

Open and Accessible to All?: Organizational Color-blindness in the Portland
Farmers Market

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Abstract

Residential farmers markets are frequently depicted as sites that foster mutually beneficial linkages between local growers and community members seeking farm-fresh food. Yet, such spaces may also reinforce exclusive boundaries predicated on racial and class differences. Adding to a growing body of literature on farmers market dynamics and using the Portland Farmers Market (PFM) as a case study, I take an *organization-level* approach to examine how a logic of color-blindness guides the ways in which the PFM addresses racial and class-based barriers, both for producers and consumers, to two markets under its purview. One market is located in a predominantly white urban neighborhood, and the other is located in a residential neighborhood with a large Black population. To provide preliminary inter-organizational comparisons, I add a third case study of a small market not operated by the PFM that aims to serve a relatively low-income immigrant community. Using in-depth interviews with market staff and vendors, informal surveys with market shoppers, and organizational literature, I analyze how farmers markets create interactive spaces for actors to articulate implicit racial ideologies, thereby coding those spaces as both “white” and “middle-class.” While members of the market organization expressed ambivalence regarding issues of race and class, I suggest that the PFM’s operation as a “business-like” non-profit creates internal tension regarding its dual aims to provide economic returns for farmers and to increase access to local produce to Portland residents, particularly people of color and low-income people. I contend that actors within the PFM often attempt to resolve this tension by explaining racial inequity through a color-blind lens, attributing racial barriers to abstract market dynamics. I highlight the important role of organizational dynamics in shaping a farmers market ideology, focusing on the implications of such dynamics in maintaining or challenging racial and class inequity.

for Mom and Dad, who have given me everything

Introduction

In the past two decades, there has been a surge in the prevalence and popularity of institutions designed to promote sustainable ecology and community access to healthy, local foods. Farmers markets aim to unite these two issues by fostering both economic and personal relationships between growers and consumers located in the same agricultural region. Proponents of these markets underscore that they serve as an alternative model to conventional agribusiness by providing contexts wherein farmers can sell locally-grown produce to an informed and enthused clientele.

Despite the positive aims of institutions like farmers markets, however, critics point out they might inadvertently create divisions along lines of race and class, precisely by prioritizing the needs to the local farmers and by promoting an ethic of sustainable consumption (Allen 2004; Guthman 2004; McCullen 2008; Alkon 2008). The focus on farmers is infused with a “white farm imaginary” (Alkon and Guthman 2010), as it often presents the image of the white yeoman farmer as the face of agricultural production. Furthermore, the “white farm imaginary” overlaps with a sense of ethical consumption, and white, middle-class shoppers are seen as “doing the right thing” by participating in farmers markets. These two processes code farmers markets as predominantly white spaces, thereby limiting their ability to provide access to fresh, local produce to shoppers of color.

Adding to the growing body of literature on the extent to which farmers markets project a veneer of middle-class whiteness, I take an organization-level approach to analyzing the Portland Farmers Market (PFM), a 501(c)6 non-profit that runs seven farmers markets in Portland. I aim to unpack the multiple mechanisms through which the PFM both reinforces and challenges racial and class-based barriers that prevent shoppers of color and/or low-income shoppers from participating at its markets. In particular, I focus on two of the PFM’s markets, its flagship location at Portland State University and a smaller market in the King neighborhood of Northeast Portland, to explore how the organization strategizes to serve demographically divergent constituencies. I compare the two PFM markets to the Lents International Farmers Market, which aims to promote food access to a large immigrant community in Southeast Portland, as a way to examine how organization-specific factors affect how farmers markets interact with low-income communities and communities of color.

In Chapter 1, I highlight the rise in the number of farmers markets in both the United States and Oregon since the early 1990s, indicating the growing prominence of these institutions. I also provide background information on the PFM organization,

including descriptions of its market locations and institutional goals. I situate the PFM in a broader institutional context of farmers markets by including a description of the Lents market, and explore the ways in which both organizations might address issues of race and class-based inequity at the three market locations mentioned above. In this chapter, I also present information on market staff, vendors, and consumers, the three key populations at each site location from which I draw my data, in order to frame my analysis of how the organization operates from multiple tiers of social processes.

In Chapter 2, I provide a context for how organizational factors influence the ways in which racial ideologies guide actors within organizations to address issues of racial and class inequity, focusing in particular on farmers markets themselves and market participants. I highlight how organizations might informally facilitate the creation of racially homogeneous settings that provide a context wherein actors construct “whiteness” through personal interaction. Paying attention to factors such as residential segregation and the rural/urban divide, I also explore how farmers markets might confront spatial dynamics that reinforce the coding of such markets as “white” spaces through the exclusion of both vendors and consumers of color. I suggest that a racial ideology of color-blindness (according to which people claim not to “see” racial difference) might overlap with the institutional logics that guide the PFM’s mission.

Chapter 3 offers a description of my methods for data collection and analysis, which include in-depth interviews with farmers market staff and vendors, informal customer surveys, and an examination of organizational publications. Chapters 4 and 5 present the results of my analysis regarding the ways in which actors in the PFM attempt to address racial and class-based inequity. In particular, I explore the interactive and ideological mechanisms through which the PFM markets in my study become coded as “white spaces.” In particular, I focus on the idealization of the white farmer in the PFM context through the spatial separation of Hispanic/Latino farmworkers from PFM markets. I then turn to the reasons both PFM staff and shoppers use to explain market participation as it relates to a community-oriented ethic of consumption. Addressing organizational-level factors, I unpack the articulation of a color-blind ideology from PFM staff. Linking this ideology to the PFM’s broader aims to promote farmers’ economic success, I suggest that the organization is ultimately likely to address issues of racial and class inequity only insofar as doing so provides a financial benefit for market *vendors*. Consequently, I argue that the PFM often side-steps the specific problem of racial inequity, thereby missing the opportunity to increase access to its markets for people of color. In both chapters, I incorporate data from the Lents market as a point of comparison between farmers market organizations.

In the Conclusion, I explore the implications of the organizational tension between the PFM’s joint aims to foster sustainable ecology and support local farmers, and to ensure that all Portland residents have access to fresh, healthy foods. I argue that the color-blind ideology that the PFM perpetuates obscures the extent to which the organization itself upholds racial barriers to its markets, and thus suggest that a direct acknowledgement of the ways in which race shapes market participation is the

first step to meaningfully address inequity. I conclude with implications and suggestions for ways in which market support for local farmers and the promotion of racial diversity—often described as incompatible—can be meaningfully brought together.

Chapter 1

Background Information

1.1 The Farmers Market Boom

Farmers markets across the country have dramatically increased in number since the mid-1990s, becoming a prominent emblem of a changing food and agricultural landscape in many Americans' day-to-day lives. Conventional agriculture in the United States relies primarily on output from a small handful of large-scale growers who operate according to a mass production model.¹ A rising concern among those who study industrial agriculture is that large-scale growing often relies on socially and environmentally deleterious practices, such as increased use of harmful chemical inputs, extensive mono-cropping, and the exploitation of migrant labor (Allen 2004; Guthman 2004). Such practices have become normalized in conventional agriculture as pragmatic solutions to market demand, which emphasizes high crop yields as the principal hallmark of agricultural efficiency over other issues like nutritional quality or soil health. In contrast to conventional, mass production-based agriculture, farmers markets aim to address risks to environmental and social health by supporting small, sustainable farms and fostering direct economic relationships between farmers and consumers. Although the word “sustainable” remains nebulously defined in the alternative food movement, Allen notes that “the common thread of all the definitions [of sustainability] is the requirement that future generations have access to the same or better quality and quantity of food, fiber, and environmental amenities as we have today” ([Dicks 1992: 191] 2004: 85). Accordingly, farmers markets emblemize sustainability by limiting their scope to include only those goods produced in a local or regional agricultural zone, a condition that reduces the impact of long-distance shipment, long-term refrigeration, and year-round production.

Variation in structure, size, and product availability certainly occurs among farmers markets, but all markets emphasize gathering farmers and other food producers from a particular geographic region in a public space in order to sell their goods directly to consumers. Leaving open the possibility for differences between farm-

¹This characterizes a shift in the agricultural landscape over the past several decades, resulting in more highly concentrated production. Lake notes that between 1941 and 1991, “the number of farmers [in the United States] decreased four-fold while the size of the farms tripled” (2007: 12).

ers markets, the Farmers Market Coalition, a national organization geared toward information-sharing and advocacy, offers the following definition,

A farmers market operates multiple times per year and is organized for the purpose of facilitating personal connections that create mutual benefits for local farmers, shoppers and communities. To fulfill that objective farmers markets define the term local, regularly communicate that definition to the public, and implement rules/guidelines of operation that ensure that the farmers market consists principally of farms selling directly to the public products that the farms have produced. (2010)

Markets generally convene for several hours in outdoor spaces such as parking lots (though some indoor markets do exist), and vendors supply their own tents, tables, and signs. Some farmers markets allow the sale of craft goods, but in general, the goal of farmers markets is to promote the production of locally-sourced food and to connect consumers to the producers who grow it. Thus, farmers markets synthesize the aforementioned goals of environmental sustainability with the aim of fostering robust local economies and social relationships.

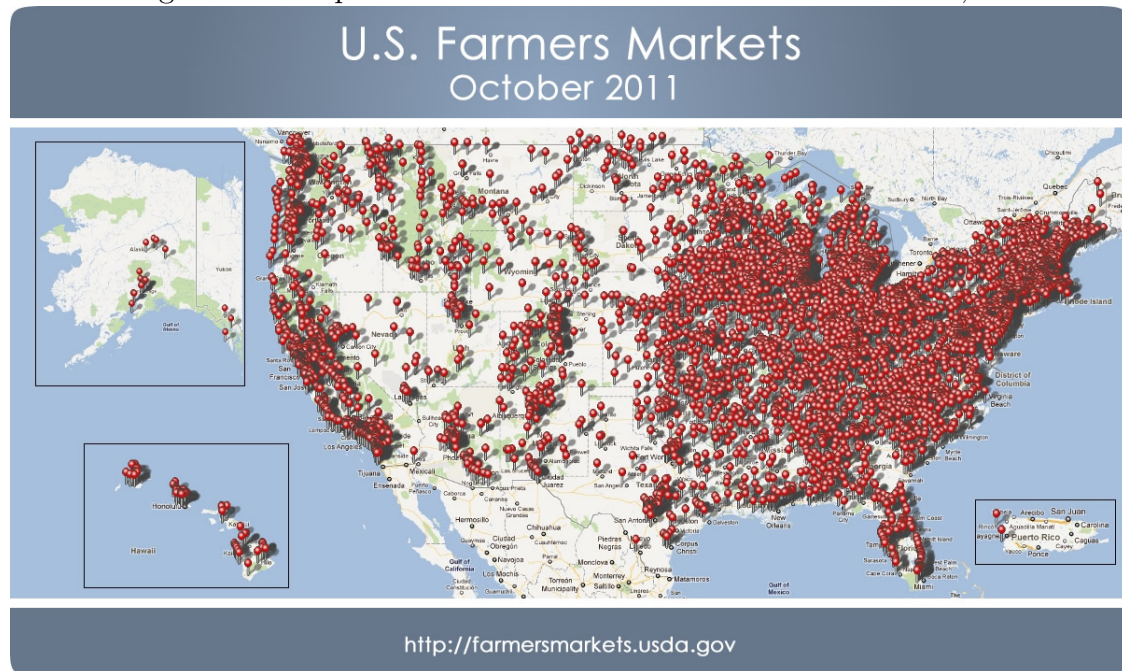
For almost twenty years, farmers markets have seen a sharp increase in prominence as more and more markets have sprung up across the country. In 1994, the number of farmers markets in the United States totaled 1,755; by 2011, that number had jumped to 7,175 (“Farmers Market Growth” 2011).² As shown in Figure 1.1, the Northeast, Midwest, and West Coast regions of the United States have the highest concentrations of farmers markets; this market density thins out west of the Mississippi, presumably because large-scale livestock and commodity crop operations dominate these agricultural regions.

On a national level, there is a dynamic pattern of success and failure as farmers markets steadily begin to take hold across the food landscape. This dynamism also underlies the trends in farmers market growth in Oregon, where I locate my study; between 1998 and 2005 (1998 being the first year with reliable data on Oregon markets), the number of markets climbed from 38 to 68 (Stephenson 2008). This number represents growth in spite of frequent failures among relatively new markets. In the same time span, 32 markets shut down, almost all of which had a lifespan of less than four years.³ These numbers suggest that while a farmers market boom in the past decade and a half is undeniable, we cannot take for granted that all markets will be successful even in a cultural climate that ostensibly supports their existence. Nevertheless, despite some fluctuations in farmers markets’ success and longevity on a nation-wide and a state-wide scale, the past two decades have generally fostered market growth.

²As Stephenson (2008) points out, this dramatic rise only documents the net gain in the number of markets and does not show the relationship between the total number of markets that opened *and closed* in that time period.

³Of the 32 markets that Stephenson cites, 30 had been in operation for four years or fewer (2008: 110).

Figure 1.1: Map of farmers markets across the United States, 2011



1.2 Markets within a Movement: How “Alternative” Are Farmers Markets?

The overall rise of farmers markets dovetails with a more wide-reaching movement to support goals like ecologically responsible agricultural practices, localized eating, and community food security, often termed the “alternative food movement” (McCullen 2008: 8-9). Scholars of the alternative food movement have explored its relationship to earlier movements, such as the back-to-the-land movement and the health food movement (Allen 2004; Guthman 2004; McCullen 2008). These overlapping trends in the discourse surrounding food and agriculture have coalesced around the championing of sustainable farming practices on small family farms, as well as the consumption of foods grown within a particular local or regional agricultural area. That is, the boom in farmers markets’ popularity is part and parcel of the “public’s heightened interest in knowing the source of the food they eat” and the concomitant notion that “eating locally [is] a way of becoming more connected with and decreasing one’s impact on the environment” (McCullen 2008: 8-9). In this way, farmers markets have become a prominent means through which farmers, consumers, and market organizers attempt to chart an alternative to conventional models of agricultural mass production and distribution, primarily by fostering direct economic and social relationships between residents of a particular community.

Because farmers markets function as spaces that refashion how groups of consumers, farmers, and market staff relate both within their own groups and across groups, it is important to examine *how* such relationships form. One of the primary critiques both scholars and movement participants hedge against the alternative food

movement in general is that its idealization of the small family farm often masks forms of inequality that, left unchecked, can permeate the movement (Allen 2004; Guthman 2004; McCullen 2008; Slocum 2007). Allen (2004) argues that by focusing on the small family farm and the yeoman farmer who ideally operates it, proponents of the alternative food movement effectively ignore both the gender and racial divisions of labor on farms, as well as broader issues regarding who has access to the crops grown on such farms. Farmers markets, as social and economic spaces that aim to foster more personalized (though not necessarily in-depth) face-to-face interactions, are unique locations in which to address these issues. As McCullen notes,

While face-to-face interactions undoubtedly give farmers market participants a sense of community, the act of defining community inevitably creates both inclusive and exclusive boundaries. Furthermore, because of the positive notions that are conjured up by the invocation of community in any discourse, negative aspects (e.g. racial exclusivity) of that community can be overshadowed by the seductiveness of positive community aspirations. (2008: 11)

If, for example, the face-to-face interactions at farmers markets tend to occur between people of similar racial backgrounds, the “sense of community” thereby created is one that subtly relies on and reinforces racial homogeneity. Such homogeneity may also overlap with other social markers like socioeconomic status, further drawing boundaries that delimit what kinds of people participate in farmers markets.

Previous studies examining inclusive and exclusive boundaries in farmers markets have focused on markets as loci of interaction in which actors (particularly consumers) articulate racialized identities (McCullen 2008; Slocum 2007; Alkon and McCullen 2010). While these studies are useful in examining one of the mechanisms through which farmers markets become coded as “white,” and for related reasons as “middle-class,” I seek to deconstruct how farmers markets *as institutions* draw and reinforce race- and class-based boundaries. Behind the spatial context in which face-to-face interactions take place between various farmers market participants, there exist market organizations that shape those parameters of interaction, both formally and informally.

Focusing on the Portland Farmers Market (PFM), an umbrella organization that operates seven farmers markets in the Portland area, I will examine the practices and ideologies that guide how the PFM itself operates. In this way, I aim to add a structural component to the discussion of how and to what extent farmers markets, which are ostensibly alternative institutions, reinforce middle-class whiteness within the alternative food movement. I add that while actors within the organization are central to this process, the PFM is also “dependent on continuing exchanges with and constituted by the [environment] in which [it operates]” (Scott 1992: 25). Therefore, I also explore how entities and factors external to the formal organization, such as neighborhood associations and differences in residential demographics, influence the PFM’s operations, practices, and goals.

I include three principle locations for analysis. Within the auspices of the PFM organization, I focus on their first and most successful market in the predominantly

white Portland State University (PSU) neighborhood of downtown Portland, and also on a satellite market in a historically Black residential neighborhood in northeast Portland,⁴ the King market. The third—the Lents International Farmers Market—is outside of the purview of the PFM and is located in a relatively low-income neighborhood in southeast Portland with a large immigrant population. Looking within the PFM will allow a comparison between two markets under the same organization, but located in remarkably different areas. Though not a perfect point of comparison to the PFM markets, Lents offers a means to frame both intra-organizational attributes of the PFM and inter-organizational attributes of farmers markets more generally. Including all three markets contributes to a broader understanding of how farmers markets as institutions might challenge, reinforce, or shape race- and class-based exclusivity and inclusivity through organizational practices and ideologies.

1.3 Contextualizing Farmers Markets: A Case for Portlandia

The PFM offers a unique opportunity to study issues of race and class, in large part due to the organization’s namesake location. Many of the staff and vendors at the PFM expressed the sentiment that Portland is an exceptional city regarding its support for local foods. They attribute the PFM’s success not only to the Willamette Valley’s oft-celebrated agricultural productivity, but also to a city that boasts a legion of adventurous eaters, a bustling restaurant scene, and a general desire to stimulate the local economy. In many ways, then, Portland is an environment particularly conducive to promoting farmers markets’ success. In addition to maintaining a food-centric ethos, Portlanders are also relatively well-educated, with 42.2 percent of residents boasting a bachelor’s degree or higher. This figure exceeds the national average by approximately fourteen percent.⁵ The city’s residents are also relatively young. Portlanders’ median age is 35.5 years old, compared to 37.2 nationally.⁶ Additionally, Portland’s white population is approximately 80.2 percent, compared to 72.4 percent nationally, making it one of the whitest cities in the country.⁷ Taken together, these factors might all contribute to Portlanders’ participation in and support for farmers markets.

I highlight Portland’s overwhelming whiteness as one of the principal justifications in my choosing the PFM as a case study. Because of the city’s demographic skew, dismissals of racial exclusivity might rest on the notion that market-goers at PFM markets are predominantly white because the city’s population is predominantly

⁴SanFilippo (2011) notes that due to racial residential segregation, the majority of Portland’s overall Black population lived in the King neighborhood during the early 20th century. While increasing gentrification has led to a large in-migration of white residents and a large out-migration of Black residents, “King remains the center of the black community, but a black community that is increasingly dispersed throughout the city” (SanFilippo 2011: 5).

⁵U.S. Census Bureau. 2010. “American Community Survey.”

⁶U.S. Census Bureau 2010. “General Population and Housing Characteristics.”

⁷Ibid.

white. This reasoning glosses over the city’s history of racial residential segregation, resulting in enduring demographic differences in the various neighborhoods where the PFM operates, as well as Oregon’s legacy of racial exclusion laws.⁸ Furthermore, such an explanation of market participation does not address the myriad ways in which people of color might experience white-dominated farmers markets, regardless of aggregate demographic statistics in the metropolitan area. Thus, while Portland does indeed have a high level of racial homogeneity, that surface-level explanation of the whiteness of its farmers markets may mask more nuanced assessments of how race overlaps with geographic and socioeconomic factors in the PFM context.

Additionally, the PFM is an important organization among farmers market institutions. It has been lauded as operating one of the best farmers markets both in the U.S. and across the globe, in publications such as *Travel and Leisure*,⁹ *The Huffington Post*,¹⁰ and *Delta Sky Magazine*.¹¹ This level of prominence makes the PFM an especially valuable case study because it suggests that the organization serves as an emblem of and model for farmers markets on a national level. This renown makes all the more important its approach to growers and consumers and any potential reproduction of inequity it may embody. Making an exemplar of a farmers market in a city with relatively low racial and ethnic diversity might subtly reinforce the ways in which farmers markets in general might cater to a particularly white consumer base, having potentially harmful consequences in cities with greater diversity. Exploring how the PFM addresses issues of race and class from an organizational perspective may help challenge the reproduction of inequalities within farmers markets as institutions more generally.

1.4 The Portland Farmers Market

1.4.1 An Outline of the Organization

In 1992, three Portland residents organized an event that laid the foundation for the now twenty-year-old Portland Farmers Market. Craig Mosbaek, Ted Snider, and Richard Hagan brought together thirteen vendors from Oregon and Washington to sell their produce in a parking lot in Albers Mill, skirting the edge of the Willamette River in Northwest Portland. By the close of the season, the number of participating

⁸Among the many aspects of both Portland’s and Oregon’s history of racism, some of the more relevant points include: the state’s constitutional exclusion law, repealed in 1926, which denied residency to Black people not living in the state prior to 1857 when the constitution was ratified; the state’s failure to ratify the 15th amendment until 1959; the provision among the Portland Board of Realtors not to sell homes to people of color in white neighborhoods, part of the code of ethics until 1952 (Melton 2008; “Portland students” 2008; “Slavery and Exclusion” 2010; Mirk 2010); the state’s long history of political involvement with the Ku Klux Klan in the early and mid-20th century (Toy 2012); and the much more recent figures that Black Portlanders were twice as likely to receive sub-prime loans than their white counterparts in 2008, controlling for income (Mirk 2008).

⁹Gold, Sarah. 2010. “America’s Best Farmers Markets.” *Travel and Leisure*.

¹⁰Goldstein, Katherine and Barbara Fenig. 2009. “Top 10 Farmers Markets in the U.S.” *The Huffington Post*.

¹¹“Top Ten: Farmers Markets.” 2009. *Delta Sky Miles Magazine*.

vendors had climbed to twenty-two, many of whom still participate in PFM-operated markets in Portland today. Shortly after opening, the market moved its location to its current space in the Southwest Park Blocks, near the campus of Portland State University. What started as a loose conglomeration of farmers and food activists has become a highly organized fixture in the local food scene, having expanded to include approximately 196 participating vendors who sell their products at seven market locations in the Portland metropolitan area. The PFM currently operates four markets in Southwest Portland, one market in Northwest, one market in Northeast, and one market in Southeast. The “original” PSU location boasts the longest season, maintaining weekly markets on Saturdays from mid-March through mid-December. During the course of this study, the PFM opened an eight-week winter market on Saturday mornings from January to February at Shemanski Park. The remaining markets begin in early May or June and end in late September or October. During the peak of market season when all six summer locations are up and running, shoppers can attend a PFM market five out of seven days of the week.

After five successful years in operation, the PFM started to broaden the scope of its operations in Portland. In 1997, vendors at Shemanski Park began meeting in the Southwest Park Blocks (just north of the current PSU location) on Wednesday mornings and afternoons from early May to late October to serve the business clientele of the area. Two years later, the PFM absorbed another market in the Buckman neighborhood of Southeast Portland,¹² and added one in the Pearl neighborhood of Northwest Portland, both of which take place on Thursday evenings. The former market runs from early May to late September, while the latter begins in early June and ends in late September. In 2009, in conjunction with the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (NECN), the PFM started the King market in Northeast Portland on Sunday mornings and afternoons from early May to late October. The following year, the sixth market was added at Pioneer Square in Southwest Portland on Mondays from late June to late September,¹³ and the Northwest market moved to Northwest 23rd Avenue. At the beginning of this study, the Northwest market again moved to Northwest 19th Avenue and Everett. With the exception of the aforementioned Buckman and Northwest markets, the remaining five markets take place during peak lunch hours.¹⁴

On an organizational level, the PFM is a 501(c)6 not-for-profit and relies primarily on vendor fees, corporate sponsorships, organized fundraisers, donations, and volunteer efforts for financial support.¹⁵ The PFM receives no funding from government agencies at the city, state, or federal levels. The organization employs

¹²The previous market managers at this location moved away from Portland, and sought out the PFM to take over its operations.

¹³Starting in 2011, the Pioneer Square market also hosted a hot-food only market on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm during July and August.

¹⁴The Buckman and Northwest markets’ hours of operation are 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The PSU market runs from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm from March to October, and 9:00 am to 2:00 pm from November to December. The Pioneer Square, King, and summer/winter Shemanski Park markets all run from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm during their respective seasons.

¹⁵In Chapter 5, I discuss the differences between 501(c)6 and 501(c)3 non-profits and highlight how such differences affect the creation of organization-level ideologies regarding race and class.

seven year-round staff members, and relies on additional staff and volunteers during the peak of market season. The core staff consists of a senior market manager; an education and outreach manager; a bookkeeper and office administrator; a communications manager; and three market coordinators, each of whom manages at least one of the PFM's satellite markets. Additionally, the manager at the Shemanski Park and Northwest markets serves as the PFM's volunteer coordinator, and the manager at the Buckman market works as an administrative assistant at the organization's office. In addition to the aforementioned staff, the PFM has an all-volunteer board of directors, whose thirteen members "[reflect] a cross-section of community interests drawn together to support regional agriculture" ("About Us" 2011). The board members' career ties span fields such as sustainable agriculture, urban planning, law, and food writing. Craig Mosbaek, one of the founders of the PFM and the original chair of the board of directors, notes that board members are expected to be avid supporters of local food systems and regular shoppers at the market.

In addition to the daily operations at each of its seven market locations, the PFM organizes special events and programs to bolster its community ties and the visibility of its commitment to sustainable ecology. At the PSU location, volunteers host a sponsor-supported Chef in the Market program that brings in Portland-based chefs to give cooking demonstrations that highlight produce from various market vendors. The PFM also participates in two programs geared toward promoting healthy eating habits and cooking skills for young children. For a five-dollar participation fee, the Kids Cook program at the PSU location offers twice-monthly cooking classes for children ages 7-11, with topics ranging from sushi preparation to crêpe-making. Starting in 2011, the King, Northwest, and Buckman markets began hosting free children's cooking classes that showcase different fruits and vegetables throughout the summer and early fall. These classes occur monthly at each of the three locations for the duration of their market seasons. Additionally, shoppers at the Buckman market can participate in a five-part class series on preserving and canning seasonal produce for 180 dollars, taught by a former PFM volunteer. Finally, while not directly related to promoting increased familiarity with local food vendors and various kinds of produce, the PFM also takes part in the EverGreen campaign. This program focuses on dividing waste generated at the market into trash, compost, and recycling streams to minimize the amount of trash sent to landfills. EverGreen began in 2010 at the PSU location, and will spread to all market locations beginning in 2012.

One of the primary concerns of this thesis is how the PFM, as an organization, draws inclusive and exclusive boundaries based on social class. Addressing the issue of cost for Portland residents of low socioeconomic status, the PFM accepts Oregon Trail Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards at all of its locations for customers who qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), i.e. food stamps. Customers swipe their cards to receive one-dollar wooden tokens to purchase produce, meat, eggs, and dairy. These tokens never expire and are redeemable at all locations. Additionally, both the King and Buckman markets participate in dollar-for-dollar matching programs (for up to five dollars per week) for SNAP recipients. These programs are subsidized through independent grants from neighborhood associations, rather than being directly financed through the PFM. At the time of this study,

however, the PFM was in the process of forming a 501(c)3 non-profit called the Farmers Market Fund in order to support matching programs at all of its markets via private donations. In addition to EBT tokens and SNAP matching, individual vendors at each location can also decide to accept vouchers from the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program and the Farm Direct Nutrition Program (FDNP), designed to offer nutrition assistance to women and children, and seniors and people with disabilities, respectively.

Since its inception, the PFM has become a successful and important institution in Portland's food and agricultural scene. With the addition of the six satellite markets to the organization, coupled with the growth of the central PSU location, the PFM has vastly extended its geographical reach across the city. Programs designed to educate market attendees and to assist shoppers of low socioeconomic status speak to the PFM's efforts to provide fresh food to all Portland residents. Building on those aims, I move to a more detailed discussion of the PFM's organizational ideology and goals.

1.4.2 Market Ideology

Allen (2004) notes that two dominant ideological or discursive threads emerge in the alternative food movement more generally, one pertaining to sustainable agriculture and the other to community food security. Stephenson's (2008) analysis of Oregon farmers markets traces the relationship between these two broad categories as they pertain to market goals. Prior to 1987, most markets operated with the principal purpose of promoting farmer income; only during the most recent rise in farmers market popularity does "the appearance of community building as at least part of the original reason for forming [markets]...become significant" (Stephenson 2008: 80). Currently, more than half of Oregon's farmers market incorporate some aspect of community building and promoting farmer income as their primary aims, suggesting an attempt to synthesize the sustainable agriculture and community food security threads of the alternative food movement.

From its incipient phases, the Portland Farmers Market has included community building elements in its stated goals, some of which have addressed the issue of race (and perhaps implicitly, class). The original proposal for the creation of the PFM lists six primary aims, the fifth of which is to foster "increased interaction among individuals from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds" (Mosbaek 1992). The proposal further explains,

...it is the goal of the Portland Farmers' Market to actively seek out and encourage ethnic diversity in the market. PFM will approach members of the African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American communities in hopes that both prepared and harvested foods distinct to their cultures will be available at the market. (Mosbaek 1992: 2)

Although the market goals contain the language of increased interaction at the fore, the further explanation subtly implies that the PFM will increase ethnic diversity by

providing different kinds of *food*, rather than by increasing participation by diverse constituencies of people per se. Thus the mission statement addresses racial and ethnic heterogeneity among market participants, but it is unclear from this explanation how the PFM will promote increased interaction across racial and ethnic boundaries, as the explanation shifts the emphasis from interaction to products. In addition, it reveals a more complex image of how race- and class-based boundaries may be conceptualized and embedded within the PFM itself.

Twenty years later, the PFM still maintains a well-articulated ideological vision that underscores the importance of supporting local growers and producers and, although to a lesser extent, of increasing access to the markets to underserved populations in the Portland area. The PFM's 2009 strategic plan arose out of a series of focus groups and meetings with vendors, community members, and customers in order to outline a unified direction for the organization to pursue. The two-year plan outlines a framework designed to support a "vibrant local food system" committed to promoting "the health of our environment, our families, and our communities" ("Strategic Plan" 2009). According to the plan, the organization's mission falls under five primary sets of goals that address the needs of vendors, consumers, and the community at large. The PFM aims to ensure that:

1. Farmers and food producers participating at our markets are successful.
2. Residents access local, healthy food through farmers market vendors.
3. The community is committed to support our markets.
4. PFM is a sustainable operation with the organizational structure and resources to accomplish our mission.
5. All farmers markets and community partners throughout the region have strong working relationships. ("Strategic Plan" 2009)

Interestingly, while these items all touch on the themes of inclusion, access, and outreach, there is no longer an explicit statement concerning outreach to communities of color or low-income communities. This subtle shift suggests that while promoting access to diverse demographics may indeed be a concern for the PFM, its explicit goals have changed, raising the question of whether the market organization in its current form supports or accomplishes such aims. I take up the question of how and to what extent the market pursues the above goals in more detail later in the thesis; for now, I simply argue that the PFM's efforts to tackle the complicated problems of racial and socioeconomic exclusion may reflect a degree of organizational ambivalence. That is, while "residents' access" implies a broad scope, the term's lack of specificity muddles the focus of strategies the PFM might use to promote such access across race and class lines.

1.4.3 Case Studies: Portland State University, King, and Lents Markets

Located in the Southwest Park Blocks adjacent to the Portland State University (PSU) campus, the PFM's flagship market embodies much of what the organization

aims to accomplish, providing approximately 180 farmers and vendors an outlet to sell high-quality produce to a large consumer base for ten months out of the year. Because this site represents the “original” market location and has been in operation longer than any other PFM market, it will serve as the primary point of access into the workings of the institution. The site itself is in the city’s urban center, yet the periphery of the market boasts impressive trees that create a particularly picturesque atmosphere. The PSU market draws over ten thousand customers a week, by far serving the largest number of people than any of the other PFM neighborhood markets. It is also situated a few blocks from the Portland Streetcar and several bus lines, making it relatively accessible via public transportation. There is ample paid parking in the area for those visitors who come by car. As previously noted, the market has been lauded as one of the best farmers markets in the country and even the world, and has become a well-known emblem of Portland’s emphasis on local agriculture.

A much smaller market in comparison, the King market began in 2009 after the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (NECN), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, approached the PFM with the aim of starting a market in that quadrant of the city. In contrast to the urban environment surrounding PSU, the King market takes place in a parking lot in a residential neighborhood in Northeast Portland. The lot, nestled in between colorfully-painted houses, skirts a large baseball field in a relatively quiet area and does not sit on any major lines of public transportation. While the lot has the capacity to host approximately fifty vendors, the actual number of vendors per week usually falls around twenty-five. King draws approximately one to two thousand customers in a week, most of whom come from surrounding neighborhoods. Indeed, while the PSU market aims to draw residents and visitors from across the city, the King market focuses on serving the particular area of town where it is situated. From the perspective of the organization, this offers insight into how market operations differ according to scale and location. The market’s relationship with the NECN also reveals how the PFM forges connections with and responds to external organizational entities. Regarding race and class, the King market’s embeddedness in its surrounding environment is unique, as the area is commonly identified as a historically Black neighborhood (SanFilippo 2011). I discuss the differences in residential demographics between the two market locations in more detail later in this section.

Located in southeast Portland, the Lents International Farmers Market aims to support immigrant and emerging farmers and to provide residents of a largely low-income, immigrant¹⁶ neighborhood with fresh produce. The market is operated by Friends of Zenger Farm, a non-profit¹⁷ urban farm located in Southeast Portland that has been in operation since 1995. The farm incorporated in 1999 and currently

¹⁶According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the immigrant population comprises approximately 20.2 percent of the total number of residents in the zip code where the Lents market takes place. This is lower than the proportion for Portland in general, which is 13.0 percent. See Table 4.2 for more information.

¹⁷Friends of Zenger Farm is classified as a C11 organization, whose “primary purpose is to preserve, protect and improve the environment.” Specifically, Friends of Zenger Farm is a “support and fund-raising entity for a single institution” (National Center for Charitable Statistics 2012).

includes seven staff members and a thirteen-member community board of directors. Over the past thirteen years, Zenger Farm has expanded to include both educational and environmental aims in its mission (“About the Farm” 2012). In 2005, representatives of Zenger Farm met with residents of the Lents neighborhood to revive the then-defunct Lents Community Market, which had started in 1999 when a small coalition of vendors convened in the neighborhood. The Farm, in cooperation with the Northwest Health Foundation, ran the first full season of the Lents International Farmers Market in 2007. The current market is located in a grass parking lot at a busy intersection near the highway, with a mix of commercial and residential buildings in the surrounding vicinity. During the 2011 season, the market had nineteen vendors and drew a crowd of approximately five hundred to one thousand weekly shoppers. Neither the environment nor the residential demographics align exactly with those of the King market, but Lents nonetheless provides an approximate counterpoint as a small market that operates in an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse neighborhood.

Using data from three subpopulations, I analyze areas of convergence and divergence between the two PFM markets, as well as between the PFM markets and the Lents market. I aim to assess how the implicit racialized and class-based ideologies embedded in the PFM as an organization affect how the market operates in different locations with substantial differences in racial and socioeconomic composition. I situate statements regarding race and class from PFM participants within broader explanations of the organization’s operations in order to characterize the PFM’s ideologies on those issues. I then analyze how such ideologies may reproduce inequity through the PFM’s attempts to promote its markets in different neighborhoods and to reach a more racially and socioeconomically diverse consumer base.

Including the Lents market allows for a broader assessment of how a market pursuing similar goals operates outside of the purview of the PFM, providing preliminary data for inter-organizational analysis between farmers markets. I also discuss Lents in order to compare small markets that operate under the auspices of a larger institution. I explore how being nested within the PFM organization affects operations at the King Market, as well as how Lents gains institutional support from its partnership with Zenger Farm. Furthermore, the Lents *International* Farmers Market explicitly focuses on increasing racial and ethnic diversity among both vendors and consumers in order to reflect the demographics of the neighborhood where it is located. I analyze how the articulation of this goal aligns with the organization’s practices, comparing the extent of this overlap to similar assessments of the PFM markets.

Below I discuss the three sample populations from whom I draw my primary data: market staff, market vendors, and consumers. In particular, I address the relationship between staff members at different locations, on-the-ground operations, methods of recruiting and retaining market vendors, and strategies to increase education and outreach among consumers of color and/or low-income consumers. Information from market staff draws attention to the internal ideologies and logics that guide the organization, while the inclusion of market vendors and consumers situates each location in a broader social context. Ultimately, parsing out the relationships that

the PFM and Lents establish with their vendor pools, consumer bases and surrounding environments allows for a more complete characterization of the organizations themselves.

Market Staff

Market staff offer the principal point of access to analyze farmers markets from the organization-level. As PFM founder Craig Mosbaek notes, “the stability of the staff...drives the rhythm” of the organization, both in terms of articulating its mission and enacting the day-to-day operations at its various market locations. These actors are responsible for addressing the needs and goals of PFM vendors and consumers, and they must devote a considerable amount of time and effort to foster strong relationships with market participants via recruitment, education, and outreach. Consequently, the PFM staff influence how the organization establishes relationships with the particular communities in the various geographic locations where PFM markets take place. Without the market staff, the PFM would lack the organizational coherence that makes it such a prominent emblem of the alternative food movement in Portland. This organizational coherence stems both from the ideologies embedded in the PFM’s practices and in the perceived success of those practices in achieving market goals.

In comparison to the PFM, the Lents market has one full-time market coordinator and several volunteers who assist her on-site. The duties of the market manager’s position align with Zenger Farm’s mission to promote community food security and to conduct outreach to Lents residents. Accordingly, I focus on the general similarities between the roles of the Lents market manager and the PFM market managers, particularly in regard to how they relate to overarching organizational ideologies. By analyzing both the market staff’s roles and their articulated ideologies regarding their respective organizations, I aim to address how the PFM and Lents formulate their conceptions of race and class, as well as how they develop strategies to address those issues. I draw information primarily from interviews with current PFM staff members and with the Lents market coordinator to outline how the organizations operate. For the PFM, I include additional material from former staff in order to trace a preliminary assessment of how that organization has shifted or remained consistent over time. This provides information on how the relationship between individual actors and the PFM itself strengthens particular institutional logics as well as racial and class-based ideologies.

I also include past and current PFM board members to develop a more comprehensive assessment of the organization’s decision-making processes. While the PFM staff are primarily responsible for maintaining organizational coherence in day-to-day operations, the board of directors guides the organization in setting larger long-term goals and policies. Board members broadly shape how the PFM addresses issues of racial and class inequity by developing strategies which the market staff in turn enact in their on-the-ground operations. The relationship between board members and staff may lead to a more consolidated organizational vision for what kinds of practices and strategies work best in various locations, particularly if the boundaries

of that relationship are relatively permeable. The practices and strategies that the organization chooses to adopt may then have a direct or an indirect effect on how its markets include or exclude members of particular racial or socioeconomic categories. Because the Lents market operates under Zenger Farm's purview and does not have its own board of directors, I do not include comparable data for that market.

Vendors

While the market staff and board members offer the clearest picture of how the organization itself operates, vendors also comprise an important part of farmers markets. I am primarily interested in how organizations recruit vendors to sell at markets, as well as the experiences that participating vendors have at markets operated by different organizations. While the PFM and Lents provide overarching organizational structure and set the parameters for market transactions, vendors are a relevant category of analysis because, as small-business owners, they are their own bosses. Their relationship to the PFM and to the Lents market can highlight the potential benefits and pitfalls of working under these organizations, as well as reveal how race and social class (arguably to a lesser extent, given that small farmer income is rarely high) play a factor in shaping vendors' experiences. As mentioned above, the PFM's primary mission is to support local farmers and food vendors by connecting them with Portland consumers. The aim of the Lents market is similar, though that organization specifically notes its goal to provide opportunities to immigrant and emerging farmers. Focusing on what categories of farmers are included at each market, as well as the experiences of the vendors within both organizations, can further explain how the PFM and Lents attempt to address racial and socioeconomic inequity.

Consumers

Both the PFM founder and current market staff underscore that the PSU market represents a space where all Portland residents can gather as a community (hence *Portland Farmers Market*), while neighborhood markets create gathering spaces for their immediate surroundings. The Lents market manager noted the distinctly neighborhood-based atmosphere at that market as well. Connecting local farmers and consumers creates a relationship wherein vendors respond to consumer tastes and demands by growing particular kinds of produce, which in turn further influences how those consumer tastes and demands develop. Ultimately, the PFM and Lents preside over these relationships by shaping the contexts in which vendors and consumers interact and exchange. Consequently, the organizations must pay attention to the needs of both their current consumer bases in order to retain shoppers, as well as those of potential new shoppers in the various neighborhoods where their markets take place. If the PFM aims to draw residents from the entire city of Portland to its PSU market and from particular neighborhoods for its satellite markets, then it must focus on how consumer needs and preferences shift according to geographic location, race, and socioeconomic status. Similarly, the Lents market must take into consideration the ways in which people from various racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic categories might

have different market experiences.

I include surveys with consumers at each location as a way to understand what motivates participation in farmers markets. Looking at trends and discrepancies among current market-goers' perceptions of the markets allows me to assess what particular consumer needs and preferences the PFM and Lents meet successfully or unsuccessfully. I also use consumer data to draw preliminary conclusions about potential differences between how people from various racial or socioeconomic categories view the markets. I attempt to assess whether the principal aims of the farmers market align more closely with the needs and preferences of one racial or socioeconomic group over and above any others by exploring the parity between how staff and consumers articulate their perceptions of the market.

Conclusion

In general, the three case studies outlined above offer insight into analyzing areas of similarity and contrast between different markets serving related aims to support local farmers and to increase community access to fresh foods. The PFM markets provide data regarding intra-organizational consistency, while the Lents market serves as a point of comparison between farmers market organizations. Members of the PFM staff work in different capacities at each market, and outlining their multiple roles reveals the organization's practices and strategies at the two PFM locations. The Lents market manager works under the purview of Zenger Farm, and therefore is guided by that organization's mission to serve the diverse constituencies in the Lents neighborhood. Including information about vendors from each location highlights the cost and benefits at selling at different farmers markets, as well as how market organizations interact with and recruit vendors in general. Discussions with consumers at the three site locations present a sketch of the demographics each market serves, as well as the attitudes individuals hold of the markets themselves. These three interactive components of the farmers market domain provide a window into the ways in which market organizations both act on and make salient their existing ideologies.

Chapter 2

Theorizing Racial Ideologies in Organizational Contexts

Scholars argue that status-based meanings develop through multiple mechanisms across the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of society (Ridgeway 2009; Risman 2004). In this chapter, I focus particularly on individual-level interactions and perspectives, as well as institutional procedures in order to address multiple mechanisms by which the PFM may acquire particularly racialized meanings. Because interactions between individuals are important contexts in which racial categories are constructed, I focus on how participants in the PFM develop their understandings of self and other in racialized terms. While such understandings correspond to more diffuse cultural beliefs about race, they form within a particular farmers market context and thus take on specific characteristics in relation to the PFM as an organization, based on both formal and informal mechanisms. At the institutional level, the PFM might resemble other large-scale farmers markets in form and practice, and might even resemble more mainstream organizations that do not boast an “alternative ethos.” The PFM might also engage in novel or unique organizational practices. Furthermore, as units under the same umbrella organization that serve demographically different neighborhoods, the PSU and King markets might diverge and overlap both in terms of institutional practices and the actions of the individual actors who participate in those markets. Additionally, looking at different farmers markets, such as Lents, which are located within similar economic and geographic spaces under different organizational oversight, provides insight into the interaction of neighborhood context and organizational influences.

I guide my analysis of the PFM using three primary analytic frameworks: (1) sociological notions of race as an interactional framing device; (2) color-blind racism as a hegemonic racial ideology; (3) and the role of institutional logics in guiding organizational action. Race is not merely a phenotypic description, but is also a social category that infuses cultural expectations of how racialized individuals should act in various social and institutional contexts. Bonilla-Silva (2003) names these expectations “racial ideologies,” and argues that they are continuously constructed within particular contexts even without the conscious intent of participants. Consequently, practices, spaces, and roles can be racialized without necessarily being grounded in

individual actors. Focusing on the concept of color-blind racism, I explore the overlap between racial and class-based ideologies (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Bobo et al 1997) in order to parse out how actors and organizations conceptualize both racial and socioeconomic inequity, particularly in relation to spatial and residential dynamics. Theories of new institutionalism provide context for understanding how both race and a racial ideology of color-blindness shape organizational practices and perspectives, leading organizations to adopt implicit behaviors to which they might not otherwise explicitly subscribe. I conclude by demonstrating how these conceptual tools help frame the existing literature on farmers markets and offer a basis for analyzing the structural factors that shape race and class barriers to such markets.

Framing Race and the Creation of Racial Ideologies

Race is salient across multiple spheres of society, imbuing racialized meanings in social processes from the individual to the institutional levels. As a “master status” (Hughes 1945), race is one of a handful of “cultural-category systems...so simplified that they can be quickly applied as framing devices to virtually anyone to start the process of defining *self* and *other*” (Ridgeway 2009: 147). By utilizing such framing devices, we “implicitly make salient our own...race categorization” in the context of interactive processes based on “shared principles of social difference” (Ridgeway 2009: 148). Importantly, these shared principles do not inhere in individual persons or the social categories to which they pertain, but instead frame our expectations of how both we and our interactants should or will behave across different social settings. Furthermore, while the notion of race as a frame focuses primarily on perceived social *difference* to explain how individuals navigate interactions across multiple social contexts, race does not “disappear” even in settings where there is racial homogeneity. Actors in relatively homogeneous settings can articulate and reaffirm their mutual understandings of racial categories through interactional processes in which there is an implicit external referent (i.e. non-participants from a different racial category). Simply, race does not merely describe a person’s phenotypic characteristics; it also entails a set of cultural beliefs regarding racial categories that can be applied to people, spaces, or institutions.

Consequently, those racial categories exist above and beyond specific interactions between racialized individuals, even if such interactions provide one context in which categories are constituted and rearticulated. Ultimately, race spans across multiple, recursive social processes in which both “structure...shapes individual choice and social interaction” and “human agency creates, sustains, and modifies current structure” (Risman 2004: 433). This recursiveness underscores the complex, dynamic, and overlapping ways in which racialized meanings become embedded in social institutions, and how those meanings shape how actors behave in relation to others and how they come to understand themselves.

Regarding racism, contemporary theorists argue that racism exists in part through the covert articulation of *collective* racial ideologies that perpetuate inequity, rather than as an amalgamation of individuals’ overt expressions of prejudicial attitudes (Bonilla-Silva 2010; Bobo et al 1997; Moore 2008). In this view, racism operates

across multiple levels of society because it “affects the consciousness of all actors in any society” (Bonilla-Silva 2003: 64), not just those who are outwardly prejudicial or bigoted. Bonilla-Silva defines racial ideology as the “racially-based frameworks used by actors to explain and justify (dominant race) or challenge (subordinate race or races) the racial status quo” (2003: 65); I apply the terms “hegemonic” and “alternative” to these frameworks, respectively (Ridgeway 2009: 150). Hegemonic frameworks differ from their alternative counterparts in that they are both widespread and institutionalized across a variety of social spheres, and they “represent most closely the experiences and understandings [of race] by dominant groups in society” (Ridgeway 2009: 150). Alternative frameworks imply that individuals across racial categories might utilize divergent racial ideologies to articulate and understand difference. As such, it is important to parse out the content of hegemonic frameworks at the individual and institutional levels in order to identify potential points of contention. The possibility for alternatives refutes the notion that there is one particular set of principles that guides a singular understanding of racial difference, while still accounting for the presence and persistence of a dominant ideology. I argue that the hegemonic understanding of racial difference is predicated on the notion of color-blindness (Bonilla-Silva 2003), while leaving open the possibility that there exist alternative frameworks that may challenge expressions of that ideology.

Color-blindness relies on the premise that individuals and institutions “do not see race,” an ostensible attempt to deemphasize racial difference as the basis for the overt forms of discrimination that characterized the years prior to and during Jim Crow. The concept of race as a frame challenges the very basis of this assumption—that individuals and institutions can consciously choose not to see race—as it draws attention to perceived social *difference* as a critical aspect of interactions between racialized actors in multiple social contexts (Ridgeway 2009). Simply, while overt and hostile articulations of racial difference might have subsided in the post-Jim Crow United States, racial difference itself still exists and is a mechanism through which we organize our social lives. As mentioned previously, because interactions in racially homogeneous settings often serve to normalize particular racial ideologies, such settings and the actors that participate in them are not racially neutral nor truly “color-blind.”

One of the principal mechanisms through which an ideology of color-blindness persists is through the normalization of whiteness. Bonilla-Silva suggests that while “whiteness” is a socially-constructed category of group identity “historically shaped in reference to subordinate ‘Others’” such as Black people, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asians, it “does not need to be elaborated in clear and overt terms” (2003: 76) in contemporary American society. Normalizing whiteness relies on creating bounded categories that maintain racial homogeneity across multiple social contexts. If social difference is what makes race and other frames salient at the interactional level, then so-called color-blindness can only occur through the structural separation between individuals from different racial categories. McCullen elaborates on the consequences of this process for whites, stating

White people...come of age immersed in the social ontology of whiteness,

believing that their worldviews and life experiences are neutral and normal. Their racial experience is invisible to them, they have difficulty seeing their race, identifying with it, and understanding how it affects their lives. Whiteness, then, is the set of unnamed and unmarked cultural practices by which nonwhites are racially defined and judged. (2008: 12)

In the present racialized social system, whites can take for granted that they will enter environments in which the majority of other participants are also white, and that any people of color who enter such environments will be cast as “different.”

On a structural level, the maintenance of informal racial residential segregation reinforces such an “ontology of whiteness,” which affects socialization across various settings, such as schools, churches, and workplaces (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Massey and Denton 1993) and allows whites to lead “fundamentally white lives” (Bonilla-Silva 2003: 76). As such, whites attend predominantly white schools and churches, live in almost-exclusively white neighborhoods, maintain friendships with other whites and “honorary whites,” such as Asians and Latinos, and engage in “various practices that preserve the white character of their lives even in so-called integrated jobs, schools, and neighborhoods” (Bonilla-Silva 2003: 76). This process perpetuates white privilege geographically “when whites achieve spatial distance from other racialized groups” (McCullen 2008: 14). Such spatial boundaries reinforce the ways in which multiple forms of advantage intersect, often linking white privilege with affluence (Alkon and McCullen 2010; McCullen 2008; Collins 2000). Similarly to whiteness, “middle- and upper-class identity forms through separation from lower-income groups,” with the result that “affluent spaces...frequently overlap with white spaces” (McCullen 2008: 14). Furthermore, sustained racial segregation is an “institutional apparatus that supports other racially discriminatory processes and binds them together into a coherent and uniquely effective system of racial subordination” (Massey and Denton 1993: 110) that remains hidden from privileged whites.

While the normalization of whiteness occurs in large part due to widespread structural factors that replicate inequity, color-blindness suggests that market dynamics are primarily responsible for the complex system of disadvantages that people of color experience. This premise, which Bonilla-Silva labels abstract liberalism, “incorporates tenets associated with political (e.g. ‘equal opportunity’) and economic (e.g. choice and individualism) liberalism in an abstract and decontextualized manner” (2003: 68-9) in order to account for particularly *racialized* aspects of society, such as residential segregation. Abstract liberalism overlaps with Bobo et al’s conception of *laissez-faire* racism, in which “modern racial inequality relies on the market and informal racial bias to re-create, and in some instances sharply worsen, structured racial inequality” (1997: 17). Taken together, these arguments suggest that (1) while whites believe that market dynamics are devoid of bias, the market is in fact infused with racial bias, and as such, (2) these dynamics reinforce race-based structural inequity. Through an abstract liberal lens, whites effectively shirk their responsibility and complicity as participants in a racialized sociopolitical and economic system, thereby placing the onus on people of color to rectify their own experiences of disadvantage and inequity.

The idea of abstract liberalism suggests that individuals can overcome disadvantage through hard work, ingenuity, or luck, which effectively ignores the macro-level forces that sustain inequity (Massey and Denton 1993; Bobo 1998; Bonilla-Silva 2003). Particularly for Black Americans, some scholars believe “the effect of segregation...is structural, not individual” (Massey and Denton 1993: 105), and “barriers to spatial mobility are barriers to social mobility” (114). Consequently, geographic boundaries often affect the extent to which Black Americans and other people of color can achieve socioeconomic progress. This argument underscores the important ways in which intersecting positions in society overlap to create compound disadvantages for poor people of color (Collins 2000). Structural inequality, reinforced and compounded through racial residential segregation, was “no historical accident; it was brought about by the actions and practices that had the passive acceptance, if not the active support, of most whites in the United States” (Massey and Denton 1993: 115). Such acceptance or support persists through the ideology of color-blindness, allowing whites to dismiss the myriad ways in which institutions carry deeply embedded racialized meanings and consequently shape the racialized structure of society.

An Institutional Logics Approach

As suggested above, raced and classed ideologies are particularly salient within the structural confines of organizations. Baron and Bielby’s call to “bring firms back in” (1980) refocused scholarly attention on the influence of the organization in defining and (re)creating inequality among workers. I shift the focus slightly to assess how exogenous pressures interact with ideology to create governing “institutional logics” (Thornton and Ocasio 2008), and how such logics might (re)create inequality among individuals who are not necessarily employed by an organization, but can nonetheless be considered participants (e.g. market vendors and consumers). Institutional logics are “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton and Ocasio 2008: 101). Simply, the categories and scripts that individuals employ in their interactions relate dialectically to the forms, structures, and practices that organizations adopt (DiMaggio and Powell 1991: 14-15). This mutually constitutive process “integrates the structural, normative, and symbolic as three necessary and complementary dimensions of institutions” (Thornton and Ocasio 2008: 101). As such, the institutional logics embedded in organizations provide a context both for the interactions between institutional actors and for the development of organizational missions and practice. Certain logics in U.S. society are hegemonic, such as that of the capitalist market (Thornton and Ocasio 2008: 104), and thus shape diffuse practices and structures within organizations in a wide array of settings, resulting in a common institutional repertoire that downplays “the adaptive custom fitting of particular organizations to specific settings” (DiMaggio and Powell 1991: 27). These institutional repertoires become taken for granted and reified, a process that generates mimicry and similarity between organizations.

Importantly, however, while a case can be made for the persistence of forms and

practices across multiple contexts, organizations do not necessarily follow deterministic trajectories across the board. Recent work by Thornton and Ocasio suggests that institutions subscribe to “a probabilistic, rather than deterministic, view of adherence to dominant norms of behavior,” which demands that studies of organizations look for “specific contingencies where subsidiary norms prevail” (2008: 106). When actors or organizations engage in non-normative practices or articulate ideologies, goals, or missions that challenge hegemonic institutional logics, it is possible for a degree of organizational ambivalence to arise. The implication is that understanding underlying institutional logics then “requires theorizing an inter-institutional system of societal sectors in which each sector represents a different set of expectations for social relations and human and organizational behavior” (Thornton and Ocasio 2008: 115). This emphasis on the intersections between multiple logics highlights how organizations are dynamically constituted through the sustained and overlapping articulation of (potentially competing) logics, and allows for the identification of possible points of tension that affect organizational practices.

Color-blindness can become embedded in organizational contexts through the interactions between racially homogeneous institutional actors and through the strategies and practices that organizations adopt to address racial boundaries. Frames create diffuse expectations of behavior at the interactional level, and relationships between actors ultimately affect the “organizational procedures and rules that actors develop through their social relations in that setting” (Ridgeway 2009: 153). Participation in a homogeneous organization thus acquires racialized meanings because actors come to understand their roles and the roles of other participants in the organization vis-à-vis their membership in the same racial category. This process shapes further interactions between actors in racialized terms, often without the conscious intent of those actors. Consequently, by creating the contexts in which interactions between actors take place, organizations themselves can privilege the experiences and perspectives of constituent members from the dominant racial category. If practices and roles across different types of organizations or within the same organization indeed carry racialized meanings, then the degree of organizational parity across different contexts might contribute to racially exclusionary procedures in diverse locales. In contrast, the extent to which individual organizations engage in unique practices or articulate non-normative cultural beliefs offers an entry point into the way that organizations might contest diffuse racialized procedures and ideologies. Examining such processes informs an analysis of how cultural beliefs about race operate on the macro-level, as well as guides studies of organizational practices and structures in particular, situated contexts.

From an institutional logics perspective, the normalized whiteness and abstract liberalism that define color-blindness might shape how organizations confront the ways in which racial inequity structures institutional participation from people of color. For example, in an organization in which the majority of participants are white, the articulation of a color-blind logic suggests that whites will attribute the absence of people of color to individual choice rather than structural constraints (Alkon and McCullen 2010). If organizations opt not to recognize their complicity in maintaining such constraints, this implied participation operates informally to reproduce

racial inequity. Furthermore, because color-blindness often entails the attribution of racial inequity to class dynamics, organizations might explicitly address socioeconomic barriers to participation without directly acknowledging how such barriers might also be racialized. If the institutional logics framework suggests that organizations often subscribe to multiple intersecting logics, color-blindness may well not be the *principal* logic that guides an organization, but it might overlap with more diffuse organizational practices and structures such that it implicitly shapes the racialized boundaries of that organization. Competing logics within site-specific organizational domains and the internal tension between them may allow innovation to arise across organizations in the same sector (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). Thus it is possible to understand how organizations within the same field in similar geographic locations can embody divergent ideologies with differing outcomes.

2.1 The Case of Farmers Markets

I argue that by shaping the context of the interactions between racialized vendors and consumers, farmers market organizations privilege the experiences of white participants. This process thus embeds racial meanings into farmers market contexts and affects the ways in which such organizations strategize (or not) to address racial inequity. Because the PFM's primary aim is to join vendors and consumers in a direct economic relationship with one another, it is important to explore how the organization formally and informally determines who those vendors and consumers actually are. Critics of the alternative agrifood movement draw attention to how movement discourse focuses on the white, male yeoman farmer as the harbinger of just sustainability, suggesting that this idealization reinforces deeply embedded norms of racism, sexism, and capitalism that underlie agrarian idealism (Allen 2004; Guthman 2004). Because this ideal type is not racially neutral, its centrality in the movement discourse affects how alternative agrifood institutions organize to support movement goals (Alkon and McCullen 2010; McCullen 2008; Slocum 2007) and has the potential to encode whiteness into institutions like farmers markets. In the case of the PFM, the fact that most market vendors are white reinforces market consumers' racialized expectations of who grows their food, thus strengthening the racialization of this ideal type.

Of course, the racialized role of the market vendor does not form in a void of whiteness, and it relies on the existence of an invisible "other" in order to achieve such ideological potency. The discourse surrounding the white yeoman farmer masks the importance of hired (often immigrant) labor on farms because non-white farmworkers are rarely present at markets themselves (Allen 2004: 147). Given that farmers markets convene in urban areas, they retain a degree of spatial distance from the farms that provide the food sold at them. Nonetheless, they simultaneously become important emblems of "localism" by forming the spatial nexus where food production chains intersect. Despite the fact that farmworkers of color support the "local" economy through their labor, their exclusion from farmers markets creates a form of localism predicated on racialized boundaries (McCullen 2008). This point is under-

scored by the fact that many white farmers hire white workers to staff their stalls at farmers markets, while farmworkers of color remain invisible due to their spatial separation from markets.

Furthermore, the geographic distance between farms and farmers markets essentializes white farmers as well, precisely because they are also decontextualized from their on-farm practices. Cole (2008) argues that in the case of the global coffee trade, for example, spatial distance from coffee growers allows consumers to believe that they “help steward coffee farmers toward a better way of life” (2008: 184) without having to examine the *actual* experiences of coffee growers themselves. This relationship, easily maintained through considerable geographic separation, essentializes both the grower and the social conditions in which he or she lives, while simultaneously bolstering the consumer’s sense of his or her ethical participation in a global economy. In the case of farmers markets, whose primary emphasis is on connecting growers and consumers in *local* economies, this spatial separation is collapsed but does not disappear.

The direct economic relationship between farmers and consumers at farmers markets rests on the basis of face-to-face interactions. Presumably, this level of interpersonal communication allows for a more substantive relationship to develop between the two groups, creating a degree of consumer loyalty that bolsters farmers’ economic stability. Nonetheless, while farmers markets create interactive spaces in which consumers can “[know] the source of the food they eat” (McCullen 2008: 8), the fast-paced nature of many farmers markets limits the extent to which consumers and farmers can meaningfully interact. A handful of customers may ask questions about farmers’ agronomic practices to bolster their ethic of sustainable consumption, but such questions do not often delve into the social or material conditions that shape farmers’ lives. I suggest that the degree to which these relationships actually provide a complex picture of farmers’ experiences for consumers might be nearly as underdeveloped as it is in the case of global coffee consumption. Simply, the face-to-face interactions that occur at farmers markets may not necessarily reduce the extent to which consumers essentialize vendors. Instead, customers’ superficial interactions with white farmers and market assistants and the exclusion of non-white farmworkers might merely reinforce the notion that the white farmer (or the white farm family) is the principal producer of sustainable foods.

As in the global coffee market, spatial dynamics also facilitate the process through which shoppers at farmers markets construct their own identities as ethical consumers in relation to the white farmers with whom they interact. The social and spatial distance between racial categories maintained through informal residential segregation generally passes unnoticed by the whites who benefit from it. In relatively racially homogeneous settings like the PFM, whites’ processes of identity construction is not founded on racial difference. Instead, such interactions provide a context for a rearticulation of whiteness that then characterizes both market consumers and vendors. This process contributes to the perception among people of color that homogeneous locales like farmers markets are “coded white.” Consequently, unlike whites, people of color often “feel uncomfortable and unwelcome in those spaces” (McCullen 2008: 14).

McCullen elaborates on the consequences of these divergent experiences of white-dominated spaces by highlighting how racial homogeneity overlaps with ethical consumption. She argues,

...the assumed ethics behind alternative food consumption construct its eaters as good, ethical people, and conversely, those who do not eat it as bad, immoral people. When the locations of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ eating each overlap with a relative clustering of particular phenotypes, locations get concomitantly coded as racialized and (im)moralized places. (2008: 17)

I add that this process is particularly powerful precisely because it occurs through the dynamic interactions between racialized actors. What imbues farmers markets with “goodness” is the notion that a direct economic *relationship* between vendors and consumers results in just sustainability. That the ideal types of both the yeoman farmer and the ethical consumer are coded white allows for the sustained reaffirmation of whiteness through interactions. Maintaining such interactions between particular groups of racialized actors is what embeds whiteness into farmers markets that view those relationships as institutional goals in themselves.

I suggest that because the roles of market vendor and consumer have racialized meanings, the PFM’s organizational aim to bring together vendors and consumers in a direct economic relationship has racialized implications. Whether actors in the institution realize it or not, their practices reinforce the notion that the white farmer is the champion of local agriculture, and that the ethic of consumption rests on supporting white economies. Because the principal interactants in a farmers market context are white, this imprints whiteness on those spaces and privileges white participants on both sides of the economic interaction. This process masks and reinforces the spatial and structural separation of people of color, and fails to examine how such separation influences people of color’s relationships to farmers markets. Thus, social processes in racially homogeneous settings such as farmers markets covertly privilege and normalize whiteness.

Previous work on farmers markets outlines avenues by which markets’ interactional contexts contribute to the coding of such settings as white spaces. Importantly, however, it does not address the complex interaction between the institutional inputs of farmers market *organizations* and the ways in which organizational actors interpret racial meanings within specific market contexts. Organizations play an integral role in formally and informally structuring interactions between similar groups of people (Small 2009), and this has racialized implications for farmers markets that seek to “create vibrant community gatherings” (“Strategic Plan” 2012: 1). Although market organizations do not formally recruit only white vendors and shoppers to markets, they nonetheless provide settings where both groups of actors can articulate and reinforce racial meanings. The interactions that take place between white farmers and shoppers at farmers markets may also link whiteness and affluence with a consumer ethic based on supporting local economies and eating healthy foods. I argue that examining the market organization in tandem with the principal interactants in the market setting provides to a better perspective on the complex ways in which organi-

zational factors maintain and contribute to the color-blind ideology that appears to dominate the farmers market locale.

Conclusion

As outlined above, color-blindness as an institutional logic entails both how whites articulate their perceptions of racial difference and inequity, as well as how they behave and organize their lives in order to maintain their structural advantage. I identify these two components as the ideological and geographic threads of color-blindness. Focusing on the PFM as an institution, I use these threads to inform my analysis of what people affiliated with the market say about race and class, as well as how the market and the actors who comprise it interact within and across the specific locations where PFM markets take place. The extent to which the PFM resembles other farmers markets and other organizations more generally helps situate the organization within a broader institutional context in terms of diffuse racial ideologies. I assess how such ideologies are operationalized in specific contexts by analyzing how markets in different locales under the PFM umbrella operate and address race and class issues. Additionally, parsing out the racial ideologies that market participants articulate helps draw the mutually constitutive relationship between organizational mission and practice. I explore how the PFM's mission guides organizational procedures, and what potential constraints that mission places on the organization to meaningfully address unequal access to the organization's markets. Specifically, I look at who participates in the market and how the racialized interactions between those participants guide the type of interactive context the organization itself aims to uphold. Relatedly, I also address both how market participants explain the structural inequality that affects people of color and low-income people, and how the organization operates based on those explanations in a way that either reinforces such inequality or attempts to engage with it. Although color-blindness purports to deemphasize racial difference as a basis for inequity, articulating a color-blind ideology may privilege the experiences and perspectives of whites, potentially undercutting how the PFM may aim to address the particular interests or needs of communities of color.

Chapter 3

Methods and Data

At the time I began research for this thesis, I had been an employee for a vendor at the PSU market for approximately eighteen months, and that experience grounded my familiarity with the demographics and characteristics of that market in particular. Working at the the PSU market also gave me a point of access to both PFM locations. My employer was instrumental in helping me make contacts with PFM vendors and staff for the purpose of this study. While I had been familiar with the Lents market prior to my research, I did not know the staff or vendors there personally. After initially contacting the market manager, she helped introduce me to some of the market vendors and provided me with background information about the market.

Interviews with market staff provide the foundation for understanding how institutional actors articulate their roles and ideologies in the PFM and Lents contexts. Focusing on the PFM, this information helps reveal the extent to which color-blindness might overlap with more diffuse organizational ideologies and procedures. I add to this analysis using information from PFM publications, mission statements, and strategic plans, and I compare this organizational literature with similar data from Lents. Relatedly, interviews with market vendors and surveys with market shoppers reveal the extent to which the PFM and Lents organize economic relationships between particular types of actors. I describe the context in which such relationships might develop racialized meanings based on my site observations at each case location.¹

¹My broad participation as a market shopper, vendor, and volunteer has allowed me to witness market interactions from multiple perspectives. Like Alkon and McCullen (2010), I recognize that my affinity for and familiarity with farmers market environments overlap with my white, middle-class upbringing. While my participation in farmers markets stems in part from a larger concern with environmental degradation, I echo the sentiment that attention to agronomic practices alone is not sufficient in addressing either the ecological, economic, or social justice goals of the alternative agrifood movement in general and the farmers market movement in particular (Allen 2004; Guthman 2004; Alkon and McCullen 2010). From my perspective as a market participant, I aim to interrogate the ways in which the PFM may undercut some of the social justice issues that make it and other markets like it a potential locus for substantive changes regarding unequal access to fresh produce.

Interviews

I conducted a total of ten interviews for this study, nine in-person and one via email. Similar to the method of “snowball sampling” (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981), I initially relied on my employer to provide recommendations for potential PFM vendors and staff to interview. After making an initial round of contacts either in-person or via email, I interviewed six PFM staff and two vendors, both of whom sell at the PSU market and one of whom sells at the King market. All of the current staff members I interviewed are on-site at the PSU market every week. One of these staff members is also the market manager at King, and another deals specifically with education and market outreach for the organization as a whole. Both the current senior market coordinator and the PFM founder referred me to the PFM’s former market coordinator and to the current executive director, and my interviews with them provide information about the relationship between staff at the operations level and the PFM board of directors at the administrative level.

At Lents, I approached both staff and vendors on-site to request interviews. While I was unable to conduct an in-person interview with the market coordinator, I include information from e-mail correspondences regarding the market’s mission and structure. Because of the small sample size of vendors at Lents and the considerable language barrier between me and several of the vendors, I only include one vendor interview from that market. Consequently, my analysis of Lents relies more on customer survey data and on-site observations than does my analysis of the PFM. While this is a limitation in my data, I use information about Lents primarily to complement my focus on the PFM as an organization rather than as an in-depth case study.

In-person interviews ranged from 50 to 90 minutes and were audio-recorded. I later transcribed the audio-tapes to look for emergent themes regarding race, class, and organizational procedures more broadly. I did not take notes during the interviews, though I jotted down detailed observations following the interviews in order to collect my thoughts and outline preliminary impressions. I did not have a specific list of questions for each interviewee, though I had a set of themes pertaining to organizational practices as well as racial and class barriers that I aimed to discuss. A list of sample interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

For approximately half of each interview with market staff, I asked general questions about their roles within the organization, as well as their impressions and interpretations of the organization’s mission. I used participants’ statements about the PFM’s mission and goals to sketch out the underlying logic that guides how the organization operates. Interviews with the PFM founder, the former market coordinator and executive director, and the current executive director provide additional data regarding the continuity of the organization’s mission and practices since the PFM’s inception twenty years ago. I asked current staff to describe their relationships with other staff members and the board of directors in order to assess the general level of cohesion within the PFM across different organizational levels. I also addressed how staff members describe their relationships with market vendors and customers to get a sense of how they characterize the primary populations the PFM aims to serve. I use these responses to assess the extent to which these characterizations overlap with

the ideal types of vendors and consumers I outlined in the previous chapter.

During the second half of each interview, I shifted the focus to address questions of race and class more specifically. Some of my participants inquired as to the direct purposes of my study, and I explained my interest in racial and class barriers to PFM markets and the organization's attempts to address such barriers. I did not directly state my research aims to the interviewees who did not specifically inquire about them, though I still asked those participants to discuss issues of race and class. Because organizations provide the context through which individuals engage in purposive action (Scott 1992: 62), I relate interviewees' responses to questions specifically pertaining to race and class to broader explanations of their institutional roles and aims. Simply, my primary area of interest is how the PFM addresses racial and class barriers *as an organization*, and consequently I situate discussions of such barriers within the broader organizational context that the respondents outlined.

For all my interviews with market vendors, I followed a similar interview format as outlined above, moving from general questions about market participation to more pointed questions about race and class. I asked vendors to discuss issues relevant to them outside of the farmers market context as well. For example, in order to address the issue of racialized spatial separation between farms and urban farmers markets, I asked vendors to discuss their hiring practices for both farmworkers and farmers market assistants. I also inquired as to vendors' relationships with market staff and customers to gauge the extent to which vendors felt well-served by the organization and well-connected to their direct exchange partners. My interviews with market vendors also supplied preliminary data regarding farmers' reasons for participating in the market, informing my analysis of how those incentives coalesce with the PFM's primary mission.

All of the PFM staff members I interviewed were white except for one staff member who identified as Mexican-American, and the Lents market coordinator was white as well. The market vendors I interviewed from each case location were also white. In the case of the PFM, this corresponds to the overwhelming racial homogeneity of the organization's vendor pool in general. From my on-site experience, I conservatively estimate that approximately ten percent or less of the 180 vendors at PSU are people of color, and the proportion of people of color is similar or lower for the twenty to twenty-five vendors at the King market. At Lents, ten of the nineteen vendors during the 2011 were either immigrant vendors, vendors of color, or both. Of the total vendor pool, eleven were growers and nine of these were either immigrant growers, growers of color, or both. My interest in market vendors relates to how the image of the white yeoman farmer as the face behind the food at farmers markets normalizes whiteness in the PFM context, particularly in contrast to Lents. By unpacking staff and vendors' perspectives, ideologies, and practices, I aim to explore the subtleties that such racialized actors articulate in regard to race and class boundaries at the market (McCullen 2008). Such an analysis forms the foundation to develop an understanding of how color-blindness might affect the PFM's operations.

Surveys

In addition to interviews, I conducted twenty on-site surveys with customers at each market location, with a total of sixty surveys across the three sites. My customer samples are skewed to include more people of color than make up the general market-going population at both the PSU and King locations, as I was specifically interested in assessing how customers of color view and experience those markets. Given that the Lents market specifically aims to serve the ethnic communities in the neighborhood where the market takes place, I saw a relatively greater proportion of people of color among shoppers there than I did at King or at PSU. After I finished my first round of surveys, which took place at the Lents market, I added two additional questions to my original list and used the modified survey protocol at both PFM locations. I made these changes based on themes that emerged during the course of the survey process at Lents. Thus, while my later surveys include more pointed questions about customers' experiences, the data gleaned from all market locations is nonetheless relatively comparable. Copies of both versions of my customer surveys can be found in Appendix B.

At each market location, I approached customers and asked if they would be willing to participate in a brief survey for thesis research on farmers markets. Four participants declined at King, two declined at Lents, and none declined at PSU. Participants gave verbal responses to my survey questions, and I wrote notes on their responses both during and immediately following the surveys. Many of the customers I approached were couples, and often one person in the couple responded to the questions while the other remained relatively quiet or merely chimed in to agree. For the purpose of tallying overall emergent themes from my results, I grouped both people in the couple as one case. In the rare event that an overlap in opinions did not occur, I also treated each person in the couple as a distinct case. In order to analyze the connections between race and reasons for market participation, however, I treated each individual in a couple as a discrete case, particularly given the frequency with which I surveyed interracial couples. In these instances, I gave both individuals the same tallies for each response except when the individuals did not agree. At the end of each survey, I asked the respondent(s) his or her gender, race, and occupation. For couples grouped as one case, I nonetheless noted these categories for both people even if the substantive responses to the questions about farmers markets showed considerable overlap. Table 3.1 shows the demographic breakdown of survey respondents by market location, with respondent's race tallied according U.S. Census categories. Table 3.2 provides a list of self-reported racial categories for each market location.

Though the sample sizes for my site location surveys are small, white respondents constituted the majority at each location despite my pointed attempts to talk specifically with shoppers of color. The percentage of white survey respondents was 65.4 at the PSU market, 80.9 at the King market, and 58.3 at the Lents market. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 give a more explicit breakdown of the racial composition of shoppers at each location. Interestingly, the King market had the highest number of white respondents despite the fact that the surrounding zip code has the lowest proportion of

Table 3.1: Demographic and shopping characteristics of farmers market survey respondents by case location. Respondent's race/ethnicity is grouped according to U.S. Census categories.

	PSU	King	Lents
<i>Total number of respondents (N)</i>	26	21	24
Women	15	15	14
Men	11	6	10
<i>Respondent's race/ethnicity</i>			
Black	5	1	2
White	17	17	14
Hispanic/Latino	1	1	2
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	2	2
Bi-racial	0	0	2
<i>Method of transport</i>			
Car	9	7	12
Walking	12	6	9
Bus	1	1	2
Bicycle	1	7	1
Streetcar	3	0	0
<i>Percentage of N who live in neighborhood of market</i>	65.4	57.1	62.5
<i>Percentage of N who shop at other farmers markets:</i>			
Never	34.6	19.0	45.8
Sometimes	26.9	19.0	16.7
Often	38.5	62.0	37.5

Table 3.2: Self-reported racial categories from farmers market survey respondents by case location.

PSU (N=26)	King (N=21)	Lents (N=24)
Caucasian (9)	White (13)	White (8)
White (8)	Caucasian (3)	Caucasian (5)
Black (4)	European-American (1)	Hispanic (4)
Asian (2)	African-American (1)	Caucasian-Hispanic (2)
African-American (1)	Asian-American (1)	African-American (1)
Asian-Vietnamese (1)	Asian (1)	Caucasian-Italian (1)
Puerto Rican (1)	Latina (1)	Ethiopian (1)
		Filipino (1)
		Hawaiian (1)

white residents compared to both the PSU and Lents neighborhoods.² Of note is also the fact that my surveys at PSU spanned multiple visits, whereas my surveys at King and Lents were collected in one visit to each location. The relatively high number of people of color with whom I spoke at PSU perhaps resulted from my exposure to a greater range of shoppers across multiple market days. In contrast, my results from King and Lents could represent one potential snapshot of each location on a typical market day.

Relatedly, the number of shoppers at each location differs rather dramatically, with approximately ten thousand customers at PSU, one to two thousand at King, and five hundred to one thousand at Lents walking through in a given week. While my surveys have relatively small sample sizes and are not based on random sampling, I use the information from these customer interactions to assess how similar themes and perspectives develop across each market and not for rigorous quantitative analysis. Both within and across markets, general similarities and patterns emerged regarding participants' perspectives and motivations as shoppers. While a larger random sample would provide useful data for more substantive quantitative research, the qualitative information gleaned from the surveys in this study provides a starting point to explore recurring themes regarding customer experiences.

On-site Observations

I collected my site observations at PSU primarily as a vendor and sometimes as a shopper, paying particular attention to the types of questions customers asked me and other vendors. During my lunch breaks, I sat in an area located in the center of the market near a stage for cooking demonstrations and live music in order to observe interactions between customers and engage in casual conversation. I also walked up and down the market's busy aisles and visited a variety of stalls to get a sense of how customers and vendors interact. Since I started my research in early October, I was limited in the number of site visits I could make to King and Lents before the end of their market seasons. Both markets took place at the same time on Sunday mornings and ended by late October. Rather than attempt to visit both sites on the available market days, I opted to attend each market every other week for several hours during each visit until both markets closed for the season. As at the PSU market, I walked up and down the aisles at each location, casually conversing with both vendors and customers as well as listening to the conversations between participants. I did not take notes during my site visits, though I did record my impressions and observations after each visit.

Organizational Literature

I add information collected from organizational literature to my on-site and in-person data. Analyzing the PFM's mission statement and strategic plans helps develop the institutional logic that governs how the organization defines its goals and aims to accomplish these goals (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). I also look at the PFM and

²I address this discrepancy in more detail in Chapter 5.

Lents vendor handbooks in order to characterize how the organizations interact with market vendors, how they recruit potential new vendors, and how they develop fee structures. While the individual actors who comprise the markets in this study are integral in shaping how the PFM and Lents operate, looking at market publications bolsters my analysis at the organization-level and provides useful information for how the organizations themselves affect their constituent actors (DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Thornton and Ocasio 2008; Scott 1992).

Conclusion

Organizations are constituted by the dynamic social processes that span across multiple levels, accounting for the roles of both individual agency and institutional logics in shaping organizational practices (Thornton and Ocasio 2008; DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Scott 1992; Zilber 2008; Chen 2009). My analysis of how the PFM and Lents address racial and class inequity at their markets incorporates data collected from multiple groups of actors within the organizations, as well as information about organizational level practices and procedures. For the PFM, I use this data to parse out how color-blindness, as an institutional logic, “provide[s] individuals and organizations with a set of rules and conventions—for deciding which problems get attended to, which solutions get considered, and which solutions get linked to which situations” (Thornton and Ocasio 2008: 114) regarding inequity.

Chapter 4

Creating Contexts: Farmers Markets as White Spaces

4.1 Characterizing the Markets

The PFM's renown for operating exceptional farmers markets is an extreme point of pride for the organization. In its 2012 strategic plan, the PFM board added the words "world class" to describe the markets under its purview. Both board and staff members underscored that the organization's commitment to high-quality produce, a focus from opening day at Albers Mill, contributes to its markets' prestige and success. As the PFM's founder emphasized,

You look at what distinguishes the Portland Farmers Market, it's the best quality produce... A lot of farmers markets focus on that, but I think Portland does that better than others, one because it's been a focus from the start, and two, because we live close to the Willamette Valley which is some of the best farmland in the world.

The commitment to showcasing Oregon's agricultural bounty extends to all of PFM's markets, and the senior market coordinator proudly noted,

[Y]ou can get everything you want for a meal at any one of our markets. You can go there and you can get a really great baguette, some really great cheese, some pâté, a lot of fresh vegetables...[T]here's somewhat of an ideal view of farmers markets just being farmers...[but] the way that Portland Farmers Market has fused the European model where...they use a little bit of everything...[creates] the best opportunity for these local farmers to sell because we have the customer base that's going to come and do their shopping there.

By boasting a large variety of products ranging from fruit and vegetable crops to value-added items like breads and cheeses, the PFM incentivizes its customers to view its markets as a feasible alternative to grocery stores for their weekly shopping.

Doing so ultimately encourages shoppers not only to spend more of their food dollars at farmers markets, but also to buy from a range of vendors, therefore boosting those vendors' economic returns.

While the PFM makes sure that all its markets include a wide array of high-quality items, the PSU market in particular stands out as the organization's emblematic success story. Spanning two large city blocks, the market's aisles are often packed during the peak season. Although attendance had dwindled slightly at the time of my study, in general, each Saturday the market boasted several thousand market-goers buying wares from approximately 150 to 180 vendors depending on the time of year. The PFM's executive director noted that part of PSU's appeal is that "it's such a beautiful site once you go in," and one market vendor elaborated that "being in the Park Blocks with all the trees around is a definite plus." One staff member called the PSU market the PFM's "flagship example of what a world class farmers market can be," further drawing attention to the market's wide variety of products and idyllic atmosphere.

The senior market coordinator emphasized the importance of product variety at the King market location as well. He explained, "When [the PFM] populate[s] a market...[it] want[s] to get the best things in there" in regard to product mix, regardless of market size. He noted that customer shopping patterns at smaller markets influenced the vendor make-up of these markets. For the King market, this resulted in a produce- and meat-heavy selection. His descriptions underscored the fact that high-quality product mixes are a large selling point at all PFM markets, even with a limited vendor pool in markets such as King.

The King market manager also discussed the appeal of the market's atmosphere in creating a solid customer base. He described King's location as a low-key, neighbor-friendly setting:

[King's] on a Sunday, one, it's out in a great environment...a lot of families, a lot of kids. Saturday [at PSU] is just in your face, it's full throttle, and it's just packed. Every square inch is packed. That's where I see the differences there, is that people feel more relaxed...[I]t's in their neighborhood, they kind of stroll in at their leisure. It's like their backyard.

Despite the difference in scale and setting between the PSU and King markets, both boast an array of produce, cheeses, breads, and meats in aesthetically pleasing outdoor locations. These factors contribute to an overall sense of "place" the executive director described when discussing PFM's markets, a quality that partially explains the markets' popularity.

In addition to this focus on product quality, variety, and market atmosphere, the success of the PFM as an organization also corresponds to a broader cultural ethos in Portland that champions local foods. As one PFM staff member put it,

...Portland is known for a DIY ethos...there's a lot of urban farming going on here, there's a lot of people who...are connected to their food source in a way that may not be as prevalent as in other cities. I think that Portland

also has a tremendous array of greenscapes and community gathering places [where] farmers markets...[are] a natural fit...so I think it rolls up into one at the PSU market and we can just kind of put it on display for everybody.

The PFM's founder went further to explain that the organization not only springs from Portland's "DIY ethos," but is in fact partially responsible for providing momentum to the alternative food movement more broadly:

There's something beyond the market that's gotten into everybody's imagination...[T]he market is one of the outlets or examples of Oregon's culinary tourism or the "buy local" movement. So we've been part of that, we've been riding that wave, and I think we've also helped create that wave within Portland.

Thus the PFM's success as an organization, as well as the popularity of the PSU market specifically, are testaments both to the agricultural productivity of the Willamette Valley and to Portland's uniquely well-developed local foods culture. Some members of the organization explained they often struggled to gain recognition from city and county authorities during the PFM's early years, ultimately noting that the PFM now enjoys considerable political as well as cultural support. In short, as the education and outreach director attested, the PFM has "become...a jewel in the crown of Portland" over the past twenty years for bolstering local economies and attracting shoppers to celebrate Oregon's agricultural bounty.

The PFM's "world class" status lends legitimacy and prestige to the organization, but market staff and vendors acknowledged that such a designation implies a certain degree of elitism. The former market coordinator and executive director noted, "the Portland Farmers Market...for better or for worse, it's the yuppie market," a characterization that has been attached to the PFM since its inception. One vendor, who has been selling at the market since 1996, recalled, "When it was at Albers Mill, that market was known as a yuppie market, and when I started going there, Craig Mosbaek told me he was glad I was there because...he wanted to shed that image." He cites being a conventional grower, as opposed to an organic grower, as the explanation for his role in helping to mitigate the "yuppie" image. In regard to whether or not the PFM has successfully shed that characterization, the same vendor admitted "probably not completely," though he again underscored that the mix of both conventional and organic growers helps temper the PFM's perceived elitism.

Realistically addressing the question of whether or not the PFM operates "yuppie" markets, both staff and vendors suggested that the organization's focus on high quality produce inevitably resulted in a clientele with a higher-than-average income. As the market founder noted,

We ended up with a pretty high-income demographic. It's not what we were aiming for, except we were aiming for high quality...[and] that's what people expect at the farmers market...There were markets that people tried in Portland...[whose goal was] to get cheap vegetables to low-income

residents. It didn't work. It didn't work for the vendors, it didn't work for the customers, and they weren't successful. What the successful markets all focus on is high-quality, fresh, local produce.

The PFM's "world class" markets are, on the positive side, showcases of high-quality agricultural bounty that, as a former PSU market coordinator mentioned, have allowed "many of the farmers who come to market [to] make very good income there." Nonetheless, PFM staff articulated a degree of ambivalence about the extent to which the organization's markets exclude low-income shoppers as a consequence of that "world class" status.

This (perceived) market elitism overlaps with both PSU and King's racial homogeneity, reinforcing race and class-based boundaries to both markets. Entering PSU for my site observations, I was met by an overwhelming majority of white faces, including both vendors and shoppers. Indeed, during my entire time as an employee at the PSU market, the clientele has been almost exclusively white, as have the other vendors in attendance. While I do not have exact customer counts for PSU, I estimate that approximately ten percent of both vendors and customers are people of color based on my extended on-site experience. During my site visits to King, I noticed a slightly greater proportion of people of color than at PSU. Given the widespread characterization of the neighborhood as historically Black, however, this proportion does not reflect the neighborhood's overall racial demographics, and the relative absence of Black shoppers was noticeable. Table 4.1 provides information on the racial composition of residents in the zip codes where each market takes place. The zip code of the PSU market has a large white population (81.3 percent), and it is unsurprising that the clientele at that market is also predominantly white. The majority of residents in the King neighborhood are white as well (66.3 percent), but this figure is much lower than at PSU or Portland in general (76.1 percent). Simply, this difference suggests a greater proportion of shoppers of color would have been present at King during my on-site visits than at PSU, yet this was not the case. A similar degree of racial homogeneity characterized the people sitting behind the tables as well (and indeed, most of the vendors who sell at King also sell at PSU). With the exception of two or three vendors of color, as well as a Mexican-American market manager, the King market looks much like a scaled-down version of the PSU market in terms of racial composition. Despite the difference in neighborhood location, the extent to which the PFM organization emphasizes and strives for "elite" status may link whiteness and affluence, creating tension for how the market aims to conduct outreach to low-income communities and/or communities of color.

The Lents market offered a point of contrast to both the PFM markets. While the Lents market manager underscored that it is the "vendors and the quality of their products that keep customers coming back," no one with whom I spoke described Lents with the same "elite" terminology as was used to characterize both the PSU and King locations. My site visits took place in mid-October as the market was winding down from the summer growing season, and there were relatively few shoppers there than one could expect to see during the peak market season. Upon entrance to the market, there was a large map covered in brightly-colored pushpins

Table 4.1: Proportion of population by race/ethnicity in the zip code for each market site location. Column percentages do not add up to one-hundred percent in order to account for Hispanic/Latino respondents, who may be of any race. Data from 2010 U.S. Census.

Race/ethnicity	PSU	King	Lents	Portland total
White	81.3	66.3	64.3	76.1
Black	2.1	20.1	5.5	6.3
Asian	9.8	2.8	15.2	7.1
Hispanic/Latino	4.8	8.8	15.0	9.4
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.5
Am. Indian/Alaska Native	0.7	0.9	1.4	1.0
Bi-racial/other	5.8	9.4	12.9	8.9
Total number of residents	15,484	31,254	33,300	583,776

Table 4.2: Proportion of population by immigrant status in the zip code for each market site location. Percentages refer to the proportion of residents who are native citizens of the U.S. versus foreign born residents, regardless of citizenship status. Data from the 2000 U.S. Census.

Place of birth	PSU	King	Lents	Portland total
Residents born in U.S. ^a	87.3	90.6	79.8	87.0
Foreign-born residents	12.7	9.4	20.2	13.0
Total number of residents	25,197	30,936	38,167	529,025

^aIncludes native U.S. citizens born abroad.

with a handwritten placard at the bottom that asks of both vendors and customers, “Where are you from? Where are your parents from?” There are pushpins spanning the entire globe, a testament to the large immigrant community in the Lents area. The neighborhood’s immigrant population is 20.2 percent (Table 4.2), almost double the proportion at King (9.4 percent). Indeed, this percentage is also much higher than comparable figures for the PSU area (12.7 percent) and Portland in general (13.0 percent). The white population in the Lents area is comparable to King’s at 64.3 percent, and I noticed in my time on-site at Lents that the shoppers perusing the stalls were not overwhelmingly white. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, ten of the nineteen vendors during the 2011 season were immigrant vendors, vendors of color, or both. Nine of the eleven growers at the market were either immigrant growers, growers of color, or both. The market manager at the time of the study was white, but there were several volunteers of color affiliated with Zenger Farm (sponsor of the Lents market) who also worked on-site. In general, in addition to a lack of focus on “elite” market dynamics, the overall veneer of whiteness so noticeable at both the PSU and King markets was absent from Lents.

4.2 The Face Behind the Food: Racializing the Farmer vs. the Farmworker

In this section, I focus on the processes through which whiteness becomes embedded in the PFM in regard to its vendors. The vendor pool from which the PFM populates its markets is predominantly white, as are the staff that individual vendors employ to work at their market booths. Again, while exact statistics on the races of the 196 vendors under the PFM’s umbrella were not available at the time of this study, I conservatively estimate that the percentage of farmers of color falls at or below ten percent. With approximately 180 vendors, the PSU location boasts the largest representative sample of the PFM vendor pool. The former executive director noted that in the organization’s early years, the PFM unsuccessfully attempted to recruit vendors of color:

[I]n the beginning...we would say, “Okay, we’re going to go out and recruit vendors for the market. We need to mix this up. We don’t want all white guys. How can we?” And we did consciously look for people...There just weren’t that many Black people that farm...so trying to mix up the all white guy formula was tough, but we did try to recruit people.

She explains the difficulty in increasing racial diversity among the vendor pool by the relatively low population of farmers of color in the area. Both she and current market staff did mention Food Works, a youth-run farming organization that boasts high rates of participation from both U.S. citizens and immigrants of color. The PFM waives Food Works’ stall fees for the duration of the market season at PSU, and this connection is one tangible way in which the PFM directly aims to increase the representation of vendors of color at its flagship market. The senior market

coordinator also mentioned the PFM's partnership with Hacienda CDC, a non-profit that provides micro-loans to Latina women to sell tamales at Portland-area farmers markets. Women affiliated with the Micro Mercantes program had stands at both the King and Lents markets at the time of my observations. While the inclusion of Food Works and Hacienda CDC at PFM markets provides a venue for these vendors to sell their products, their presence is only a small contribution to the overall white demographic of the vendor pools at those markets.

The PFM's founder reiterated the challenge of recruiting vendors of color, adding that the organization lacked the personal and professional ties to make such outreach effective:

We tried to recruit vendors from minority communities, but it was just difficult. We couldn't find them, we didn't have the relationships with them, etcetera. There's more and more of that now. You know I haven't done any data collection down [at PSU], but I know there's more Asian and Hispanic vendors. I don't know if there are any African American vendors. But it's like, how many African American farmers are there within a hundred miles of Portland? Or in Oregon? There's not very many. So that's the problem with getting minority vendors is that there's not that many minorities in the business, either farming or the products that people make.

Data from the 2007 U.S. Census of Agriculture confirm the low numbers of people of color employed as farm operators¹ in Oregon. Table 4.3 shows the total number of farm operators and the number of principal operators in Oregon by race, as well as the proportion of both groups for whom farming is their primary occupation. As of 2007, 97.7 percent of all farm operators in Oregon were white, and 96.9 percent of principal operators were white as well. With the exception of the total number of Asian farm operators, less than fifty percent of operators from all listed racial categories cited farming as their primary occupation, a statistic that corresponds to national trends.² These data imply that while white farm operators are overwhelmingly responsible for managing Oregon farms, operators across racial categories must often supplement farm-based income with other employment. They also suggest that the low numbers of farmers of color may indeed represent a significant hurdle for their participation as farmers market vendors. Although, as I discuss in further detail below, the differences in the representation of vendors of color between Lents and the PFM may indicate that the lack of vendors of color at the PFM locations is not solely due to their low numbers in the overall population.

I argue that there are potential organization-level factors that might overlap with exogenous barriers to market participation, particularly for low-income growers

¹The USDA includes full owners (operate only land they own), part owners (operate both owned and rented land), and tenants (operate rented land) in its definition of farm operators. Counts of farm operators include those who list their primary occupation as "farming" or as "other."

²Of the 2.2 million farms currently in operation in the U.S., the majority (60 percent) earn \$10,000 or less in sales per year and 1.2 million farms must rely on non-farm income in order to stay afloat. U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2007. "Census of Agriculture."

Table 4.3: Number of farm operators in Oregon by race/ethnicity. Figures include the number of principal operators and the proportion of operators who list farming as their primary occupation. Column totals do not add up to the total N as respondents could list more than one race. Hispanic/Latino respondents could be of any race. Data from the 2007 U.S. Census of Agriculture.

Race/ethnicity	Total number of operators ^a (N)	Number of principal operators (P)	Farming as primary occupation	
			% of N	% of P
White	61,672	37,390	42.6	37.4
Black	80	36	43.8	44.4
Asian	506	267	55.5	46.3
Hispanic/Latino	1,391	789	45.5	47.5
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	94	31	37.2	41.9
Am. Indian/Alaska Native	1,391	497	35.9	34.2
Total	63,110	38,553	43.9	46.2

^aFor farms with up to three operators.

and/or growers of color. Because the PFM is a non-profit, much of its revenues come from stall fees at each of its market locations. Vendors are responsible for paying weekly fees based on both the number of spaces and type of stall they occupy at a given market. Fees³ range from 34 to 59 dollars per stall space at the PSU market, and from 26 to 46 dollars at the King market⁴ (“Fees and Payment Procedures” 2011). Farmers have the option of paying for the full season up-front or by the month, and those who choose the former option are eligible for a five-percent discount.

While these fees are not exorbitant, one PFM vendor argued that “just getting people to notice you” at a farmers market as large as PSU is one of the biggest struggles for vendors, and thus might demand that a vendor occupy several stalls. He elaborated, noting in particular how customer loyalty to other vendors overlaps with minimal visibility to hinder market success:

I know a number of vendors who are trying to get started [at PSU] and it’s a struggle for them because the customers are used to going to other places...And usually when a vendor starts they’re usually just taking up a ten-by-ten space, so they’re also visually small because they can’t afford to use two or three spaces. So not only are they not known but they just don’t stand out very well, and they might be in a row with a whole bunch of other vendors.

He adds that “a strong display consciousness” and the ability “to really mound [produce] up and make something that’s visually appealing” are two factors that help

³These figures reflect the fee structure for farmers only. Food artisans, bakeries, and hot food vendors are subject to a higher fee-per-space given the PFM’s primary focus on serving growers.

⁴These prices are the same at the Buckman and Northwest Markets. Stall fees at the Pioneer Courthouse Square and Shemanski Park markets range from 31 to 51 dollars.

vendors get noticed at PSU in particular. Merely taking up one ten-by-ten stall is insufficient to attract the kind of attention from consumers that will ensure high returns for vendors. Implicitly, it not only takes money to make money at PSU, but it also requires having a large enough yield to sufficiently fill a larger space. Such parameters potentially limit the PFM's vendor pool to those growers with enough acreage to ensure both a stable income and a reliably high yield. This suggests that growers who manage more acreage will have greater success at farmers markets, a reality which might disadvantage growers who cultivate a relatively small tract of (rented) land (Table 4.4).

The fee structure at the Lents market is more flexible than at either PFM market in this study. Stall fees range from 22 to 27 dollars a week, and the organization offers a ten-percent discount to vendors who pay at one time for five weeks, and a twenty-percent discount to vendors who pay for 10 or more weeks ("Vendor Rule Manual" 2011). This allows vendors to benefit from discounted fees regardless of whether or not they participate for the full market season, unlike at the PSU and King markets. Furthermore, given the relatively small scale of the Lents market, the need to compete for visual prominence is less pronounced there than at the PSU location. As such, most vendors at Lents occupy just one stall. These differences suggest that the Lents market might be more accommodating to vendors who manage smaller farms.

Table 4.4: Characteristics of farms in Oregon by principal farm operator's race/ethnicity. Totals for number of farms by race/ethnicity do not add up to the total N as respondents could list more than one race. Hispanic/Latino respondents could be of any race. Data from the 2007 U.S. Census of Agriculture.

Race/ethnicity	Total number of farms (N)	Number of farms by type of ownership ^a			Average size of farm (acres)
		Full	Partial	Tenant	
White	37,390	29,323 (78.4)	6,023 (16.1)	2,044 (5.5)	417
Black	36	31 (86.1)	2 (5.6)	3 (8.3)	60
Asian	267	198 (74.1)	52 (19.5)	17 (6.4)	138
Hispanic/Latino	789	617 (78.2)	107 (13.6)	65 (8.2)	403
Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	31	22 (70.9)	3 (9.7)	6 (19.4)	130
American Indian/ Alaska Native	497	300 (60.4)	50 (10.0)	147 (29.6)	557
Total	38,553	30,160 (78.2)	6,168 (16.0)	2,225 (5.8)	425

^aNumbers in parentheses indicate the percentage of total farms for each type of ownership.

Table 4.4 describes the patterns of farm ownership and average farm size in Oregon by the principal farm operator's race. Again, these data confirm that the overwhelming majority of Oregon farms are run by white operators. Furthermore, the percentage of farm operators who manage rented land is lowest for white respondents. White-operated farms are also larger on average than farms managed by people of

color, with the exception of American Indian/Alaska Native operators. These operators manage the largest farms on average (557 acres), yet have the lowest percentage of respondents with full ownership (60.4 percent).⁵ Black respondents are the most likely to have full ownership over their farms, yet the average size of such farms is only 60 acres compared to 417 acres for white operators and 425 acres overall.

Both average farm size and percentage of respondents with full ownership are comparable for white and Hispanic/Latino operators. 78.4 percent of white operators and 78.2 percent of Hispanic/Latino operators have full ownership, and the average farm sizes are 417 acres and 403 acres for these groups, respectively. Because of the distinction made between race (e.g. white) and ethnicity (e.g. Hispanic/Latino) in the Census of Agriculture, Hispanic/Latino respondents could be of any race. Indeed, 757 of the 789 Hispanic/Latino respondents (95.9 percent) listed their race as white, which explains the level of similarity between the figures for these two groups. One point of divergence is in the proportion of tenant farm operators, which is 5.5 percent for white respondents and 8.2 percent for Hispanic/Latino respondents.

Overall, these data suggest that farm operators of color are more likely both to rent the land they manage and to farm smaller tracts of land on average than white operators. Such exogenous factors might affect the ability of smaller farmers to sell their products at markets that favor large, prominent displays such as the PSU location. Furthermore, these constraints might also overlap with the differences in fee structure between the PSU, King, and Lents markets to shape the vendor pools at each location, as smaller farms might not be able to pay for multiple stall spaces. I draw attention to the potential constraints regarding farm ownership and size in part because virtually none of the staff interviewees from the PFM mentioned these issues, despite the ways in which they might structure participation from vendors of color at farmers markets.

In addition to farm owners/operators, the people who staff the stalls as the PFM are also overwhelmingly white. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, less than 3.4 percent of the overall population of Oregon is employed in the agriculture industry. Of note, however, is that the proportion rises to approximately 11.3 percent for Hispanic/Latino residents. This figure is more than three times as high as the percentage for white residents (3.2 percent),⁶ despite the fact that the number of white people employed in the agriculture industry is higher overall (N=102,547 for white and N=50,857 for Hispanic/Latino agricultural workers).⁷ Given the relatively

⁵This discrepancy reflects patterns of land tenure for American Indians more generally. For more information, see the Indian Land Tenure Foundation's 2012 publication "Fractionated Ownership."

⁶Percentages for residents from other racial categories are also low. According to the 2010 U.S., approximately 0.5 percent of Asian residents and 0.0 percent of Black residents were employed in the agriculture industry. 2000 Census data indicate that these figures were 4.0 percent and 1.2 percent for American Indian/Alaska Native and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander residents, respectively.

⁷These figures from the 2010 American Community Survey refer to the number of individuals employed in the agricultural industry, including farming, fishing, and forestry. Thus, they are merely approximations of the total number of permanent *farm* laborers for each racial category. Given these caveats, I offer these data in order to demonstrate the differences in proportion versus number of white and Hispanic/Latino farm laborers.

low number of Hispanic/Latino farm operators (Table 4.3) and the well-documented⁸ prevalence of Hispanic/Latino farmworkers in the U.S., these data suggest that a large proportion of Oregon's Hispanic/Latino residents employed in the agricultural industry are farmworkers. There are approximately 123,000 farmworkers employed in Oregon per year, and of these, 95,000 are seasonal (Massey 2002). While exact descriptive statistics by race of farmworkers in Oregon were unavailable at the time of this study, "the majority of seasonal workers are, without doubt, of Hispanic origin" (Searle 1999).

Again, while a large percentage of Hispanic/Latino residents of Oregon are employed in agriculture-related positions, very few are employed as farm operators. Such a discrepancy refers to the notion that farm laborers of color "are simultaneously everywhere and nowhere" (Allen 2004: 148) in the agriculture industry. That is, while Hispanic/Latino farmworkers are often primarily responsible for producing and harvesting crops, the (white, male) farmer is almost always the "face" that customers greet in the interactive contexts farmers markets provide. Alkon and McCullen elaborate on the implications of this process:

Even when customers do meet farm owners, they are far from actually knowing the people who grow their food. In this way, the white farm imaginary facilitates a partial defetishization drawn by racial lines and refetishizes sustainable agricultural production by painting a whitened picture of who grows food. The abundance of white farmer-farm operators and their white non-farmworker employees at farmers markets suggests an image of a white family farmer as the subject of sustainable agricultural production and fails to paint a more accurate racial portrayal of those who grow our food. (2010: 946)

Although I did not collect information about labor from a large number of farmers who sell at PSU and at King, my interviewees' discussion of on-farm versus at-market labor revealed some insight into how spatial distance reinforces whiteness at those markets. One PFM vendor discussed his relationship with his on-farm staff:

Most of the people who work for us on the farm are Mexicans...we do have some Americans who work for us...but probably about sixty percent of our workers are usually Mexican, and ironically...they like the work, but they're really not interested in the food we grow... We used to try to keep reminding them, "You should take some of this food home. It's free for you to eat," and they were never that interested in it, but they loved the work. The people who work for us at our markets love the food. Mostly

⁸Data from the 2001-2002 National Agricultural Workers Survey, conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, indicate that eighty-three percent of farm workers in the U.S. identified as members of a Hispanic or Latino ethnic group regardless of place of birth, and of these, seventy-nine percent self-identified as Mexican or Mexican-American. Additionally, seventy-five percent of crop workers employed in the United States were born in Mexico and an additional two percent were born in Central America. Twenty-three percent were born in the United States, and one percent in some other country of origin.

they come, they're working for us because they want to be able to eat the food and they want to be able to have some connection to their food.

Though not stated explicitly above, the vendor later clarified that he has “never had any Mexicans, any non-whites work for [him] at the markets.” He suggests that the Mexican farmworkers he employs do not identify with the cultural ethos surrounding consumption at farmers markets, whereas identification with that ethos is the primary reason for which white market workers seek employment. Other studies of farmers markets (McCullen 2008; Alkon and McCullen 2010; Guthman 2008) have indicated that many people of color do not necessarily identify with the ethic of local consumption, and that it is precisely this ideological underpinning that codes markets as white spaces. I add that whites can justify a lack of participation or perceived interest in farmers markets from people of color based on the *a priori* assumption that the latter do not identify with ethical consumption. I explore the implications of actual or presumed differences in ideology between racial categories later in this chapter.

The same vendor went on to recount an instance in which one of his farmworkers accompanied him to the PSU market:

Last year for the first time we brought one of our Mexican workers to the market...because we wanted her to see where the food went. She loved it...We wanted to do that this year—we offered that opportunity to a couple of the other Mexicans on the crew who have been with us for five years now, and they said, “Gosh we’d really love to do that but we wash dishes on the weekends.” They have another job... I don’t think they would like to do it on a regular basis, and they actually don’t really have—some of them don’t have the language skills for it, and the woman that we brought last year definitely doesn’t have the math skills for it. So they’re not the kind of people that we would want in terms of both language and math, but it was a really good connection for her last year and I think they really would like to see where the food goes.

Here, the vendor justifies the lack of participation by the Mexican farmworkers he employs based on a number of perceived limitations. While he claims that the woman to whom he refers loved the experience of seeing “where the food went,” he notes that she does not have the math skills to be a regular market employee. He extends this explanation to the majority of the other farm laborers, citing a lack of language and/or math skills as primary obstacles. He also mentions that many of the farmworkers he employs have second jobs on the weekends, which constrains their ability to come to high-traffic weekend markets like PSU. This assertion struck me, given his admission that “it’s always a bit of challenge to find people in the city who will come work at the farm stand” because many (presumably white) urban dwellers “have full-time work during the week [and] they’d like to have time off during the weekend.” He adds that many people whom he hires at the market also lack the skills necessary to work there effectively. While it might be possible for the vendor to train his farmworkers

in the skills necessary to work at markets, potentially eliminating their need for dual employment as well as the difficulty in hiring once-weekly market staff, he does not make this connection. Ultimately, he explains the spatial separation of farmworkers of color from markets in terms of their perceived lack of identification with an ethos of local eating, their lack of skills, and their secondary employment (even though the latter two factors are not necessarily unique to farmworkers).

Interestingly, the same vendor goes on to suggest that an organization like the PFM should be responsible for training individuals in market-specific skills, thereby displacing the burden of on-the-job training from the farmer to the organization. He claims that “it would be nice if the farmers market could somehow or another link [him] with people who have those skills,” thereby advocating for the organization to broker connections between him and market workers. Given that the market does already broker such connections through informal mechanisms such as word-of-mouth advertising, the vendor suggests that more formalized strategies might provide him with a more reliable labor pool. I add that this suggestion is a potential, if somewhat far-fetched, opportunity for the PFM to engage in a purposive attempt to use formal mechanisms to recruit more people of color to work behind the stalls at its markets.

Another PFM vendor also noted that the fieldworkers on his farm are predominantly Hispanic/Latino, but that all of his market employees are white. He then corrected himself, adding,

I might have one Hispanic worker. She was probably born in the U.S. but has Hispanic background...I don't think I have [had] any Black responders to our 'Help Wanted' sign [at the market]. I don't think I've had any Oriental-type [*sic*]. It'll be mostly whites who respond to my help wanted sign.

This assertion underscores the notion, evident in the other vendor's statements as well, that whites are more self-selecting than people of color in terms of seeking employment at farmers markets. He also attributes the fact that he employs predominantly white market staff to the overall demographics of the PSU market:

If you look at the people going through the markets, most of them are white. At PSU, there's a bunch of students going through, Oriental [*sic*] girls. I see a few Oriental [*sic*] guys but not as many as there are girls, and they would probably not be interested in working as much as the domestics. Perhaps they don't have the necessary documentation to work, and there's very few Black people going through the market. There's a few, once in awhile, occasional, but nothing-quite possibly not when I have my 'Help Wanted' sign up.

The vendor explains that white people are more likely to approach his stand to inquire about his 'Help Wanted' sign, primarily due to their overrepresentation at the PSU market. Recent literature on farmers markets has suggested that the “the clustering of phenotypes in particular locations codes those spaces according to phenotype” (McCullen 2008: 3)—based on this premise, the large majority of white shoppers at the

PSU market in particular attaches a veneer of whiteness to the location. As such, by providing the context for consumers to shop from local farmers, the PFM (re)creates an informal mechanism by which the primary labor pool from which vendors hire their at-market staff is predominantly white. The vendor above merely takes this fact for granted, but I suggest that the PFM actually facilitates the creation of a predominantly white vendor pool simply by creating a sustained environment for white consumers to shop. The coding of spaces as white also “exclude[s] racial difference from those spaces” (McCullen 2008: 3) and contributes to the taken-for-granted notion that “there’s very few Black people going through the market” as well. Adding to these covert processes of racial inclusion and exclusion and their effects on the racial composition of at-market staff, the vendor quoted above assumes that young Asian market attendees are most likely immigrants unable to work at the market, in addition to having a lack of interest. Similarly to the previous vendor, he echoes the cultural explanation for whites’ overrepresentation as market workers and adds an additional structural barrier (lack of citizenship status) to the explanation of people of color’s underrepresentation.

When asked why none of his Hispanic/Latino farmworkers work at any markets, the above vendor explains that he and his brother, with whom he owns his farm, “need them in the field more than at the market. If we put the Hispanics [*sic*] in the market then we have to have somebody else in the field to do the work.” This reasoning implies that Hispanic/Latino farmworkers constitute one type of labor pool while predominantly white urban dwellers constitute another, each of which is suited to one type of venue. Maintaining this conceptual and spatial distinction effectively masks the extent to which farmworkers of color contribute the majority of the labor to producing the food sold at farmers markets. The predominantly white farmers and market employees effectively become placeholders for those laborers, thereby whitewashing the face that people greet when they supposedly get to know the source of their food.

Elaborating on the vendor make-up of the PFM organization, there is not one general, formalized vendor pool from which the PFM populates its markets because market vendors must apply to have a stall at each market location. Nonetheless, because seniority is a factor in deciding who sells at each location,⁹ and because people often apply for stalls at multiple locations, there is considerable overlap between markets in regard to vendor composition. At the beginning of 2012, the PFM received applications from 209 unique vendors for all of its market locations and declined applications from thirteen new businesses. Given that the PSU market boasts approximately 180 vendors, an overall vendor pool of 196 suggests that there are relatively few vendors who populate PFM markets that do *not* also have stalls at PSU. Observationally, while not all of the vendors at King also sold at PSU, I recognized at least fifty percent of them from their stalls at the downtown market at the time of my observations. Because the majority of the PFM vendors are white, the considerable overlap between PFM locations in terms of market vendor pools reinforces the image that productive farm labor is white labor. I discuss this overlap to

⁹I discuss vendor regulations in more detail in Chapter 5.

draw attention to the ways in which vendor homogeneity might create an implicitly exclusive environment for people of color at farmers markets. Again, I suggest that because the PSU market is the PFM's crown jewel, the predominance of both white vendors and white shoppers at that location embeds whiteness into the PFM as an organization. Consequently, the introduction of a new market signifies a reiteration of a white space.

In contrast, the Lents market suggests that incorporating the explicit aim of supporting immigrant farmers and/or farmers of color might help decenter the white farmer as the sole representative of just sustainability. While the market's goals show areas of both overlap and divergence from those of the PFM, Lents' market manager highlights that the organization's focus on racial and socioeconomic equity "completely distinguishes [Lents] from most other farmers markets in Portland." She elaborates on the aims of the Lents market:

The Lents International Farmers Market has two primary purposes – to provide farm direct sales opportunities for immigrant and emerging farmers and to provide Lents and the surrounding neighborhoods with access to nutritious, farm fresh food. Going along with that last point, I think, is to provide the area with a neighborhood gathering place.

Both the PFM and Lents aim to create gathering places, and the latter's explicit goal to provide opportunities for "immigrant and emerging" farmers aligns with the organization's goal to create a *neighborhood*-specific gathering place.

The market manager indicated that having a vendor pool that reflects the demographics of the neighborhood creates a degree of comfort for market shoppers that is potentially unavailable at other markets:

[B]y maintaining a diversity of cultures and languages among our vendors, we hope to make the market accessible to customers who might otherwise not feel comfortable shopping at the market. For example, we have quite a few regular customers who speak Russian as their primary language who shop primarily from our Russian vendors. It has taken a few years to build this repeating customers [*sic*] base.

Of particular note in this description is that the market manager acknowledges the extent to which Lents has had difficulty in fostering the sense of community that she now feels characterizes the market. Nonetheless, she suggests that by providing opportunities for non-English-speaking shoppers in particular to connect with vendors who speak the same language, the organization has slowly built an inclusive atmosphere for a range of market attendees.

These comments regarding market diversity differ dramatically from those that some people in the PFM made about the organization's vendor pool. The PFM founder suggested that increased vendor diversity would be a high selling point for the organization, presenting such diversity as a near-commodity:

People [in Portland], especially the people who come to the farmers market or who live close in the city, just love ethnic diversity. You know, if you

could buy a carrot from a farmer who's Hispanic or African-American or Asian versus who's white, you know basically most customers are going to choose to buy it from the person who's from a minority group. Plus, and then, if they're actually selling something that's a little bit special or specific to their ethnicity, because it's used in cooking from their native country, I just think it's like—people love that stuff.

This explanation implicitly labels “most customers” at PFM markets as white—indeed, most of them are—and suggests that white customers “just love ethnic diversity” as if it were itself a product available at the market. Interestingly, all five of the respondents at the Lents market who cited vendor diversity as an appealing aspect of the market were white (Table 4.6), noting that the market was more successful in reflecting the neighborhood's demographics than other Portland markets. There was only one person of color among my customer survey respondents at either PFM location that mentioned vendor diversity as a motive for market attendance. An African-American banker in his mid-30s, he explained that he explicitly sought out Food Works in order to support that organization's goals.

The tokenism in the above quotation highlights one of the potential risks in interrogating the motives for which the PFM might aim to recruit vendors of color, as it suggests that the fetishization of diversity might be a distinctly white phenomenon. One vendor suggested that such attempts stem from a desire to project a positive image of the organization so that “the market might be able to go out and say, ‘We have a ten-percent quota of non-white vendors.’” The comments from the Lents market manager and the PSU shopper regarding vendor diversity suggest that increasing the representation of vendors of color or immigrant vendors at markets can be personally meaningful to shoppers who might otherwise feel uncomfortable at predominantly white markets. The fact that only white shoppers at Lents *explicitly* cited vendor diversity as one of their reasons for participation suggests that an underlying fetishization of such diversity might be evident among whites more generally. Nonetheless, these respondents explained their reasoning in terms of particular community and neighborhood dynamics, not as though “diversity” in itself was a commodity. I discuss these patterns in more detail later in this chapter.

Overall, the examples in this section illustrate the extent to which the spatial separation between farms and farmers markets creates racialized boundaries and normalizes the assumption that white labor is primarily responsible for producing the foods sold at markets. While the difficulty of recruiting farmers of color that multiple PFM staff noted is evident in the low representation of people of color in Oregon's agricultural sector, limiting the focus to farmers masks the importance of on-farm versus at-market labor. The PFM vendors cited in this section outlined the contours of two distinct labor pools, one for farms and one for markets. Both explained the maintenance of these two groups in cultural and structural terms, suggesting that the potential barriers that prevent farmworkers from effectively staffing farmers markets are easily circumvented by hiring white urban dwellers. This practice consolidates the notion that the white farmer and, conceivably, the white farm family (Allen 2004) are the principal harbingers of sustainable foods to farmers markets. I suggest that

farmers market organizations like the PFM are implicated in this process by providing the context in which market vendors and consumers interact, thereby exposing farmers to a predominantly white urban labor pool while simultaneously providing opportunities for white urban dwellers to locate market jobs. While the PFM does not formally shape the process through which vendors hire at-market labor, the presence of informal mechanisms that link these two constituencies occurs because the organization itself brokers their interactions. I add the discussion of the Lents location to highlight how that market's explicit aim to promote vendor diversity at its markets provides a different interactive context for market participants that at least partially displaces whiteness from the center of just sustainability.

4.3 Homophily and Word-of-Mouth Advertising

One way in which organizations can be complicit in perpetuating color-blind racism is by relying on recruitment through already existing (and whitened) internal channels, which harbor homophilic tendencies (McPherson et al 2001). Homophily refers to the propensity for people with similar social characteristics to associate with one another more frequently than people with dissimilar characteristics, and it is an important concept in studies of network formation (McPherson et al 2001). There are two primary categories of homophily: status homophily, which describes similarity in terms of common sociodemographic markers and perceived status; and value homophily, which conceptualizes similarity based on shared values, beliefs, and ideologies. Studies of racial and ethnic homophily (a form of status homophily) within social networks indicate that white people tend “to have much more racially homogeneous networks than any other racial or ethnic group” (McPherson et al 2001: 420; see also Marsden 1987). Furthermore, people often associate with others whom they perceive to hold similar opinions and attitudes. This implies that racially homogeneous social networks, particularly among white people, are in part built upon a common ideological repertoire. I suggest that both status and value homophily structure consumer outreach in the PFM because the organization relies heavily on informal network-based mechanisms, such as word-of-mouth advertising, to attract new shoppers.

Word-of-mouth advertising has arguably been the most critical aspect of promotion since the organization's early years at Albers Mill, with the exception of an article in *The Oregonian* highlighting the market's opening. The PFM founder notes,

[There was] a short segment [in *The Oregonian*] on the Portland Farmers Market opening the next day...We did a survey of customers, about “How'd you hear about the market?” and three-quarters of them heard about it from that column, so it was huge... I also remember telling all my friends, you know, and we didn't have any mailings or anything... I don't remember if we put fliers up anywhere. Yeah I don't remember, like where would we have put the fliers? I don't know...Of course word-of-mouth is huge.

One market staff member noted that at this point, the PSU location in particular

is so popular that the PFM no longer needs “to promote that market anymore to bring traffic there.” I suggest that this degree of success, as well as the prevalence of word-of-mouth advertising from organization’s incipient years, leads the PFM to continue to rely heavily on such advertising, despite an awareness that this strategy corresponds with homophily.

The reliance on word-of-mouth advertising to recruit new shoppers is one of the most important ways in which the PFM might indirectly facilitate the articulation of whiteness at its markets. In this way, it depends on abstract market mechanisms to provide its consumer base, and these mechanisms are not racially neutral. The PFM’s education and outreach director implicitly acknowledged this notion in discussing the pros and cons of word-of-mouth advertising:

Word-of-mouth I think is by far the most effective way to reach people. Which again has its pluses and minuses, because if it’s word-of-mouth then your audience is finite...it can keep growing but it may not grow as quickly as you want it to, and it may not diversify in the way that you want it to...I think that’s common to a lot of farmers markets, not just PFM, that we’re only reaching a small segment of the population and we want to broaden that as much as possible. So that takes something beyond word-of-mouth, because chances are if you’re passing the word, you’re passing it to someone who lives and looks like you, and probably lives in your sphere versus in a different world.

The above quotation highlights the extent to which relying on informal communication networks to promote market attendance creates homophily within market contexts. The normalization of whiteness rests in part on the maintenance of fundamentally “white lives” (Bonilla-Silva 2003), and thus the predominantly white clientele at PFM markets is likely to pass information to people who live and look like them. This process further consolidates the white image that characterizes those markets precisely because the organization relies on this indirect mechanism of outreach.

For promotion for the King market, the PFM collaborated with other neighborhood organizations to build a consumer base. The market manager notes that in order to draw families to the King location, “the NECN and Foodshare Fund Northeast [now FreshExchange] made stock cards and fliers and just passed them out. The school’s right there so they had a big access, so every kid one time went home with a card.” He adds that those organizations also “did fliering all up and down Alberta, the co-op, just everywhere” to reach a broader swathe of the neighborhood. Interestingly, he noted that the PFM had little oversight over how the NECN and FreshExchange conducted outreach, but he nonetheless attests to the efficacy of these strategies.

Importantly, King’s market manager stressed that word-of-mouth advertising is ultimately more effective than other kinds of outreach because it relies on trust networks between potential market-goers. This explanation overlaps with a *laissez-faire* perspective that suggests that the PFM itself *should* rely on informal mechanisms rather than conduct targeted outreach, particularly at King:

[J]ust making the market open and welcome is the best thing that I think

we can do to get people to come to the market, and especially when you're such a small population in a neighborhood where something comes in that's so foreign...[People are] going to trust their friends, and that's really great, because then they come and you can bridge that gap and you can talk with them and that's how I've cultivated relationships with people in the neighborhood. Just talking with them, not talking at them, not going after them and being like, "Hey you need help, here take this." Nobody wants to feel that.

Again, King's market manager advocates for a hands-off approach to outreach in order to avoid proselytizing to untapped consumer bases. This hands-off approach, however, might limit the extent to which the PFM is able to reach a diverse constituency.

The PFM's senior market coordinator highlighted that King's FreshExchange matching program has largely contributed to the success of that market, due in large part to word-of-mouth advertising:

It was definitely something that the community was able to talk about, where it was, "Check it out. There's this match over at the King Market (*What's the King Market?*). Oh it's the new farmers market down the street." The EBT users also told their friends, used their networks to bring that together. When the match went up it was the same thing—we had brand new customers. Again, how do we get new customers to the market? That was definitely one way to do it. That's significantly different than just having a gigantic billboard on I-5. It's more community-based and more word-of-mouth, less flashy, more about getting food to people, essentially.

The above quotation highlights the ways in which informal communication mechanisms overlap with the organization's more formal efforts to conduct outreach to low-income shoppers. The presence of the SNAP matching program provides a tangible incentive for shoppers at King who use food stamps to tell others who might not be aware of the program to attend the market. This process mitigates the extent to which the "elite" image of the PFM's markets bars low-income shoppers from attending. I suggest that the PFM's lack of direct engagement with racial barriers, in contrast to class barriers, does not account for the complex ways in which race is coded in the market, and informal communication networks implicitly allow such barriers to endure.

I contend that this discrepancy stems from the fact that promoting programs geared toward socioeconomic inequity, such as SNAP matching, provides a clear benefit to farmers. At no cost to the organization, the PFM is able to ensure that food stamp recipients spend more of their food dollars at farmers markets, thereby boosting farmers' profits. Several market staff highlighted FreshExchange as a principal factor contributing to the King market's success, and that market enjoys a reliable clientele. Because of this relatively high degree of financial success and strong consumer base, I suggest that the PFM perhaps has a disincentive to use its resources to conduct outreach specifically to communities of color in the King neighborhood.

I briefly draw attention to one piece of evidence to support this claim. Throughout the course of my interviews, several PFM staff talked about the Northwest market as the organization's least successful location. They attributed that market's lower numbers to the fact that it has moved locations several times in the past three years, as well as to the type of clientele of the area, many of whom are low-income seniors. In addition to conducting outreach to WIC and SNAP recipients, the PFM has developed an on-site senior bingo program in order to draw seniors to participate at that market. The current executive director explained that this provides an opportunity for customers to share information with one another about how to cook different foods available at the market, bolstering the sense of community there. I argue that these concerted efforts to create population-specific outreach tools stem in part from the fact that the Northwest has the lowest profit margins than any of the other PFM markets. From a business-perspective, investing resources in community outreach is useful insofar as it results in higher economic returns for farmers. Because King's sales are not low, the PFM lacks the financial incentive to conduct more targeted outreach in that area to dismantle implicit racial barriers to the market which are not necessarily a "problem" from an economic perspective.

Ultimately, I contend that the PFM's tendency to rely on word-of-mouth advertising reinforces a predominantly white clientele at both the PSU and King markets through biased abstract market dynamics. In a neighborhood like PSU, the fact that such dynamics result in a predominantly white consumer base is not surprising given that area's demographic composition. The overrepresentation of white shoppers at King in light of that neighborhood's racial make-up, however, implies that market dynamics themselves are not sufficient to create a demographically representative clientele. I suggest that the racial similarity between the two locations occurs because the PSU market's implicit whiteness becomes embedded into the PFM as an organization as a whole, due to that market's prominence. From an institutional perspective, the prevailing color-blind logic that market dynamics are devoid of racial bias further reinforces that whiteness. Consequently, the PFM implicitly privileges the experiences of white shoppers, even in settings such as the King neighborhood that have a relatively large population of people of color.

4.4 Whiteness and the Ethic of Consumption

Several market staff underscored the importance of face-to-face interactions between vendors and consumers in establishing a loyal market clientele and thus a steady economic return to farmers. In the preceding sections, I argued that this face-to-face interaction has racialized implications regarding consumers' expectations of who grows their food, and potentially creates an exclusive interactive atmosphere for people of color on both sides of the market booth. Building upon the notion of value homophily, I add that the normalized whiteness embedded in the PFM overlaps with a universalized ethic of consumption based on supporting local farmers and building community. This overlap paints the "typical" (read: white) market consumer as someone who is both well-informed and ideologically motivated to shop at farmers

markets. Such an image suggests that non-participants are not as ethical as people who do participate, and this carries negative racialized implications for people of color given their underrepresentation at PFM markets.

PFM staff attributed a heightened sense of community engagement and connectedness to the face-to-face interactions at the organization's markets. The PFM's founder highlighted that by having both the central PSU and satellite neighborhood markets, the organization creates two kinds of community gathering spaces that serve related but distinct purposes:

We wanted to be like, *the* Portland Farmers Market. We thought Portland should have a place where everybody could come gather. But there also should be a farmers market in almost every neighborhood in the city...because one of the great things about markets is you can go and see your neighbors there. That's not what you do at the Portland Farmers Market. You go see your friends from all over the city.

Other staff echoed the sentiment that the PFM fosters the creation of multiple spaces in which community members can connect with both local farmers and other Portland residents. Referring to the interactions between consumers and vendors that transpire in these spaces, the PFM's executive director explained that the organization seeks to create "that 'my market' feel" where people have "my tomato girl' or whatever [*sic*] it is that they make that personal connection with" at markets. This subtle proprietary tone suggests that the PFM sees itself as partially responsible for branding and selling vendors as much as local foods.

The current market coordinator added that farmers markets in general offer the opportunity for like-minded shoppers to connect to one another. He alluded to an ethic of local consumption that promotes market participation and the concomitant formation of community gathering spaces:

People come in to farmers markets and the conversation changes to, "It is important that I'm buying this way, or that I'm doing this thing, or that I'm making this choice," and they share that with one another. There's a statistic that you're 900 times more likely to engage in a conversation with a stranger at a farmers market than you ever will at a grocery store. So, that exchange that's happening is something that I see as nothing but positive for the community itself.

The above quotation characterizes individuals' shopping patterns at farmers markets as hallmarks of ethical consumption. While not all individuals have the same options available to them, those that choose to shop at farmers markets implicitly do so in order to make the "right" choice. By participating in farmers markets, individuals are easily able to relate to one another based on perceived shared ideologies (McPherson et al 2001). Importantly, the speaker suggests that the *space* of interaction matters—the markets themselves foster communication between individuals in a way that grocery stores do not (or cannot). In this sense, the PFM provides the spatial context in which

the interactions between consumers occurs in order to promote overall community growth.

Participants in alternative food institutions often refer to notions of universalism to add potency to the ideology of local consumption (Guthman 2008). For example, the education and outreach director alluded to her perception of the widespread appeal of farmers markets:

[S]ometimes I think this is the easiest job in the world. Only because, who could possibly be against the message of farmers markets and local food? This is one of the most accessible messages to receive, that we want to keep this region feeding itself.

This notion of universalism creates an “if only they knew” mentality (Guthman 2008)—that is, participants in farmers markets suggest that if non-participants were simply more informed of the “good” that markets do, they would almost always opt to start attending those markets. As King’s market manager explained in regard to recruitment efforts, “The only thing you can do is make it known to the shoppers. You can’t force people to come. You can put out more information, and if they look at it, they look at it and they want to come.” Thus, he argues, “just making [markets] more accessible [through] more promotion” is the key to draw people to shop. This explanation suggests a direct relationship between increased awareness and increased participation, reinforcing the universal nature of the participatory ideology outlined above.

Embedding a particularly ethical component to market participation casts non-participants as implicitly unethical, regardless of the reasons for which they do not attend markets. The PFM’s education and outreach director further elaborated on this ethos. Asked to explain her perspectives on why people do or do not attend markets, she offered the following explanation for participation:

I think that people shop at markets to meet the face behind the food...It’s the freshest, most nutritious food you can buy and I think farmers market shoppers recognize that it’s a real great value for the product. And I think the typical market shopper is really invested in local community in the sense of really trying to do the right thing in terms of what makes sense for the health of their community and their family and their individual lives, and I think shopping at markets does that in a very different way than shopping at a big box store. And people are interested in keeping their money close to home...[L]ocal agriculture creates local jobs and has a pretty intense multiplier effect, and I think at least our dedicated shoppers get that in a way that a lot of people who aren’t shopping at markets may not understand or appreciate.

She links market participation to individuals’ ideology of localism and doing “the right thing,” adding that those who do not shop at markets “may not understand or appreciate” that kind of ideology. She lists a wider range of examples that could lead to non-participation in markets: convenience, transportation, routine, a lack of

awareness, and “the perception that it’s for rich white people even though it’s not.” Importantly, she admits that while she does not believe that the PFM’s markets are just for rich white people, that perception nonetheless “probably keeps people away.” Ultimately, the ideological distinction that the above quotation makes between participants and non-participants negates the possibility that people might in fact support the aim to bolster their local economies, but nonetheless do not shop at markets because of financial, symbolic, or geographic constraints. Such a logic implies that even though PFM staff openly acknowledge potential constraints, merely subscribing to an ethic of local consumption should encourage participation regardless of these barriers.

King’s market manager indicated that “sometimes you don’t even get to that point [of inciting market participation]...because people come in and just scoff at the price and walk out,” noting that he “can understand” such a reaction. While he acknowledged certain socioeconomic barriers to markets, he nonetheless added that if customers understood that the high prices at farmers markets correspond to higher returns for farmers, then they would be willing to pay such prices. Interestingly, almost all of the customers I surveyed at both PFM markets indicated that prices at those markets were higher than at grocery stores. In spite of this, many also noted that paying more was “worth it” because of the high quality of the products they purchased and the sense that they were, in fact, “doing the right thing.” These comments effectively link ethical consumption with affluence, diminishing the significance of real socioeconomic barriers to markets by casting non-participation as unethical.

Regarding race, Guthman argues that white people in alternative market institutions explain non-participation from people of color by indicating “a lack of knowledge or the ‘right’ values” (2008: 393) rather than focusing on structural or symbolic barriers. In regard to symbolic racial barriers, a study of California farmers markets underscores the ways in which a consumer ethic predicated on “supporting the local farmer” relies on a particularly “white farm imaginary” that “romanticizes and universalizes an agrarian narrative specific to whites while masking the contributions and struggles of people of color in food production” (Alkon and McCullen 2010: 945) (as outlined in the previous section). This ethic potentially “has a chilling effect on people of color” and thus “works as an exclusionary practice [and] also colors the character of food politics more broadly” (Guthman 2008: 388) in alternative food institutions. When conceptualized in ethical terms, market participation is attributed *solely* to the abstract liberal notion of choice, which again fails to account for other possible explanations for (non-)participation. This, in conjunction with the dismissal of the perception of the markets as exclusively for “rich, white people” mentioned above, suggests that the PFM and the actors within it hold ambivalent perspectives regarding the ways in which race and class informally affect market participation by people of color and low-income people.

Data from my site surveys provide a nuanced picture of why consumers choose to shop at farmers markets, adding a layer of conceptual complexity to the notion of ethical consumption. Table 4.5 lists the reasons survey respondents gave for market participation at each site location. I coded each response category based on the data that arose through the survey process. I gave each response one tally if it was

mentioned at any point during the survey. For more complete information about my survey protocols, see Appendix A.

Table 4.5: Reasons for participation at each market site location.

PSU	N per location ^a		Response
	King	Lents	
20	15	12	To get fresh produce
19	14	5	Variety of available items
10	11	8	Likes market atmosphere (location, music, etc.)
11	5	12	To connect face-to-face with farmers; to be a part of a community
7	2	8	To support the local economy; because it “feels like the right thing to do”
6	7	5	Size of market; not too overwhelming
6	11	13	Convenience; market is near-by
2	2	5	SNAP tokens/matching programs
2	0	5	Diversity of vendors and/or clientele

^aThere was no limit to the number of responses a respondent could give. A response was given one tally if either one or both partners of a couple indicated it as a reason for participation. N=the number of times each reason was mentioned, with 20 being the highest possible frequency. The total numbers of individuals surveyed at each market were 26 at PSU, 21 at King, and 24 at Lents.

At both PFM market locations, shoppers most often cited the desire to buy high-quality fresh produce (N=20 at PSU; N=15 at King) and the variety of available products (N=19 at PSU; N=14 at King) as the principal draws to the markets. In fact, every single survey respondent at PSU indicated in some way that the market’s produce was what compelled him/her to shop at the market. This is relatively unsurprising, given PFM’s primary focus on providing high-quality produce to its shoppers. Produce was also one of the top priorities for Lents shoppers (N=12), though in contrast to PSU, the market’s location was listed the most frequent reason for participation (N=13). Convenience was also a factor for King shoppers (N=11), while it was a relatively uncommon response for shoppers at PSU (N=6).

Interestingly, shoppers at Lents cited the desire to connect with farmers face-to-face as a reason to attend the market more often than either PSU or King shoppers (N=12, N=4, and N=8 respectively). Previously, I explored the extent to which the inclusion of immigrant farmers and/or farmers of color at the Lents market represents the desire to reflect the neighborhood demographics. Responses from my site surveys at Lents indicate that shoppers at that market are drawn to participate because of that market’s community atmosphere. Cross tabulations (Table 4.6) indicate that the differences between response rates at each site location are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), though given the lack of random sampling, I draw preliminary rather than definitive explanations for these results. Nonetheless, I suggest that Lents shoppers appear to identify a greater sense of community engagement than did shoppers at either PFM location.

In the previous section, I discussed the notion that the desire to connect face-

Table 4.6: Cross tabulations of market location by the response frequency for the desire to connect with farmers, including row and column percentages (Pearson χ^2 (2)=6.667, $p=0.036$). Responses were given one tally if a respondent cited the desire to connect face-to-face to farmers or participate in a community environment as a reason for market attendance.

Market	Desire to connect		Total
	Yes	No	
Lents	12	8	20
	60.00	40.00	100.00
	50.00	22.22	33.33
King	4	16	20
	20.00	80.00	100.00
	16.67	44.44	33.33
PSU	8	12	20
	40.00	60.00	100.00
	33.33	33.33	33.33
Total	24	36	60
	40.00	60.00	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 4.7: Reasons for participation at each market site location by respondent's race. Because of the small sample sizes and for visual clarity, responses from people of color (P.o.C.) were grouped together.

PSU		King		Lents		Response
White	P.o.C.	White	P.o.C.	White	P.o.C.	
17	9	13	3	7	8	To get fresh produce
16	9	13	2	3	4	Variety of available items
13	1	7	4	9	3	Likes market atmosphere (location, music, etc.)
10	1	4	0	11	5	To connect face-to-face with farmers; to be a part of a community
7	3	2	0	8	3	To support the local economy; because it "feels like the right thing to do"
5	3	4	2	6	1	Size of market; not too overwhelming
5	3	9	2	10	7	Convenience; market is near-by
1	1	2	0	4	2	SNAP tokens/matching programs
1	1	0	0	5	0	Diversity of vendors and/or clientele

^aThere was no limit to the number of responses a respondent could give. Because of the pattern of agreement between couples, a response was given one tally per person if either individual in a couple indicated it as a reason for participation. N=the number of times each reason was mentioned. The total numbers of white individuals surveyed at each market were 17 at PSU, 17 at King, and 14 at Lents. The total numbers of people of color at each market were 9 at PSU, 4 at King, and 10 at Lents.

to-face with farmers rests on a whitened local ideology based on the image of the white yeoman farmer as the face of just sustainability. Table 4.7 lists the reasons white respondents and respondents of color gave for market participation at each site. Because of the small sample number of people of color surveyed at each location (N=9 at PSU, N=4 at King, N=10 at Lents), I group participants of color together in order to draw a clearer contrast between their responses and those from white participants. Again, both white respondents and respondents of color frequently cited fresh produce as a reason for shopping at the markets. Convenience was also a primary factor for respondents from all participants at the King and Lents markets, regardless of race. In contrast, the survey data indicate that white participants are more likely to express the desire to connect with farmers than people of color, especially at both PFM markets.¹⁰ Again, the overrepresentation of whites in my overall sample potentially skews this data. Nonetheless, I offer preliminary explanations in support of the claim that whites are more likely to indicate an ethic of local consumption as a primary factor in market participation.

Ten out of a possible seventeen white respondents at PSU indicated the desire to connect face-to-face with farmers as a reason to participate, while only one person of color out of nine surveyed cited this response. At King, four out of seventeen white participants mentioned this response, while none of the people of color with whom I spoke did. Eleven out of the 14 white respondents and five out of the ten respondents of color at Lents discussed their participation in the market in terms of the desire to connect to farmers. Results from both PFM markets suggest that white shoppers identify more strongly with this desire than do shoppers of color, while the results from Lents are more ambiguous. I suggest that the Lents market provides a unique case to interrogate the connection between whiteness and a notion of ethical consumption based on establishing face-to-face connections with farmers. While my overall data suggest that there is indeed a correlation between these two phenomena, the extent to which Lents customers express such an ethos is stronger than at either of the PFM markets regardless of race. I contend that Lents helps deconstruct the link between whiteness and the ethic of local consumption by purposively recruiting vendors that reflect its neighborhood's demographics, a process which at least partially displaces the notion that white labor is chiefly responsible for the production of market goods.

I also argue that the community-centered ethos is less developed at the PFM markets because most respondents' participation is product-driven. With the exception of convenience and atmosphere at the King market, community-based explanations for market attendance pale in comparison to product-based explanations at both PFM markets. Given the PFM's focus on providing high-quality produce to its shoppers, the frequency with which shoppers cite produce as the primary reason to shop at markets is unsurprising (perhaps more unexpected is the extent to which product mix surpasses all other possible responses regarding market attendance). Moreover, because the organization's primary goal is to support farmers financially,

¹⁰Cross-tabulations, which are not included here, approach statistical significance ($p=0.06$), but a larger random sample is necessary to draw stronger quantitative results for the link between whiteness and the desire to meet the "face behind the food."

this implies a more economically-oriented relationship between farms and consumers, as opposed to a community-oriented relationship. Consequently, market-goers at the King and PSU markets are primarily *consumers*, over and above their potential role as participants in a local community.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored how the PFM's goal to create community gathering spaces affects how the organization provides a context for interactions between predominantly white market vendors and consumers, and in so doing indirectly facilitates the articulation of racial ideologies. I discussed the sense of universal appeal attached to farmers markets, which paradoxically lies in contrast to market staff's acknowledgment that "it's notoriously difficult to get shoppers that don't already shop at farmers markets" (senior market coordinator) to attend. I suggest that part of the difficulty of attracting new shoppers stems from the tension between the notion that farmers markets are universally accessible and the contradictory belief that market shoppers share an ideology not held by non-participants. By arguing that shopping at farmers markets is "one of the easiest messages to receive," yet also that non-participants "may not understand or appreciate" that message, the PFM implicitly upholds the notion that participation at its markets must be ideologically-motivated. That this notion overlaps with the predominance of an affluent, white clientele suggests that non-participants, particularly people of color and low-income people, are unethical or at least ill-informed. Moreover, the discrepancy between PFM staff's attribution of market participation to the desire to connect to local farmers and market participants' actual survey responses suggests that the organization itself is primarily responsible for upholding a façade of ethical consumption. This might diminish the relevance of symbolic and structural barriers to market participation and reinforce the connection between whiteness, affluence, and ethical, local eating.

Chapter 5

The Portland Farmers Market's Competing Logics

In order to promote the Portland Farmers Market's vision to nourish "the nation's most prosperous, healthy and sustainable food system" ("Strategic Plan" 2012: 1), the organization includes two broad aims under its mission statement. PFM markets serve (1) to "contribute to the success of local food growers and producers" by providing a venue for them to connect directly with consumers in their local areas; and (2) to "create vibrant community gatherings" in which residents from across Portland come together to make connections to one another through a shared commitment to supporting local economies ("Strategic Plan" 2012: 1). I discussed the racial implications of the second goal in the previous chapter by focusing on some of the challenges regarding vendor recruitment that the PFM faces, as well as the ways in which the market context reinforces beliefs about race and class among organizational actors. I shift the focus to discuss how the primacy of the first goal shapes the ways in which the PFM's institutional logics sustain and reify such beliefs. Taking into account the overlap between the farmer-centric and community-centric threads of the PFM's mission, I explore how these threads inform the ways in which the organization lays out specific goals to bolster farmer revenues, to increase local access to fresh produce, and to participate actively in community development. I will argue that the PFM staff and board members approach the organization more "like a business" than a non-profit, outlining an institutional logic that emphasizes the importance of the bottom line. While this logic is dominant in the PFM, there exists a subordinate ideological logic geared to promote social justice goals as well. As a result of the tensions between these logics, the PFM's principal focus on promoting farmers' economic security privileges the barriers that predominantly white farmers face over and above the potential barriers that customers of color and low-income customers face in accessing the market. Related to this, I will also outline how participants in the market often use class as a proxy for race in discussing inequity, and that this discussion coalesces with broader institutional practices that aim to promote access to low-income shoppers without necessarily directly addressing race as an overlapping factor with income inequality.

I suggest that the market's own practices interact with other exogenous geo-

graphic, structural, and social phenomena to create markets in which the overwhelming majority of participants are white and middle-class, even where such demographics are not expected, as in the King market. Ultimately, the PFM as well as the actors embedded within it reflect a degree of ambivalence regarding racial and class-based barriers to its farmers markets, particularly in regard to what the organization can or should do to address those barriers. While I acknowledge the complexity of this issue, I aim to uncover the ways in which a subtle and covert reinforcement of white privilege affects the PFM's markets and organizational practices in order to draw the focus back to how the organization itself might meaningfully address inequity in the future.

5.1 Refashioning Exchange Economies: Connecting Farmers and Consumers

Since its inception, the Portland Farmers Market has aimed to fill a gap in the city's economy by creating a venue for farmers in Oregon and Washington to sell locally-produced goods to consumers in the area (Mosbaek 1992). As mentioned previously, fostering this direct exchange relationship is seen as a boon to both parties, as farmers are able to keep a higher percentage of their revenues than they would selling wholesale, and consumers have access to fresh, high-quality produce at the height of its growing season. While establishing this economic *relationship* is critical to sustain the markets, several PFM staff underscored that farmers' needs come first and foremost. As the senior market coordinator emphasized,

Our first goal and the reason we exist is so our farmers and producers are successful. Without them, we have nothing. They are our first customer, they are our product that we have to sell. That's a terrible analogy, but that's sort of the truth of the matter.

While the PFM exists beyond merely representing a collection of small business owners, the above quotation highlights that vendors form the backbone of the organization's operations. Interestingly, although the market coordinator admits that commodifying the farmers themselves is a "terrible analogy," this characterization points to the PFM's role in branding and selling the ideal white farmer, described in the previous chapter, as part and parcel of branding and selling local produce.

In the previous chapter, I discussed how the spatial separation of farmworkers of color from PFM markets contributes to the racial typing of the ideal market vendor. Here, I address another aspect of the creation of this ideal type, namely the PFM's focus on the constraints that market vendors face as a consequence of their profession. Both PFM staff and vendors discussed the myriad risks of farming in general, as well as the difficulties inherent in leading "a market life." This talk underscored the severity of problems such as little or no access to health insurance, lengthy commutes, and lack of government support for small farmers, and often coalesced with implicit characterizations of farmers as "good" for bearing the brunt of such burdens. The

interpretation of these constraints was markedly different than similar explanations for the potential constraints that consumers face, particularly low-income shoppers and shoppers of color. Although some of my interviewees acknowledged structural barriers that limit consumer participation in markets, they were more apt to suggest that individual consumers could nonetheless overcome such barriers simply by choosing to do so. In contrast, constraints on farmers were viewed as the product of institutional forces, and individual farmers were not expected to overcome such obstacles based on personal choice or effort. Based on the notion of abstract liberalism, which cites choice as a mechanism for surpassing structural barriers (Bonilla-Silva 2003), I suggest that this discrepancy takes on racialized implications because the expectations surrounding individual choice are different for predominantly white farmers and shoppers of color.

Serving Farmers

PFM vendors and staff discussed low income as one of the primary foundations for organization's mission to support farmers. As the former market coordinator noted,

[W]hen we started with the market, [farmers] were definitely an underserved and underclass group of people. Farming was not a way to...earn a living really...as far as farm direct sales, so we were trying to support the farmers that wanted to grow product in a sustainable manner and bring it to market, versus multi-thousand acre farms that are more of a commodity crop acre farm.

Providing a stable income for farmers who could not "earn a living" in the early years of the market overlaps with the goal of promoting sustainable agricultural production. Supporting such farmers is a means through which the PFM can "[keep] farmland in farming," as the current market coordinator argues. By linking monetary gains for farmers with the prevention of an onslaught of development, the PFM attaches an ethic of conservationism to the organization's primary financial goal. Again, this connection contributes to the ideological potency of the PFM's mission because supporting "an underserved and underclass group of people" also implies the preservation of sustainable, productive agricultural land. Similarly, Lents' explicit aim to serve immigrant and emerging farmers demonstrates the parity between the two market organizations' goals.

Farmers themselves also articulated that their primary reason for participating in markets was to earn a profit. Other factors, such as the desire to form a community of fellow growers and interested shoppers, were also considered, but rarely superseded financial motivations. One PFM vendor explained his participation at PSU, as well as at another non-PFM market in Beaverton:

Beaverton and Portland are the two largest markets in the area. They're the ones that have high sales, most customers—they're both on Saturday when most customers come to the market...There's a lot of repeat customers...many diehards that are going to be there every day rain or shine or snow.

He points to the high sales figures at the markets as their primary draw, adding that both locations also boast a “diehard” clientele. Focusing on PSU, this assertion underscores that that market fosters a degree of consumer commitment that ultimately boosts farmers’ revenues. In this case, the implicit community atmosphere of the PSU market is a relevant factor for participation insofar as it serves farmers’ financial imperatives.

Another PFM vendor explained that the community atmosphere at farmers markets in general provides substantial benefits to farmers by facilitating information flows between vendors and consumers. While the vendor celebrates this relationship, he admitted that, realistically, market participation often comes down to the bottom line:

[I]f I compare the farmers markets to other ways of marketing, like wholesale for instance, I find that, personally, there’s a pretty big benefit in meeting the people who are eating our produce because we get a lot of strokes from those people...for the most part we get a lot of positive affirmation from people and a real strong sense of support. We really appreciate that. We had that strong sense of support when we were doing [our hometown] market but it’s just not enough to overcome the poor financial picture.

The decision to leave his hometown market was difficult for this vendor, who felt a strong connection to serving the clientele in his community. As another PFM vendor summarized, in a supportive-but-not-lucrative market, “It would be hard to leave, but it would be—it would not be impossible to leave.” These vendors explain that while community engagement is both an incentive to participate in farmers markets as well as a potential source of non-monetary resources, a strong community atmosphere cannot trump “the anticipation of making a profit” (PFM vendor) as the principal motivating factor to sell at a market. This overlaps with findings in the previous chapter that suggest that PFM shoppers’ motivation to participate in markets is primarily product-driven, and underlies the PFM’s broader focus on economic goals.

At Lents, the tension between a strong community atmosphere and low economic returns also arose, albeit expressed in slightly different terms.. After making a list of his fellow market participants, one vendor, a farming intern, expressed his belief that there was not “a single person [at Lents] who’s actually there because they want to make money and because they think it’s a good deal.” He explained that being an intern afforded him more financial freedom to sell at a less-than-successful market because he earned a steady salary from the farm owner. He viewed Lents as an opportunity to “come see the city on Sundays [and]...to be able to use the car for the day afterwards.” As such, he emphasized that despite the fact that Lents was not particularly profitable for him and his co-worker, they “really loved” the market’s community, location, and mission. In this scenario, a strong community atmosphere did not eradicate concerns about finances, but was sufficient to sustain participation because the principal operator of the farm had “his land paid off and [did not] have any debts.” This allowed his interns the opportunity to build community relations at a non-lucrative market with relatively little cost. The vendor added,

[I]f it was my farm I wouldn't go there, because I would need to be paying for the farm. I would have bills to pay and it just wouldn't be worth it, as opposed to going to someplace...where I know that I would make a lot of money and I would be able to put that back into my farm.

He noted that even though Lents has a high rate of vendor turnover, vendors there still feel a strong sense of community commitment. These examples illustrate how organizations like the PFM and Lents try to operate markets that sustain both farmer-centric and community-centric goals, with the implicit understanding that the former category is the basic foundation for market success.

5.2 Balancing Constraints: Farmers vs. Consumers

While staff and vendors pointed out that farmers markets can provide considerable benefits to farmers through their exchange relationships with consumers, both groups also underscored the effort that selling at markets entails. This topic was particularly salient in regard to the King market, as that market has received considerable criticism for its date and hours of operation. King takes place from 10:00am to 2:00pm on Sundays, overlapping with church service times for the large Black population in the area. Discussion of this problem revealed several related threads regarding the organization's mission to serve farmers' needs and its role in conducting community outreach.

Even though the PFM acknowledges the criticisms it has received regarding King's hours, several staff members underscored the difficulties the organization faces in attempting to change the time and/or date of the market to accommodate the Black church-going population in the neighborhood. They pointed out that many vendors participate in multiple markets, and because most farmers live well outside the city, any proposed change in market times had to factor in two-way travel time. One PFM staff member explained farmers' difficulty in juggling these constraints:

They're busy, they've been up since four, they're coming to market, they're driving home in the dark, they're getting ready for markets on Monday, Tuesday. It's just that [King] would have been a very difficult market to populate with vendors to begin with had we looked shifting the time a little bit later.

Balancing the needs of both vendors and consumers presents a significant challenge for the organization. Nonetheless, the staff I spoke with were unanimously clear that farmers are the PFM's first priority.

The PFM's executive director also suggested that the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (NECN), the entity that approached the PFM to start the King market, bore the primary responsibility in conducting community outreach. She explains,

[King] is on a Sunday and it is at exactly the time when African-Americans primarily in that community are in church...We didn't know that was

going to be a problem. I'm not sure about what happened in terms of when we did acknowledge that, if NECN was willing to help negotiate a better relationship with the church community. I don't know what the representation was there, if any, but it's still a problem. Having not been involved in any of that, I can look back on it and go, I feel a little cheated. I feel like that was something really important that they didn't help us out with.

The sense of feeling "cheated" underscores the notion that relying on an outside entity to engage in outreach has left the PFM in a difficult position in regard to its ties to the Black community in the area. This frustration indicates that the PFM views the exclusion of the Black church-going population as a significant problem, but also displaces the need to remedy the situation from the organization's purview. The executive director does point to two potential solutions, but deems neither of them feasible:

One option that I clearly have is to...go right into the religious community to contact churches directly and say, 'Hey, we would love to engage your parishioners somehow,' and be really open and authentic about that question. But then I'd have to be willing to accept that answer, and at this moment we are not able to change the date or time of that market. It's just not going to happen, so we haven't asked the question...The other option for us would be to create a whole new model of markets to serve that community, and the church community in particular. The mobile market concept is what it's been called... But I don't have that yet. I don't have that mobile unit to be able to offer.

Her unwillingness to pursue the first option reinforces the logistic difficulty in switching the date and time because doing so would put considerable strain on farmers. The discussion of the second option emphasizes that while another potential solution has been identified, the organization's lack of resources prevents that solution from being realized. Overall, the above quotation highlights the organizational perspective that because of the PFM's focus on serving farmers first and foremost, attempting to make the market more accessible to Black residents in the King neighborhood was not only logistically impossible, but would also dilute the market's principal financial aims. I highlight how the debate surrounding King's market hours reveals the racial undertones of the tension between the PFM's competing institutional logics. This example suggests that the organization's farmer-centric logic supersedes its community-centric logic, thereby privileging the constraints on its predominantly white vendor pool over and above those on low-income shoppers or shoppers of color.

The issue of implementing a date and time change also came up in regard to the Lents market. At the close of the season when I conducted my site research, there were fliers at the information booth indicating that the market would switch from Sunday mornings to Friday evenings for the following season. The market manager alluded to a similar tension as the one outlined for the King market in regard to balancing both vendors' and customers' needs:

The only time these aims have been in tension with each other is when we have discussed making big changes to the market (the day/time for example). Sometimes what's convenient for the customer isn't convenient for the vendor and vice versa. However, that tension serves to keep us on track. It can be hard to find the overlap between what's good for the customer and what's good for the vendor but that's exactly the sweet spot we're looking for.

In contrast to the discussion of market hours at King, the above quotation implies that there is a positive aspect to the tension between the Lents' markets two goals, as it provides the organization with the opportunity to keep itself "on track."

Offering another point of contrast to the characterization of this tension as either a significant problem (PFM executive director) or as a potential area for an organization to develop (Lents market manager), King's market manager suggested the criticism the PFM faced was unnecessarily harsh:

We definitely have heard from all on down the line that having that market on Sunday at those times is...excluding a certain community, which is far from the truth. It's just the time that was chosen, you know...I have regular customers that come through that have lived in that neighborhood their whole life. I have conversations with people who had lived in that neighborhood before but don't live there any longer because of situations that have happened with gentrification up there and being priced out of their homes.

He implies that the specific people to whom he refers, those who "have lived in the neighborhood their whole life," including some who have since moved away, are in fact shoppers of color, despite never explicitly stating whether or not that is the case. Building from this assumption, he refutes the suggestion that the hours of the King market functionally exclude Black residents from participating. He draws attention to the fact that the consumers to whom he refers—and with whom he has a personal relationship—attend the market despite potential barriers, such as displacement through gentrification. By citing these examples, he suggests that individuals always have the option to participate, diminishing the severity of potential constraints. Again, this differs from how market staff discuss constraints on farmers who are not viewed as having the same luxury of choice.

Although the market manager admits that the demographics of King are "about the same as Saturday" at PSU—which is to say, predominantly white—he maintains that the PFM itself is not actively exclusive. He notes,

[W]e want everybody who lives in that immediate area to come to the market. It doesn't matter who, what, when—just come to the market. So that's how we really approached it, to keep that stigma away, because that's something—it's there, but you don't necessarily hear it directly from word of mouth from anyone who actually lives in that area.

The market manager argues that creating an open-door environment is the most effective method to invite shoppers from all racial categories to participate. Although the racialized meanings in the interview discourse are more explicit in discussing King's market hours, this *laissez-faire* attitude of the approaches to both PFM markets suggests an abstract liberal logic—the idea that the organization does not bear the responsibility to conduct outreach specific to communities of color (Bobo 1997; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Guthman 2008). Instead, it relies on abstract market dynamics to draw shoppers of color to the market based on its generically “inviting” atmosphere.

Another PFM staff member attributes the low participation of Black shoppers at PFM's markets to Portland's racial make-up more generally, and also echoes the notion that the PFM seeks to create community gathering spaces that do not cater to any specific demographic group:

[T]he African-American population that does join us at the King market, it is very low. But to me, the percentage of African-Americans in Portland is also very low, it happens to be maybe a tick higher in that neighborhood, but we don't have a lot of anything specific that is marketing to them, because what we [aimed]...to build [is] the best market place so that the community would want to come and participate...[T]here's no easy solution to getting any new shoppers, and if that's specifically African-American people, I think it's more about creating the best marketplace and you know, make it so that it's for everyone.

The comment that the Black population in the King neighborhood is a “tick” higher than it is in Portland overall does not correspond to actual differences in racial demographics (Table 4.1). While the overall Black population in Portland is relatively low at 6.3 percent, the number jumps to 20.1 percent in the King neighborhood—over three times as high as the proportion for Portland overall. As a point of comparison, the number falls to 2.1 percent in the PSU neighborhood, constituting merely a tenth of the proportion at King. Furthermore, approximately 17.1 percent of Portland's overall Black population lives in the King area, whereas only 4.7 percent of Portland's overall white population does. These demographic differences suggest that while the overall Black population in Portland is indeed low, there remains considerable racial residential segregation resulting in significantly higher concentrations of Black residents in certain areas of the city, including the King neighborhood. Given that these differences debunk the notion that the Black population is only slightly higher in King than in Portland or at PSU, the fact that Black shoppers' participation at King is “very low” or “about the same” as at PSU suggests that the market there does not functionally serve everyone.

The notion that the PFM should focus on making markets generally accessible to everyone rather than on conducting outreach to communities of color specifically rests on a notion of color-blindness that might ignore the organization's complicity in upholding racial barriers to the market. That is, by attempting to deemphasize the ways in which racial differences might factor into market participation, market staff normalize and privilege the experiences of those who *do* attend markets, i.e.

white shoppers (Alkon and McCullen 2010; Guthman 2008; Bonilla-Silva 2003). Furthermore, a deemphasis on race masks the ways in which barriers to the market are specifically race-based, as in the case of the King market.

Regardless of whether or not those barriers arose from exogenous factors, such as the NECN's failure in addressing the problems with King's time slot, the PFM not only acknowledges that it does not have the resources to dismantle those barriers, but certain staff imply that it is not within the organization's purview to do so. Many market staff suggest that church-goers have the option of coming to King either before or after services, thereby placing the onus to participate on individuals. One PFM staff member explains,

I think that because we do want to ensure the success of vendors that we have to keep that in mind first, and hope that if the market does go from 10:00-2:00, hope that maybe there's an hour...before church services or an hour after church services where someone could stop in to the market and still make it a part of their day if they had time to do that.

This argument summarizes several of the themes I have addressed in discussing King's market hours. First, the speaker reiterates that the PFM's principal focus is on farmers and their unique constraints, and thus constraints on shoppers are viewed as secondary. While she does acknowledge the barrier the hours create, she attempts to lessen its severity by hoping that there exists the possibility for church-goers to participate in the hour-long window before or after services. The market manager also notes, "from [his] understanding, the church[es] in that area, some go from 9:00 to 1:00, some go from 10:00 to 1:00, 10:00 to 2:00," suggesting that because not all church times perfectly overlap with King's hours, individuals can still choose to stop by the market. This effectively attributes the overall lack of representation of Black shoppers at the market to one of individual choice and downplays the extent to which the PFM as an organization could better attend to increasing participation by the Black community.

King's market manager, who is the only person of color I interviewed from the PFM, drew attention to another explanation of some of the organization's relatively "hands-off" perspective on targeted outreach to communities of color. Highlighting his personal experience working at farmers markets in Manhattan, he argued that such attempts at outreach can also come across as proselytizing or paternalistic:

As for outreach, as much as we can do without putting someone underneath the microscope and in that sense making them feel like, they're *there*, you know? So I think you have to be really careful about that, because I've seen it happen before. And people don't understand. I understand you want to help, but when you say..."We need to help these people"...you're really making someone feel uncomfortable. I've been in that situation before and I've seen it happen living in gentrified neighborhoods in New York...Be respectful of where you're at.

For him, making sure the market is "open and accessible" to everybody is an effective strategy to encourage market participation from shoppers of color, in part because

doing so does not involve the sense of self-righteousness that is potentially implicit in targeted outreach. While this consideration raises important concerns about how the market interfaces with communities of color, this conceptualization leaves the option to participate open to the decisions of the potential constituency, rather than focusing attention on the ways in which the organization itself is responsible for (or able to) reaching out to consumers of color in Portland.

5.3 Portland Farmers Market: Part Business, Part-Non-Profit

While the PFM's ethos centers on a fundamentally economic goal (i.e. promoting farmers' revenues through direct sales to consumers), the organization's non-profit status allows it to retain an ideological component. The PFM's founder underscores the importance of starting the organization as a non-profit, in part because of non-profits' ethical image, stating,

[P]art of the ethos of a non-profit is that you're just doing such good stuff. You're taking out the middle person, you're selling high-quality goods, you're selling fresh produce which is good for your health, you're creating a community gathering place. So making it for-profit, day-to-day, people wouldn't know, but at some point it would be known, and if you start making a lot of money then people aren't going to like you for that, even if you're providing a great market.

The notion that non-profits just do "good stuff" in the community underscores the fact that the PFM incorporates an ideological component to its organizational mission. This ethos provides the PFM both with a sense of purpose and an air of legitimacy in fostering positive economic and community development. Furthermore, the current executive director reiterated that "opportunities [for the PFM] to make money are not as important as sticking with our values," reinforcing the notion that "people aren't going to like" the organization if it prioritizes its own profits above its ideological commitment to promoting *farmers'* profits. Thus, the PFM expresses its focus on farmers' financial security in distinctly ethical terms.

Although the PFM is not a true business in the "for-profit" sense, market staff distinguish it, as a 501(c)6 non-profit, from more charitable 501(c)3 organizations. Indeed, one of the primary differences between the two types of non-profits is that 501(c)6 organizations, such as business leagues and chambers of commerce, exist "for the benefit of the organizations' members" whereas 501(c)3 organizations, such as churches, hospitals, and public charities, exist "for the benefit of the public."¹ Thus, as one staff member explained, while the PFM retains the implicit ethic of being a non-profit, it lies "somewhere in between" a business and a more social-justice-oriented non-profit. Importantly, this orientation appears to have implications for

¹See the National Black Chamber of Commerce's (2011) comparative chart "501(c)3 vs. 501(c)6 Status" for further elaboration for the differences in these kinds of non-profits.

the way in which the organization views overarching issues of community access to market goods. The PFM's education and outreach coordinator conceptualizes the organization as having an "in-between" status that limits the extent to which it can address these types of issues:

[W]e are a 501(c)6 organization, so our mission is really devoted to the sales and success of farmers and food producers...It might be different if our structure were a little bit different, if we were a (c)3 or if we were a program of another kind of socially-minded or less economically-focused organization, but I think that because we do want to ensure the success of vendors that we have to keep that in mind first.

She also adds that while "a lot of markets get started with idealistic motivations," those markets will not be successful if they "aren't thinking through the business end of things." Balancing the market's "idealism around the romanticism of the small farmer," as one former PFM staff member put it, and the need to provide that farmer with tangible economic returns limits the extent to which the PFM can pursue other "idealistic" goals, such as increased access.

The Lents market manager added that because that market falls under the purview of Zenger Farm, a 501(c)3 non-profit, it has access to several benefits through its parent organization. She explains,

Zenger Farm has a lot of connections in the wider community which can work synergistically for getting the word out and cross promoting programs. We also have the ability to be a little more focused in making decisions about the market than a market Board of Directors made up of community members might be able to be. Being a part of Zenger Farm also allows the [Lents market] to apply for grants and funding that would otherwise be unavailable to most other markets due to its non-profit status (most other markets are also non-profits but are classified as 501(c)6 non-profits to which donations are not tax-deductible).

She elaborates on the multiple ways in which the Lents market benefits as an organization from its 501(c)3 non-profit status, alluding to the notion that its "more focused" decision-making might make it better suited to address community-centric aims. The distinctions between organizational structure that both PFM and Lents staff make underscore the ways in which institutional forms and ideologies overlap to guide divergent strategies to address issues of inequity.

I draw attention to the tension implicit in operating the PFM as a business-like non-profit in order to parse out the institutional logics that undergird the organization's goals, focusing on how the ideological and economic aims of the PFM simultaneously create points of divergence and overlap in both organizational mission and practice. Because organizations follow "a probabilistic, rather than deterministic, view of adherence to dominant norms of behavior" (Thornton and Ocasio 2008: 106), the tensions that arise as a result of the PFM's sometimes-competing logics

underscore how diffuse institutional perspectives, such as the importance of the bottom line, and more alternative ideological perspectives, such as supporting the local farmer, can both be embedded in the same organization. Given that several PFM staff members point out that the organization is essentially a business first and foremost, the dominant logic is economically-minded despite the presence of ideological aims.

Being a non-profit implies that the PFM should retain a certain ideological focus, and certainly the organization's commitment to farmers stems directly from its articulated ethos. I suggest that the PFM's ideological component also motivates its attempts to promote education and outreach to low-income shoppers, and to a lesser extent, shoppers of color. While the organization has these goals in its purview, they are often viewed as incompatible with its economically-minded business practices, whereas supporting farmers financially coalesces with such practices. Consequently, this implies that, from an organizational perspective, the PFM will be more effective at conducting outreach to low-income shoppers or shoppers of color if doing so provides a tangible economic benefit to the farmers the organization serves. Below, I explore how the PFM's intersecting logics inform how members of the organization approach goals related to farmer income and racial and class equity.

5.4 Addressing “The Equity Goal”

Many staff in the Portland Farmers Market suggested that there is an inherent tension between supporting farmers and increasing access to the markets, particularly for low-income shoppers and/or shoppers of color. Indeed, some staff members wavered in regard to the extent to which they cited increased access as one of the PFM's principal aims. While the organization's original proposal states that one of “the goal[s] of the Portland Farmers' Market [is] to actively seek out and encourage ethnic diversity in the market” (Mosbaek 1992), this goal is not explicitly stated in more recent iterations of the PFM's mission statement. Reflecting on this shift, the PFM's founder suggested that,

[W]e deal with multicultural disparity, equity issues all the time in public health, and the joke I always say is that the health equity goal is always the last goal. It's always like, we're gonna do all this and this and everyone's got to put this health equity goal in at the bottom...[E]quity actually needs to be integrated into all your goals. It's not a goal in and of itself.

This assertion suggests that while the “equity goal in at the bottom” of the original proposal might have encouraged targeted outreach to vendors or consumers of color, its inclusion might have been more nominal than anything else. As the former market coordinator noted, the organization “did little things” in its early years to address inequity, but doing so “was never an overall organizational goal” despite its being mentioned in the original market proposal. When asked about the PFM's strategies to interface with communities of color as well as low-income shoppers, the

current executive director elaborated on the tension between explicitly and implicitly addressing inequity in the organization’s mission:

Adrien: I spoke to [the founder] about...his initial mission list for the market...and the fifth goal of six goals was to make connections to racial minority groups in Oregon, and when I asked him [to elaborate]...he said, “Well, in the public health community, there’s this understanding that everyone always tacks on the equity issue at the end and the way to actually address it is to embed it in all of your other goals.” So I’m wondering how—because I think that equity is certainly talked about in the market and seems to be something that matters in terms of the Farmers Market Fund [an extension of the FreshExchange program] etcetera—but how do you go about addressing that goal and...embedding it in your more diffuse practices?

ED: [W]e don’t have it as a specific goal. It’s not a stand-alone. It is embedded in several areas, and the most obvious way that we go about ensuring that we invite people with low-income anyway is...by accepting SNAP at all of our markets and marketing that [program].

She further elaborates on programming at the PFM’s Northwest market designed specifically for low-income seniors who shop at that location, as discussed in the previous chapter. Although the initial question addressed the market’s strategies to interface with both communities of color and with low-income shoppers, the response focused exclusively on the latter group. This suggests that while certain practices in the PFM do indeed target the implicit goal of increasing access, such practices often address class barriers without explicitly engaging in a discussion of how such barriers might in fact be racialized as well.

The PFM has made a handful of (unsuccessful) attempts to encourage low-income shoppers and shoppers of color to attend its markets through collaboration with the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) direct nutrition assistance program. The PFM’s education and outreach director elaborated on some of the exogenous factors that contribute to this difficulty, in particular highlighting that the PFM is at the bottom of the communication ladder between government agencies and WIC and other Federal Direct Nutrition Assistance (FDNP) recipients regarding how to use their vouchers. The former executive director of the PFM pointed to other difficulties the organization has faced regarding WIC:

We had the WIC people, we invited them down to do cooking classes and they actually handed out the WIC coupons...Some strategies like that, but nothing really took off or was a huge success...It’s a conundrum. I don’t really know, with the structure of the Portland market and...how it’s working for the farmers that sell there, I just don’t know if it’s the right venue.

The education and outreach director also noted that many shoppers do not know that they can use WIC and FDNP coupons at PFM markets. In addition, the organization

faces difficulty in even locating WIC and FDNP recipients to provide useful information about how to reimburse those coupons. The PFM vendors in my sample both noted that the number of WIC and FDNP coupons they receive at markets is “very low,” indicating that despite the organization’s attempts to bolster those programs, those attempts have not had a dramatic effect on increasing access to low-income shoppers and/or shoppers of color.

Importantly, the speaker above ultimately concludes that the PFM’s relative lack of success in increasing consumer diversity corresponds to “the structure of the Portland market,” and how the organization might not be “the right venue” to address such issues. While she and others acknowledge certain exogenous constraints that affect the organization’s effectiveness in promoting equity, such as a non-transparent government bureaucracy, this explanation focuses on how the organization itself might also have endogenous constraints that prevent it from accomplishing this goal. Specifically, she refers to the notion that the PFM is ultimately more like a business than a non-profit, and thus the organization’s economic imperatives temper the extent to which it pursues ideological or philosophical goals.

As mentioned previously, several market staff distinguished between 501(c)6 and 501(c)3 organizations as two types of non-profits suited for divergent aims. These differences underlie the creation of the Farmers Market Fund, an extension of the FreshExchange SNAP matching program that provides dollar-for-dollar matching for up to five dollars of food stamp funds at the King and Buckman markets. One staff member highlights how the FreshExchange program at King, started through a grant from the Alberta Foods Co-Op and jointly administered by the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods and the PFM, helped that market reach a more socioeconomically diverse constituency:

The King market, since it opened, I think one of the most powerful outreach tools there is the nutrition incentive program, where we provide a dollar-for-dollar match up to five bucks for SNAP recipients...People came flocking, so that’s really helped boost that market and boost vendor success at that market, and it’s really developed a solid customer base.

Many PFM staff described FreshExchange as a testament to how collaboration between the PFM and community-based organizations bolsters overall market success by making the products sold at the market available to low-income shoppers. This success translates to the optimism surrounding the creation of the Farmers Market Fund.

While this organization has not yet officially begun, many market staff underscored that its proposed 501(c)3 status offers substantial benefits to addressing socioeconomic inequity:

The idea behind [the Farmers Market Fund] is that institutional funders are much less likely to fund a smaller-scale project or a smaller-scale program, and FreshExchange volunteers run into that time and time again, where foundations would say, “This project sounds great but it doesn’t

have enough impact. We’re looking for something that has a broader community impact.” So if we could have a match program for everywhere in Portland, that would be millions of dollars in additional funds for fresh fruits and vegetables for SNAP users.

The current market coordinator adds that the PFM, as a 501(c)6, cannot offer tax benefits for charitable donations, making it a less-than-ideal venue for providing benefits for SNAP users.

The PFM’s current executive director was optimistic about the creation of the Farmers Market Fund as a way to surpass both the internal and external constraints that limit the PFM itself from promoting greater access to low-income shoppers. She suggests,

[T]he PFM as an organization might become less focused on underserved populations because the Farmers Market Fund is exclusively focused on underserved populations. I don’t know if that’s going to be true but I’m just kind of saying it because it might end up that way. I’m basically the ED for two organizations and one of them has a large mission around serving people who are in need. The other one has a large mission around getting fresh food out into the community. Where those come together is where those populations are met.

The above quotation highlights the belief that the Farmers Market Fund’s more focused mission and its greater freedom as a charitable organization will allow it to address issues of socioeconomic inequity more effectively than the PFM.

While this organization aims to bolster the extent to which the PFM (and other Portland-area farmers markets) can serve low-income populations, this goal does not necessarily imply that the organization will also address racial barriers to the market, particularly given the organization’s prior difficulties in attempting to do so. Indeed, while market staff and board members were all relatively candid in their discussions of the PFM’s “yuppie” status and higher-income clientele, there was a greater degree of ambivalence in market participants’ perspectives on race.

Although several market staff and vendors openly acknowledged that the clientele at the PFM’s markets is predominantly white, they also showed greater reluctance to examine the ways in which the market itself might uphold racial barriers. Staff explained the higher-than-average income of PFM shoppers in terms of both exogenous constraints and organizational practices, and identified strategies the organization itself currently employs as well as those it aims to develop in the future in order to expand its outreach to low-income shoppers. In contrast, talks about race shied away from the organization’s complicity in maintaining racial barriers, shifting the explanation of such barriers more toward broader, external forces than the discussion of class barriers.

I explain this discrepancy by referring back to the competing institutional logics that inform how the PFM operates. Again, because the *dominant* logic of the organization is one that privileges the economic goal of boosting farmer income,

whatever ideological aims the PFM pursues that do not directly serve that goal will create more intra-organizational tension than those that do. As such, while the PFM's ideological focus supports developing possible solutions to issues of racial inequity, actors in the organization are more apt to discuss these solutions as falling outside of the PFM's purview. In so doing, however, the PFM misses the opportunity to critically interrogate the racialized meanings embedded in the organization itself. Thus the PFM disproportionately acknowledges its own role in dismantling class-based barriers to its markets while downplaying its role in doing the same for racial barriers.

Conclusion

The PFM aims to support local farmers as its primary goal, and bolstering the direct exchange relationship between farmers and consumers is the mechanism through which the organization facilitates farmers' financial success. Relatedly, the PFM focuses on the exchange of high-quality goods in order to provide farmers with the greatest economic return, a focus which has ultimately resulted in a predominantly "yuppie" clientele. While several members of the organization expressed a desire to shed its "elitist" image and open the market up to low-income shoppers, attempts to do so have been markedly difficult. Furthermore, the PFM has also struggled to promote greater racial diversity at its markets, both in terms of its vendor pool and its consumer base. Despite exogenous factors that contribute to the difficulty the PFM has faced in addressing these aims, I focus on the ways in which members of the organization characterize the PFM as more of a business than a non-profit, thereby accounting for organization-specific reasons for such difficulty.

My interviews reveal a degree of ambivalence about what is, and what should be, the organization's role in attracting shoppers of color to the PFM, and Black shoppers to King in particular. While staff members recognize that its markets appear to be predominantly white, they levy a variety of explanations to explain the relative absence of people of color. Whether conceptualizing the NECN as the organization responsible for clarifying the best market times, farmers as constrained participants based on the time they could attend, or consumers as making individualized choices in an open market, the organization itself articulates a particular color-blind logic regarding market outreach. I suggest that the prevalence of a color-blind ideology is also strengthened by the PFM's principal focus on supporting farmers' economically. Explaining issues of racial inequity vis-à-vis market forces diminishes the ways in which the organization itself is implicated in the maintenance of that inequity, and therefore minimizes the extent to which the PFM must actively seek to combat it. That all of the market staff I interviewed articulated a color-blind logic regarding market outreach indicates the extent to which ideologies embedded within institutions shape how actors within those institutions organize their beliefs and practices (Thornton and Ocasio 2008; DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Scott 1992).

Conclusion

During the summer of 2010, I was at work on a particularly busy Sunday at a small farmers market in Northeast Portland (not one of the site locations included in this study). I was hustling to ring up the long line of customers waiting to check out when a Black man in his mid-30s approached the stand where I worked and asked if I could answer a question. His grey suit set him apart from the other people at the market, most of whom were dressed casually in shorts and t-shirts, and suggested that he had just come from church. As I shifted my focus from the register to him, the man asked, “Were any Black people invited to this event?” Admittedly surprised by the question and distracted by the people standing in line, I hesitated and failed to respond before the man walked away. The notion that no one had *explicitly* been invited occurred to me, but then, as now, I felt that such a response missed the point of the man’s inquiry. Given that that market in particular was in an area of Portland that boasted a higher-than-average Black population for the city, the absence of Black shoppers suggested a disconnect between the market and its potential consumer base. In this thesis, I have argued that this disconnect occurs precisely because farmers markets often adopt color-blind explanations for the underrepresentation of shoppers of color (and, to a lesser extent, low-income shoppers as well).

Prior studies of color-blindness and the articulation of whiteness in farmers markets have focused primarily on the interactions between actors in market contexts and the discourse regarding race that market participants articulate. Despite the appearance of being racially neutral, farmers markets are often imbued with a particular middle-class whiteness. I add to the body of research on this subject by exploring how these informal mechanisms overlap with organization-level ideologies, practices, and structures in the Portland Farmers Market. In so doing, I have attempted to interrogate the ways in which the PFM itself might contribute to the rearticulation of racial barriers.

In Chapter 5, I explored how tension arises between pursuing the PFM’s dual aims to support farmers economically and to ensure that Portland residents have access to fresh, healthy food if the second aim does not directly serve the first. For example, investing in outreach to shoppers of color or low-income shoppers is implicitly seen as useful insofar as doing so provides financial returns to PFM’s vendors. Programs like FreshExchange provide a means for low-income shoppers to spend a greater number of food dollars at farmers markets, thereby increasing their access to fresh produce while also boosting farmers’ sales. While these strategies target socioeconomic inequity, they do not necessarily explicitly address how racial barriers also

structure access to PFM markets. I suggest that the PFM's heavy reliance on abstract market dynamics to provide both its vendor pool and consumer base presumes that such dynamics are devoid of racial bias, though they are not. Through an ambiguous if not *laissez-faire* approach to outreach, both PFM markets in my case study informally provide the contexts for predominantly white actors to interact. This process glosses these markets with a veneer of whiteness that remains largely unaddressed from the perspective of the organization.

The Lents International Farmers Market provides a potential window to the ways in which the PFM might meaningfully address racial and socioeconomic inequity in the future. By including the goal to support immigrant and emerging farmers in its mission statement, the organization is ultimately able to reflect the constituency of the community it serves and create a uniquely community-oriented atmosphere. Several participants at the Lents market indicated that this explicit attention to targeting racial and socioeconomic inequity provides a meaningful context for immigrant shoppers and/or shoppers of color to gain access to healthy food by supporting farmers who share their racial or ethnic backgrounds. In so doing, the Lents market displaces whiteness from the center of creating community gathering spaces and economic relationships between local shoppers and vendors. This process has not been without difficulty, however, and members of the organization expressed that creating an inclusive community atmosphere demands persistent effort, often in the face of low economic returns. Nonetheless, the market manager suggested that organizational support from Zenger Farm and Lents' 501(c)3 non-profit status provide the market with the resources to pursue aims directly related to racial and socioeconomic inequity. What is ultimately so unique about the Lents market is the way in which it pursues those aims regarding both its vendor pool and consumer base.

Ultimately, I contend that in order for the PFM to meaningfully address racial equity in particular, doing so must actually become a goal in itself. Indeed, while the PFM founder argued that the "equity goal" should be embedded in all of the organization's practices, this ostensibly allows for an articulation of color-blindness to endure. I suggest that the introduction of the Farmers Market Fund, a 501(c)3 non-profit, indicates the PFM's willingness to directly target class barriers to its markets, thereby placing equity at the center of its practices. While this fund directly aims to boost access for low-income shoppers, it might not allow the PFM to target racial inequity if the organization maintains a color-blind perspective. Although concerns about how the PFM might come across as proselytizing when interfacing with communities of color, avoiding attempts to foster relationships with such communities allows normalized whiteness to code the organization's markets and retain an air of exclusivity. I contend that while the goals of supporting farmers and addressing "the equity goal" were often viewed as incommensurable from the PFM's perspective, the case of the Lents market suggests that one of ways in which farmers markets can decenter whiteness is by explicitly committing to creating contexts for people of color to interact with one another from both sides of the market booth.

Appendix A

A. Sample questionnaire for Lents customers

Gender

Race

Occupation

1. How do you get to the market (car, bicycle, walk, bus, other mode of transportation)?
2. Is this market in your neighborhood?
3. Why do you come to this market?
4. What are the best aspects of this market? In what ways do you think the market could improve?
5. Do you have any further comments or suggestions?

B. Sample questionnaire for PFM customers

Gender

Race

Occupation

1. Is this your first time at the market?
2. How do you get to the market (car, bicycle, walk, bus, other mode of transportation)?
3. Is this market in your neighborhood?
4. Why do you come to this market?
5. What are the best aspects of this market? In what ways do you think the market could improve?
6. What kinds of products do you typically buy at this market? How do you think this market compares to other retailers (e.g. grocery stores) in terms of price, quality, and availability of produce?
7. Do you have any further comments or suggestions?

Appendix B

Sample interview questions

PFM staff

1. In your opinion, what is the Portland Farmers Markets primary purpose?
2. What are the primary differences between the PFMs locations? What are areas of overlap?
3. What is the relationship between PFM and other Portland-based farmers markets?
4. What is the key to an individual markets success? How does the PFM as a whole gauge its success?
5. In your opinion, what does the PFM do well, and where are there possibilities for improvement?
6. What is the process through which new market locations are taken on by the PFM?
7. Are people knocking down the door to participate? How in demand is participation in this market? How has that changed over time?
8. In what ways does the PFM address access to its markets in terms of race and class?

Lents staff

1. What do you see as the primary purpose of the Lents market?
2. How does the market aim to provide a sustainable income for its vendors while also increasing access to low income shoppers and/or shoppers of color?
3. Are these aims ever in tension with one another?
4. What roles does Zenger Farm play in managing Lents' operations?
5. Are there any unique benefits or constraints to operating Lents from an organizational perspective?
6. What, if anything, do you think distinguishes Lents from other farmers markets in Portland?

PFM/Lents vendors

1. At which markets do you participate? Do you prefer one market location to another, and why?

2. How long have you participated [at King/PSU/Lents] and what was your initial reason for joining?
3. What are the primary benefits of selling at farmers markets in general, and at [King/PSU/Lents] in particular? Are there any drawbacks?
4. How would you characterize your relationship with other vendors?
5. How would you characterize your relationship with consumers?
6. In your opinion as a vendor, what does the [PFM/Lents] do well? Where are there areas for improvement?
7. Have you noticed any changes in the market since you began participating?
8. Do you accept EBT/WIC/Direct Assistance vouchers?
9. Do you know of other people who could sell at the market and choose not to?
10. How do you hire on-farm versus at-market labor?

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