

NEOLIBERALISM AND ALTERNATIVE FOOD MOVEMENTS: MARKETS, THE STATE,
AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Alternative food movements are promoted as solutions to environmental and social problems in the context of neoliberalism in the United States. Scholarly literature is divided over whether alternative food movements are reproducing the very structures of oppression they have sought to overcome, thus limiting the potential for systemic food change.

My dissertation investigates how food justice is envisioned and practiced in this context through a qualitative research study of two alternative food projects in San Diego, California. One project is in a low-income, African American, and Latino locale, called Southeastern San Diego. They call themselves “Project New Village.” A second project is formed by white, affluent participants, located south of the city in the wild Tijuana River Estuary at the U.S. – Mexico border. They call themselves “San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project.” These two movements emerge from San Diego’s history as two different trajectories.

I found that by building a community garden and local farmers market, PNV is resisting the legacy of institutional racism, class inequality, city disinvestment, and supermarket abandonment that forged Southeastern as a space of exclusion. Not simply a project about food, PNV uses food as a tool to empower the neighborhood by engaging educational institutions in the project, creating employment opportunities through the garden and neighborhood market, forging community bonds, and teaching critical knowledge about food and nutrition from their perspective. Strategically using the garden and market as a tool to leverage city support, they can position themselves in ways that can advocate for policy transformation. The obstacles they face, such as that of law enforcement patrols interrupting their community rebuilding efforts, are very different hurdles than those faced by privileged settings.

The location and affluence of SDRS leaders and participants lends a different approach to food justice work. I learned that SDRS is resisting the legacy of development in San Diego that has given rise to suburban sprawl, little land for farming, importing food to survive, and environmental destruction. SDRS challenges this past by creating local markets around sustainable food production. Building on sustainable agriculture by using permaculture, dry land farming techniques, and experimenting with the local habitat, SDRS is contributing to new knowledge about how to farm ecologically in San Diego. In addition to selling their produce at the farm and local venues, they work to create a new generation of sustainable farmers, and enlightened consumers.

To my family of felines (Crystal, Sprokitt, Meuty, Raymond, and Schmizzles), who have taught me how to love others and myself.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING FOOD AS EXCEPTION

Despite that the U.S. is one of the richest countries in the world, there are millions of people who still go hungry and lack access to quality food, particularly in impoverished rural areas and inner cities. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), more than 23.5 million people in the US live in low-income areas that are more than a mile from a supermarket. Known as “food deserts,” these are areas in the U.S. that are recognized by a lack of supermarkets and other food venues that enable adequate, convenient, and affordable sources of healthy foods (Ver Ploeg 2010). Food deserts disproportionately effects low-income and communities of color, who bear the increased risks of cancer, obesity, and diabetes (Morland, Wing, Roux, Poole 2002).

In 2008 food deserts were brought into the language of the national Farm Bill, or the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act. The bill provided the definition for the term, and commissioned a study and report by the Secretary of Agriculture within one year that identifies the causes and consequences of food deserts.¹ According to the commissioned report by the USDA in 2009, what motivated the food desert concept was a concern that “a lack of access to full-service grocery stores and the easier access to fast and convenience foods may be linked to poor diets, ultimately, to obesity and other diet-

¹ The report was to include: “(1) assess the incidence and prevalence of food deserts; (2) identify-- (A) characteristics and factors causing and influencing food deserts; and (B) the effect on local populations of limited access to affordable and nutritious food; and (3) provide recommendations for addressing the causes and effects of food deserts through measures that include--(A) community and economic development initiatives; (B) incentives for retail food market development, including supermarkets, small grocery stores, and farmers' markets; and (C) improvements to Federal food assistance and nutrition education programs” (Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008: Public Law 110-234 2008: Part III, Section 7527).

related diseases” (USDA 2009: 1). Incorporation into the farm bill created the organizational mandate that brought together the USDA, Institute of Medicine (IOM), National Research Council (NRC), and the National Poverty Center at the University of Michigan. Two conferences as well as commissioned research studies produced the infrastructure to discuss and try to solve the problem (USDA 2009: iii).

While solutions such as direct marketing and support for farmers markets were investigated in the report, larger food stores, or supermarkets were used as the proxy for finding food deserts (IOM and NRC 2009: 1).² This proxy also became the basis for the Food Desert Locator, a spatial representation of food deserts and non-food desert areas. This has been updated in 2013 to the Food Access Research Atlas to include 2010 data and the 2006-2010 American Community Survey. The spatial proximities have also been changed to low-income and low-access at 1 and 10 miles (original definition), .5 and 10 miles, and 1 in 20 miles, and a separate indicator based on low-income and vehicle availability (see Figure 1.1).

Metaphorically, the term “food desert” connotes a space devoid of food; a place in which food does not exist (see Figure 1.2 and Figure 1.3). The two figures serve as examples by key institutions (United States Department of Agriculture) and researchers (Mari Gallagher Research and Consulting Group) that have heightened policy attention to the issue of access. These depictions point to the lack of food. The USDA image likens food deserts to literal deserts, where spatial distance to the oasis in the background is far

² As said in a key workshop convened because of the Congressional mandate, “Although larger food stores are not the only outlets able to sell healthy food, their presence (or lack) is used as a proxy for access to healthy lower-cost food option” (IOM and NRC 2009: 1).

off. The popular image from Mari Gallagher's influential report on food deserts in Chicago juxtaposes the empty retail lot in the foreground with an empty cart from the city background. Both images highlight the depravation in food deserts. These portrayals have inspired critiques of the narrow policy solution that advocates more supermarkets as an intervention to the complex issue of access to food.

Food deserts may be cast as a new public health problem, however within the field of sociology issues of hunger and poverty resurface during times of economic restructuring and political struggles over needs (Fraser 1987). That the state and food industry gains legitimacy by acting on a problem they can quickly fix by way of bringing in new supermarkets to underserved communities, presents the state and capital as solutions rather than actors in such problems. Criticisms within the community food security movement argue against a single solution to food deserts that calls for more big-box retailers or even Whole Foods. Instead, the community food security movement asks why income and zip code decides food access, why land is made unavailable for community gardens, and why are communities aren't being asked what they want (Community Food Security List Serve).

This next section situates the problem of food deserts within the academic debates now circulating in the following relevant literatures: rural sociology; risk, race, and environmental justice; and neoliberal governmentality and alternative food movements.

LITERATURE

Rural Sociology

The field of rural sociology was one of the first in the sub-discipline to take notice of the drastic changes in agriculture throughout the 20th century and began to theorize about such shifts. Looking to the structure of corporatization of agriculture, including consolidation within the industry, incorporation of technological advances like machinery and biotechnology, rural sociologists highlight key changes within the industrial food system that have led to rural hunger, the destruction of the family farm, as well as the degradation of farmers' experiential knowledge (Hassanein 1999; Heffernan 2000; Magdoff, Foster, and Buttel 2000; McMichael 2000). Rural sociology provides a background of critique on the industrial food system encompassing transformations in the farming sector as well as trade policies. Rural sociologists like McMichael (2000) and Heffernan (2000) shed light on the Farm Bill that has subsidized such changes as well as the incorporation of agriculture into the GATT, and now WTO. By highlighting agriculture's global reach and relation to development, this scholarship has added to the ways in which the power of transnational capital can extend or manipulate the power of the state (see also *From Columbus to ConAgra*, 1994). This project incorporates the critique of industrial agriculture inherited by rural sociology, and extends this critique to the field of alternative food movements in urban areas.³

³ While food deserts are both urban and rural, far less attention in the literature has been paid with respect to rural food deserts. In this study, I focus on food deserts in an urban context (communication with Ann Reisner 2016).

Risk, Race, and Environmental Justice

According to Ulrich Beck (1992), we live in a society dominated by technological risks. The growth in alternative foods and organic food is shaped by the fear of industrial harms. The consumption of organic foods is driven primarily by concerns about pesticides, freshness, and personal health (Winter and Davis 2006). The awareness of pesticides and food scares are risks that organic products are assumed to offer safety against. For instance, as Friedland (1994) reports, the Alar scare in the 1980s combined with Chilean grapes laced with cyanide, and the Exxon Valdez catastrophe, spelled growth for the organic industry, “The director of produce operations at a Seattle supermarket said, ‘We went from selling 600 to 700 pounds a week (of organics) to selling 6,500 pounds’” (225). Similarly, in California, the Alar scare contributed to the quadrupling of certified organic lands in 1989 (Buck, Getz, and Guthman 1997). Food scares such as “Mad Cow” disease and the avian flu raise concerns about the risks associated with food production (Lein 2002). The newest pet food recall last year and more recently, imported ginger from China found to be treated with a toxic pesticide, aldicarb sulfoxide (Zamiska and Kesmodel 2007), are added but growing industrial risks that the standardization of organic products assures consumers to avoid. Consumers are also participating in farmers markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) for “improved personal and ecological health” (Alkon 2014: 27).

In Beck’s world of risks (1992), instead of class positions that are based on access to material goods alone, what we see are overlapping risk and class positions, which are based on the protection from technologically caused harms. Those with high-

risk positions are able to shield themselves from these risks, whereas those with low-risk positions cannot. However, while Beck's point is to illustrate how environmental catastrophes affect everyone, such as nuclear war or PCBs in all human bodies, socially constructed differences such as race, class, and gender still affect our risk positions.

Additionally, while the risks mentioned above point to legitimate concerns, such as toxins in food and food scares, what is often unstated in the mainstream debate is the uneven distribution of risks. For instance, risks met everyday by marginalized communities point to toxic chemical plants in neighborhoods, lead paint in housing units (Bullard 1993), substandard nutrition in schools, and lack of healthcare to cope with increased illnesses caused by pollution (Hofrichter 2003). People of color disproportionately bear the burden of these risks in the U.S. (Bullard 1993). These risks are avoidable for those who are privileged and can afford it, while risks in marginalized communities are made invisible.

For instance, access to nutritious food is an issue for those most vulnerable in our society. Gottlieb's (2001) research study in Los Angeles revealed that food security is an issue for those living in the most impoverished parts of the city. After the Los Angeles uprising in 1992, grocery stores and supermarkets abandoned the area. Not simply access to organic food in grocery stores, but access to quality food in general is a concern for many people and families in Los Angeles. Unfortunately, mainstream environmental organizations construe these risks or insecurities as "public health" opposed to environmental. Why and how are these issues instead seen as a matter of "public health?"

According to the environmental justice movement, the mainstream environmental movement views nature differently. Mainstream environmental organizations such as the Nature Conservancy and the Sierra Club construct their vision of nature that is a consequence of their social position. For instance, many mainstream environmental activists are white, educated, and middle-class (Taylor 1989). Nature constructed from this vantage point is defined as wilderness, a place for recreation, and a Garden of Eden. Most importantly, in this view nature is where the people are not. Mainstream environmental organizations draw from an Edenic narrative of nature that casts humans as agents of contamination. In this Judea-Christian narrative, humans became impure and caused the fall of nature when Eve ate the forbidden fruit of knowledge. Humans thus become contaminated with sin, and are forbidden from Eden. Common to environmental NGOs is the idea that humans contaminate nature's purity, and the solution to this contamination is to recover Eden through the rescue of a heroic masculine figure. This figure in mainstream environmental organizations is white as well. Like organic food advertising, this vision of nature creates a nature/society divide because "pure" nature is imagined as that without humans or human intervention.

However, while mainstream environmental NGOs see the "uncivilized others" as infecting nature, this nature/society divide again translates industrial risks into matters of "public health." The privileged view of nature, or a nature defined by wilderness away from the city, play, and spirituality, delegitimizes views of nature that combine nature as a place to live, work, and play. For example, during slavery African Americans had a relationship with the land based on cultivation, management, sustenance, and work. Their

view of nature is intrinsically tied to survival and thus environmental justice, fairness, and self-determination, which stand for environmental justice groups' concerns. On the other hand, mainstream environmental organizations defend nature's aesthetic beauty.

However, for those who live, work, and play in their landscapes, the nature/society divide is blurred and fraught with issues of power and politics. Decisions to locate toxic facilities in low-income neighborhoods and feed poor children dangerous meat and dairy products at school are a result of the legacy of institutional racism in the U.S. and political power that has traditionally been in the hands of privileged whites (Bullard 1993). Because low-income groups and people of color lack the influence measured in terms of campaign donations, the likelihood of asthma and illness as a result of toxic exposure dramatically increases when compared to whites. These toxic facilities are results of political land use decisions that weave the relationship between nature and society together. As such, the environmental justice movement links the environment to everyday living, and as such involves occupational hazards as well as the location of parks and recreation facilities.

A new wave of scholarship that theorizes food as part of an environmental justice framing is the "food justice" movement. In this frame, rather than focusing on disproportionate burdens faced by low-income and communities of color, the focus is on access to environmental benefits and goods (Alkon and Norgaard 2009; Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Gottlieb and Fisher 1996). Through such framing access to nutritious food becomes a matter of environmental justice as well. The approach of food justice

then expands our use of the EJ framework to include “what we consume and what gets grown as well as where we live, work, and play” (Gottlieb and Fisher 1996: 201).

Neoliberal Governmentality and Alternative Food Movements

Inspired by Michel Foucault, neoliberal governmentality is used to understand how society, culture, and subjectivity form around discourses of market orthodoxy, including not only the way the economy is defined, but how it works, and how people should take responsibility for the problems of government (Dean 1999, Lerner 2000, Rose 1996). Neoliberal governmentality defines the current argumentation around the possibilities within the alternative food movement. Given that the alternative food movement parallels the environmental movement in terms of race, class, and gender, as well as using markets as a solution to problems of collective risks and capitalism, critics using a neoliberal governmentality lens critique the movements themselves by offering ways in which mentalities of government that parallel the rise of inequality are again repurposed and reworked in alternative food projects (Guthman 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, Pudup 2008).

Connections

The insights brought to the table in this research connect rural sociologists’ focus of farming communities and corporate-industrial agriculture to that of urban concern for food justice. If we can envision environmental justice as disproportionate access to environmental goods, we can add to a new wave of food literature within the sub-

discipline under the rubric of food justice. Finally, through the lens of neoliberal governmentality as it is applied to alternative food movements, we can connect the ways in which purity and knowledge intersect in the “civilizing” tendencies of alternative food practices. This helps us to be mindful of limitations but through reflexively engaging in alternative food projects, provides the opportunity to work our way out of the box of neoliberalism.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions that emerge from the engagement in the scholarship and empirical problem are thus:

- What are the institutional and technical means that give rise to food deserts?
- What are the food industry instruments that give rise to food deserts?
- When people are placed outside legitimate channels of food consumption, how do people navigate this exclusion?
- What kinds of subjectivities emerge in the space of alterity?

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

To explore these questions above, ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in two alternative food projects in San Diego, California, one of which has problems of food access. The insights contained in this dissertation come from seven months in the research field as a participant observer at these two food projects between February of 2012 and August 2012. During this time, I undertook the role of occasional customer, observer, and participant in order to observe and interact with project managers and leaders, planning committees, community gardeners, vendors, farm tour operators, and participants at both project sites. Through participant-observation at Project New Village

(PNV), I could witness interactions among project leaders and community gardeners, children and youth in the juvenile justice system, and residents in the neighborhood. At San Diego Sustainable Roots Project (SDRS), I saw interactions among project leaders, farm staff, and supporters during their farm tours and potluck parties. At both projects, I gave through my “sweat equity,” helping to turn soil, unearth the ground from under the concrete, and create starter plants. During these intense activities at the sites, fieldnotes were taken after the day was done. In some cases, I recorded my fieldnotes that day and transcribed them after the event. My goal was to maximize my immersion in these activities and experiences of others’ lives, as well as build trust (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995).

Building trust was especially important in my first site, PNV. At previous conferences and dialogue on the community food security list serve, there were critical remarks being made about white outsiders, aiming to help in food justice causes through their research. While this is not inherently a problem, there was a growing frustration among some communities of color that in the aim of doing good, whites were overshadowing the black and brown experiences of those in the movement. Knowing this could be a possibility for me, I worked on building trust with PNV in a careful way. I did not intrude in conversations or play the investigator role, which SDRS expected of me. Instead, I informed PNV of my larger project and asked how I could contribute. It was important for them that I take part in all activities, especially through “sweat equity.” I was careful in following through on my commitments, and tried to help them with whatever they asked or needed help with.

Through these interactions at both sites I could gain an understanding of the discourses and practices through which participants discuss their hardships, as well as their environmental, communal, and equity goals. I explored these themes in greater depth through 32 semi-structured interviews with project leaders and farm staff, and participants at the community gardens and markets. These interviews lasted from 20 minutes to 2 hours, and were audio-recorded and transcribed. I also attended PNV market meetings (3 in Southeastern San Diego), and Community meetings through the local union (2 in Sherman Heights), the San Diego Cultivating Food Justice network (1 conference in San Diego), and PNV's yearly Cesar Chavez Annual Celebrations (1 in Southeastern San Diego).

At these meetings and events, I "jotted" the number of people in attendance, key words and phrases that I was unfamiliar with, as well as verbatim phrases that would later enter my fieldnotes. Some of the conferences were also presentations by city officials, who kindly shared their presentations with me. In addition to the jottings, and fieldnotes, I formed "asides" where I reacted personally or theoretically to what happened in the day's events, leading me to understand different entry points into food, social struggle, and the desire to take part in alternative food projects (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995: 100-101).

I supplemented my primary data with accounts from newspapers, magazines, and other popular media (such as Facebook) describing my cases. During interviews, older participants discussed the history of food in San Diego, and inspired my archival research at the San Diego History Center of retail, food, agriculture, and development in the city.

This helped me to triangulate the stories told, as well as supplement the gaps missing in San Diego's development chronicle.

It is important to note that while my study focuses on two specific organizations, I received help by attending the Good Food Conference in Chicago, Illinois in 2012. At this conference, I learned of the food access problems that people are facing around the country, and the multiple ways in which they were being worked in both Detroit and New York City. I attended urban agriculture tours including Will Allen's project Growing Power. I also attended the California's Small Farm Conference outside of Los Angeles in 2012, where I learned about the practices of organic and sustainable farming, and regulation, and had a chance to interview several small farmers.

In San Diego, I also attended Occupy Wall Street events, interviewed those from the Slow Food Movement, visited community gardens in Carlsbad (North San Diego), as well as a dozen farmers markets throughout the County. I also toured Feeding America, attended a gleaning workshop, and interviewed a scholar working to "green" the food bank system. I also did participant-observation and interviews in the Logan Heights community, who were fighting the illegal teardown of the farmers market building to create a Walmart Neighborhood Market. I attended the wider Community Garden Network event for San Diego County, and could learn about the many gardens springing up around the county in effort to grow and share more food, including domestic violence shelters. In sum, the field of food projects in San Diego is astounding, and this knowledge aided my wider understanding of the strategies, and goals of what we may broadly call the "alternative food movement."

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The first part of the dissertation sets up the institutional context to answer the question “how we got here?” That is, how is it that food deserts exist? What are the social, technical, and institutional requirements for spaces of exclusion? In chapter two I draw from Bonilla-Silva’s “racialized social systems” theory to analyze how San Diego became spatially segregated with white affluent food secure suburban neighborhoods on the one hand, and low-income and food insecure communities of color on the other?

Chapter three builds on the foundations of food deserts by analyzing the role of the corporate food retail system in creating spaces of lack. In the early 1900s cities were made up of neighborhood mom and pop stores, and many people had home gardens. However, this shifted with the advent of the automobile, and mechanization of agriculture, industrialization of food, and corporate managerial structures. Chain stores emerged and outcompeted neighborhood stores, paving the way for a revolution in distribution through supermarkets. As cities decentralized, supermarkets folded into suburban lifestyles, and corporate food retail built their trade areas on the affluent suburban consumers. Dependency on the supermarket meant having a vehicle, money, gas, and convenience. As the power of corporate retailing grew, they could open and close doors at will without great profit losses. In other words, supermarkets refuse to locate in spaces that are not affluent, and continue to do so.

The second part of the dissertation marks the empirical start of the chapters and involves the two alternative food projects I outlined in the beginning of the introduction. Here I engage these projects with the intersection of neoliberalism and markets (chapter

four), neoliberalism and the state (in chapter 5), and neoliberalism and knowledge production (chapter 6). With respect to markets, scholars are divided over whether the creation of alternative food markets reproduces neoliberalism by creating self-interested, self-responsible consumers. In both projects, we see mixtures here of creating social protections, emancipation, and forms of marketization. However, rather than reproducing neoliberalism these movements engage with some aspects of it strategically and in a creative way.

Chapter five similarly draws from the debate about the state among scholars of neoliberalism. Those critical of the alternative food movement argue that alternative food projects take on responsibilities shed by the state such as food regulation, poverty reduction, and revitalizing neighborhoods. By doing so the state is not held accountable. However, the history of institutional racism and neoliberal roll-out shows a use for alternative food projects stepping in at the local level. By using their reputation these movements can then advocate for their communities that may be more effective in the past. Lastly, chapter five discusses the role of law enforcement in alternative food projects to illustrate the ways neoliberalism relies upon and uses borders for race and citizenship.

In the last chapter, the claim that alternative food movements are “white spaces” and “white projects” is engaged. Critics of alternative food movements argue that whiteness in the form of knowledge production, practices, and norms surfaces to exclude and even appropriate the other. Chapter six examines the role of whiteness and alternative

food movement expertise to shed light on how new subjectivities are challenging both neoliberalism as well as its privileged subjects.

My dissertation concludes with a chapter that explores the theoretical and practical implications of my research. My study sheds light on the complex processes through which food deserts are created. These chapters reveal that food access is more than lacking supermarkets. The growth of supermarkets cannot be separated from the expansion of suburban development and technologies of infrastructure that were unavailable to people of color. The expansion of supermarkets also cannot be separated from the trajectory of development that is now heavily criticized as ecologically unsustainable. Thus, this dissertation brings movements for food access and sustainable development together. Theoretically, we're seeing a new scholarship emerge around food justice, bringing together environmental sociology, rural sociology, and the critique of neoliberalism in new ways. Practically, this means that in order for movements for food access and environment to come together, collective concern that both acknowledges and works to undo race and class inequalities must be at the foundation.

FIGURES

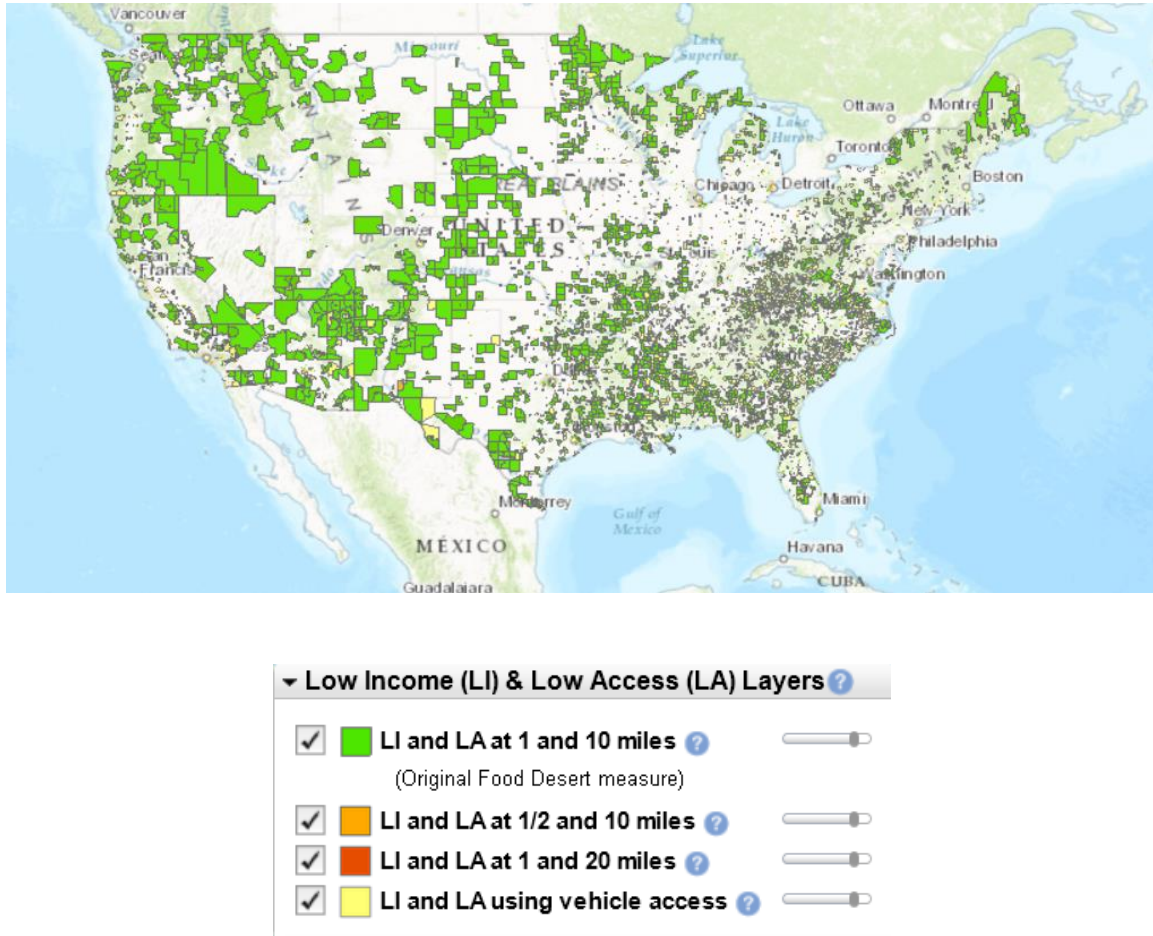


Figure 1.1: Food Deserts in the US applying all access indicators (June 14, 2016). Note that while all layers are applied, the green is more visible, and the more one zooms into the map the more visible orange, red, and yellow become. (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>)



Figure 1.2: Iconography of the USDA “Food Access Research Atlas” (Economic Research Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture 2017)



Figure 1.3: Iconography of a food desert (Gallagher 2014).

CHAPTER 2: RACE, SPACE, AND URBANIZATION IN SAN DIEGO

Public discussions about food deserts are conveyed as a new social phenomenon. Bringing attention to the lack of grocery stores, conventional policy dialogue focuses on the quick fix of how to bring more supermarkets into low-income and minority urban areas. However, this reading is problematic for two key reasons. First, this discourse limits the wider discussion of social inequalities to food access, thus ignoring the interconnections between investments in infrastructure, education, employment, and public services to quality of nutrition and availability of retail outlets or land. Second, this dialogue poses the problem of food access as a problem for low-income minority communities, thus obscuring the ways that structural forces give rise simultaneously to both white affluent communities on the one hand and disinvestments in low-income minority neighborhoods on the other. This chapter deepens the conventional approach by analyzing the structural underpinnings of social inequality in San Diego, California. To do so I ask the question: what are the structural forces that have given rise to social inequality in San Diego, specifically focusing on race?

Drawing from scholarship on race, I argue Bonilla-Silva's "racialized social systems" theory offers a compelling framework from which to analyze urban inequalities in San Diego (1996). These next two sections introduce the reader to the race literature as well as a brief introduction to the chapter. Afterwards, I follow with an analysis of San Diego as a racialized social system.

SYSTEMS OF RACIAL PRIVILEGE AND EXCLUSION

Despite the social and legal gains made by the Civil Rights Movement, racial inequality still permeates U.S. society. Income, wealth, education, status, health, and longevity indicators all point to disproportionately lower qualities of life for people of color in relation to whites (Lui, Robles, Leondar-Wright, Brewer, Adamson 2006). In other words, race still matters.

Race matters not simply at the individual level, but as part of a social system. Drawing from race scholarship that sees the persistence of race with origins in institutions that privilege whiteness creates significant explanatory power for why racial inequality continues. In this chapter, I draw from Bonilla-Silva's (1996) theory of "racialized social systems" to point to the institutional and routine ways the status of whiteness is supported in San Diego socially, economically, politically, and psychologically. In my view, it is not simply about race, but about the privileges built into systems that grant material and symbolic advantages to whites, yielding a system of white domination. Of course, who becomes white varies throughout history (Lipsitz 2006), but the stability of the white/black dichotomy continues to trouble race scholars (Bell 1992).

In the U.S. as in other societies race plays a role in defining a social hierarchy. Race, identified by phenotype, but also other selective traits, classifies people into groups. A racial structure of society is characterized as:

In all racialized social systems, the placement of people in racial categories involves some form of hierarchy that produces definite social relations between the races. The race placed in the superior position tends to receive greater economic remuneration and access to better occupations

and/or prospects in the labor market, occupies a primary position in the political system, is granted higher social estimation (e.g., is viewed as ‘smarter’ or ‘better looking’), often has the license to draw physical (segregation) as well as social (racial etiquette) boundaries between itself and other races, and receives what DuBois (1939) calls a ‘psychological wage’” (Bonilla-Silva 1996: 469-470).

Despite the seemingly stable nature of a racial structure, social policies effect racial hierarchy, as well as social movements. This chapter speaks to the history of racial structure in San Diego, illustrating both the stability and flexibility of race. Bonilla-Silva’s racialized social system emerges through the following pages to illustrate the ways that whiteness has granted not only increased life chances for this group, but also a segregated landscape and world of privilege in San Diego. This world of privilege includes high quality housing, parks and recreation, higher standards of education, health care, and food. While this segregated landscape is inclusive for affluent whites, those left out live in zones of exclusions. Using the framework for a “racialized social system,” we will see how Southeastern San Diego became a zone of exclusion.

SOUTHEASTERN SAN DIEGO AS A ZONE OF EXCLUSION

This next section analyzes the processes that give rise to Southeastern San Diego as a zone of exclusion. To do so, I periodize San Diego history per major transformations that have shaped industrial and commercial expansion and patterns of residence. These transformations reveal the creation and continuation of structural obstacles faced by low-income communities of color in Southeastern San Diego. These hurdles prevent income and wealth accumulation, as well as access to public goods necessary for a thriving

community. As such, this chapter offers the context for social struggles anchored around access to healthy food, adequate employment, neighborhood investment and public support. I argue that white privilege is organized through racialized labor regimes and residential barriers whose burdens are visible in the regional landscape. The possessive investment in whiteness systematically undermines the well-being of minority communities in Southeastern San Diego.

Early Commerce, Industry, and Residential Patterns, 1880 – 1916

Social hierarchies and privileges in San Diego did not emerge on a blank slate. Preexisting the city of San Diego are indigenous Kumeyaay peoples, as well as the Spanish conquistadores beginning in the mid-1500s, and the later Mexican rule for about three short decades between 1821 to 1848. The United States annexed California in 1848 after conquering Mexico, and organized the county seat of San Diego in 1850. At that time, San Diego was a military outpost for the nation with a population of 2,287 people (see Figure 2.1).

Race in early San Diego, 1880 -1916. While San Diego would become subject to land speculation, the industrial ideal, and migration beginning in earnest in 1880, racial hierarchies were already in place in San Diego. As the census illustrates in Table 2.1, San Diego's social organization inherited categories of racial difference. These categories reveal the ways in which race works through census measures and the formal organization of the state. Thus, as both domestic and international migrants would come to take part in building San Diego as a metropolis, race as a social structure would shape

their categorization and social experiences with other racialized groups (Gueverra 2012; Lipsitz 1996).⁴

Although the first three decades after 1850 brought in American rule, the roots of industrial capitalism had yet to arrive. Until the 1880s people in San Diego engaged in local agriculture, cattle ranching, and set up the post office and county government. Most transportation was by foot or buggies (Quastler and Pryde 2014). However, speculators imagined San Diego would become the next metropolis serving as a major port and as the terminus of the southernmost route of a U.S. transcontinental railroad. Anglo male leaders, notably Alonzo Horton, Frank Kimball, Elisha Babcock, John Spreckels, and others boosted and bought real estate in San Diego with the industrial ideal in mind (Griffin and Weeks 2014; Lotchin 1992). Importantly, ethnic, and racial diversity was not part of the selling to outsiders. Rather, they aimed at attracting white, middle, and upper-class families to work and live in San Diego (Ciani 1998; Killory 1993). Thus, from the very beginning white city investors imagined the emerging city as a Anglo metropolis, one in which whites were superior.⁵

Commercial and residential activity, 1880 – 1916. The 1880s is the first boom where San Diego began to look like a city. Railroad construction linked up San Diego to the north and east of Los Angeles in San Bernadino. This first transcontinental

⁴ The racial hierarchy set up by whites in the U.S. was not the first social hierarchy in San Diego. During the Spanish and Mexican periods blacks were slaves, and mixed-blood Spanish speaking people existed at all levels of society (Madyun and Malone 1981).

⁵ Per historian Christine Killory, “The businessmen, realtors, lawyers, and architects who comprised San Diego’s civic elite had fashioned a strategy for growth based on tourism and military development, and excluding such distasteful aspects of industrialism as the immigration of undesirable groups – racial minorities and the poor” (1993: n.p).

connection lured in eastern migrants with low-cost fares. Railroad companies built intercity railroads, connecting the coast with inland territory in San Diego County. The downtown became a site for commercial activity. Builders filled in the waterfront area to the west, including piers, warehouses, and business buildings. With the increase of county population to 35,000 people, public transportation in the form of streetcars, cable cars and steam powered rail lines were constructed, following residential expansion (Quastler and Pryde 2014). Residential settlements were platted, notably Logan Heights, Golden Hill, Grant Hill, and Sherman Heights. Logan Heights became the home for some working and middle-class residents who could afford single family homes. However, during this period most people lived in the downtown area and along the waterfront. Golden Hill, Grant Hill, and Sherman Heights housed the white wealthy elite. These segregated enclaves boasted Victorian architecture, an attractive view of the bay, and easy access by streetcar directly to downtown (Ford 2014, see Figure 2.2).

Military and industrial evolution, 1880 -1916. Industrial growth and migration grew at the turn of the twentieth century, however the national depression of the 1890s significantly altered growth in San Diego, including how to best grow the city. The booming population dwindled to half when massive flooding washed away the railroads. The floods destroyed the transcontinental railroad. San Diego became an offshoot to Los Angeles, and with little competition from San Diego, industry and wage labor in Los Angeles grew exponentially more than in San Diego. With smokestacks lacking in San Diego, the industrial model of development began to shift to innovative ways of creating urban prosperity, namely through tourism, resorts, and serving as a retirement

community. Early civic leaders and boosters sought to turn San Diego's balmy climate into a resource, calling on white eastern industrialists and midwestern farmers to escape their smoke-filled skies (Ports 1975). Civic leaders also began to tap into federal dollars by selling the port as a potential strategic site for the Navy (Shragge 1994).⁶ Unlike Los Angeles, whose industrial base offered the catalyst of urban growth, San Diego instead became interlinked with federal military dollars, a mixture of employment in services catering to retirement and lifestyle, and some manufacturing.

At the turn of the twentieth century, San Diego continued to expand and attract military attention. The population doubled to 40,000 people by 1910 and would continue to grow in the war time economy of World War I (WWI) in 1917. The announcement of a direct rail line to the east in 1908 brought further construction and industry. The first downtown eastern-style office buildings with twelve stories were built, and the waterfront became a site for a nascent fish canning industry. 1908 also became the first year that manufactured products exceeded agricultural output, heightening the hopes that San Diego would develop a major industrial base (Ford 2014, Harris 1974). The Navy's attention in San Diego was captured in 1908 under the Theodore Roosevelt administration when the U.S. Navy battle fleet would visit San Diego. The bay's strategic location spurred interest in San Diego as a site for military activity (Griffin and Weeks 2014).

⁶ Importantly, the city viewed the Navy as a clean industry, one who could offer industrialization without the sacrifice in quality of life created by factories (Lotchin 1992).

Race and tourism, 1880-1916. In the attempt to bring national attention to San Diego's port, climate, and tourism base, San Diego led the international Panama-California Exposition of 1915. This two-year expo brought four million visitors to San Diego including former presidents and military generals. The expo attracted national attention to San Diego's mild climate, attractive Spanish colonial architecture, as well as offering the first port of call north of the canal. The expo also revealed the importance of race in the construction of San Diego's development narrative. Event festivities and pageants asserted white superiority over people of color (Miller 2003, Montes 1982). As reported by the *Union Tribune* in January of 1915, the exposition stood for the confrontation between "Saxon" and "Latin" people:

... the weaker was absorbed by the stronger; but with the passing of the weaker they left a legacy of their art and culture, which the survivor has gladly possessed to beautify and decorate his own. We have received this tradition gladly; we have made of this romance the background of our own history ... in the fair port of San Diego and on this golden coast of California. (In Miller 2003: 162)

In the representation of white dominance over the Spanish, Mexicans, and Native Americans, city leaders rewrote brutal colonization as a "romantic" passing and grateful transaction. By rewriting history on their terms, whites claim their dominance over Spanish, Mexican, and Native Peoples. This exposition strengthened white superiority over nonwhites, clearly defining a racialized hierarchy to tourists and San Diegans.

Apart from the cultural investment in superiority, monetary investment in the expo totaled \$2.5 million, \$62 million today (Amero 2013). These investments created new building construction, local commerce, as well as improved roads and electric

railway connections from the downtown area south to Mexico. Improved transportation and open roads would stimulate further residential expansion creating new neighborhoods to the north and east of the park after WWI (Ford 2014; Montes 1982).

Race and labor, 1880 – 1916. Racial hierarchies also took shape during the early years in San Diego with respect to labor. This is clear in the kinds of labor reserved for groups classified as nonwhite. For African Americans that migrated to San Diego beginning in the 1880s, the average black man worked as a servant or unskilled laborer. Employers limited African Americans to positions such as cooks, porters, bootblacks, janitors, waiters, mariners, and dock workers. Very few blacks obtained prestigious occupations during this period when overt discrimination was practiced, and historical accounts prove that blacks were treated as outcasts by white society (Madyun and Malone 1981). Access to certain kinds of positions was decided by race, thus demonstrating the racialized social system emerging in San Diego.

A working-class white identity was born in San Diego as federal acts by Congress barred specific groups from migrating to the U.S. fueled anger and resentment towards nonwhites. In the 1880s, Chinese immigrants worked the railroad boom, as well as in the fishing industry, and farming. However, the statewide anti-Chinese movement broke out in San Diego in 1885. Whites formed an Anti-Chinese Club, and persuaded the San Diego Water Company to fire all Chinese employees. Many Chinese immigrants left the city for employment in San Francisco, but the federal Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 also brought legal migration to a halt (MacPhail 1977). Despite the white working-class backlash, these jobs in fishing and farming were worked by Japanese, Mexican, Filipino,

Portuguese, and Italian migrants at the onset of WWI (Felando and Medina 2012; Gueverra 2012). Anti-immigrant sentiment brought whites together as whites began to collectively view nonwhites as obstacles to employment as well as a social status to avoid (Roediger 1991).⁷ The special privilege of higher wages for white labor opposed to lower paid black labor is what DuBois refers to as the “psychological wage” (1935: 700). Supplementing white wages was self-esteem, special courtesy, and deference as whites had access to public parks, public functions, and public schools.

Race, residential patterns, and poverty, 1880 – 1916. In the early years, labor not only separated the elite from the working classes, but also residence. As people of color migrated to San Diego they lived in specific neighborhoods within the city. The 1880s brought African Americans to San Diego, and while a small population of 51 people, 80 percent lived in the downtown area (Harris 1974). Most did not own property and therefore rented, lived with employers, or on their employer’s property (Madyun and Malone 1981). Most Mexican Americans, or those with Spanish surnames, totaling 37 people in the city, also lived in the downtown area and rented. However, like African Americans, people of color did not live in the early established suburbs of Grant Hill, Golden Hill, and Sherman Heights. However, as the city grew, in the coming decades, racial segregation became an institutional practice (Harris 1974).

⁷ As Roediger notes, farm, and household workers in the 19th century “were becoming *white workers* who identified their freedom and their dignity in work as being suited to those who were ‘not slaves’ or ‘not negurs.’ White workers were not slaves, and there were excellent reasons, quite without manipulation by employers, for their not wanting to be considered ‘like a slave’” (1991: 49).

Living conditions for people of color and poor whites were unfavorable, compared to the Anglo elite. Inequality observable in the city became a concern in 1914 with the progressive publication, “The Pathfinder Social Survey of San Diego” (E. King and F. King). These researchers sought to professionalize social welfare services and make social policy recommendations to San Diego businessmen and political leaders. Contrary to the official City version of San Diego as a unique city without slums, smog, or illnesses found in eastern and midwestern cities (Ciani 1998), the Pathfinder Survey shed light on the poor and working-class that labor in the city. Documenting poverty in the city, researchers noted destitute social conditions:

There are distinctly slum conditions in San Diego in shacks along the water front and among the Mexicans, negroes, and whites, in the tenement houses and cottages of the district south of F street, and west of Sixteenth street to the waterfront. (E. King and F. King 1914: 12)

Conditions of overcrowding in living quarters, lack of consistent and quality schooling for children, absence of sewer connections, prohibitive cost of garbage service, the risk of tuberculosis,⁸ and infant mortality from spoiled milk were all documented. Philanthropic organizations emerged in the wake of the report, especially for child services, however organizations blamed poverty and dire living conditions on people of color themselves. While serving white families, many organizations harbored racial stereotypes of African Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans, and thus excluded these groups from services. This not only drew a color line between the

⁸ Shockingly, the E. King and F. King report noted that garbage-fed pigs contracted tuberculosis, and were slaughtered and sold (1914: 10). Also, raw sewage flowed into the waterfront, exposing those that lived in shacks on the shore (6).

“deserving” and “undeserving” poor, but justified that regardless of poverty, whites were more deserving than nonwhites. These exclusions forced people of color to build their own social services outside of the official philanthropic network (Ciani 1998).⁹

The Pathfinder report draws attention to the conditions of poverty faced by poor people in San Diego. E. King and F. King outlined race and poverty on a district map, also showing the neighborhoods by quality of life (Figure 2.3). This report makes race and class inequalities visible in the landscape. The wealthiest areas are in the hills and are sheltered by the park and easy transportation to employment in the city, while people in the flatlands and waterfront face poor living conditions. This patchwork of land uses for low-lying areas would grow into an organized geography of racial segregation in the next several decades. In a racialized social system, those dominant (white) occupy better prospects for income, housing, and health care. In this racialized social system, affluent whites have a higher standard of living due to their race.

Summary. The first period of San Diego growth reveals the beginnings of a Yankee racial structure that privileges a nascent middle class and elite whites by relegating people of color and poor whites to lower status and low-paid insecure employment. This marks the beginning of a racialized social system in San Diego. This system deprives poor and nonwhites from opportunities to forge wealth accumulation. While the early pattern of segregation began with the creation of new early suburbs in the 1880s, conditions of poverty effected both people of color and whites. These groups lived

⁹ See Ciani (1998) for a review of the social organizations that emerged among the Mexican, Filipino, Chinese, and African American communities as well as other social critiques and reports of early San Diego poverty.

in the downtown and the waterfront areas, and those with enough income expanded into census tracts south and east of the city to Logan Heights. Although class shaped the identity of everyone in the social structure, a working class white identity began to forge around the expulsion of nonwhite immigrant groups. Even for the poorest whites in San Diego, they could claim entitlement from official philanthropy, while nonwhites were excluded and created these social supports on their own.

Commercial, Industrial, and Residential Expansion, 1917 – 1939

Commercial, industrial, and residential expansion continued apace throughout the twenties as WWI generated the demand for military and industrial activities as well as for labor. This expansion worked in concert with migratory flows from the Philippines, Mexico, and African Americans from the South, which provided a low-cost labor force for said expansion. As in the twentieth century, federal restrictions on immigration from Europe and Asia in the first few decades would structure labor markets, creating racial hierarchy and differential access to resources. Furthermore, as the population grew, and with the advent of the automobile, city zoning, restrictive covenants, and racism within the housing industry, residential segregation intensified, concentrating people of color into neighborhoods south and east of the city. Returns on whiteness as an investment became palpable. In the 1920s and 1930s “white flight” occurred on a larger scale than in the 1880s and white privilege noticeably shaped the experiences of people of color as well as the San Diego landscape.

Military investment and expansion, 1917-1939. Economically, the tide of federal investment in San Diego as a major military operation changed with the U.S. involvement in WWI. In 1917 units of the Pacific Fleet were stationed in San Diego to protect American interests in the Philippines, Hawaii, and Central America (Griffin and Weeks 2014). Expanding the use and experimentation with aeronautics, the Navy spent \$2 million on a Naval Air Station in 1917. Afterwards, federal money continued to flow into the city, turning San Diego into a military installation. The federal government built a \$2 million Naval Hospital in 1922, and shortly afterwards a Naval Supply Depot was commissioned as well as a Naval Training Center. Marine installations were also under construction and authorized by 1924. In all, by 1928 San Diego had become a significant military base whose federal payroll consisted of \$18 million in comparison to industrial payroll at \$7 million (Harris 1974: 33-43). Federal dollars fueled the metropolitan growth in San Diego, linking the industry of war to urban prosperity. However, during the 1920s the military would employ few nonwhites in skilled positions. Businesses and industry that supplied the military with services and construction offered labor for nonwhites. Thus, the racialized social system limited skilled employment to whites, thus denying people of color these opportunities and social mobility.

Race and labor, 1917-1939. The 1920s brought growth in military development along with industries such as agriculture and fish canning. The onset of WWI combined with federal laws that restricted migration from Asia and Europe created a labor shortage. Agriculture and fish canning industries advocated for Mexican and Filipino labor; thus,

these groups became the “beneficiaries” of racial exclusions.¹⁰ The Mexican Revolution had already disrupted livelihoods for Mexicans, and many migrated to the Southwest in search of wages and stability. Low population estimates show between 1920 and 1930 the Mexican population more than doubled in San Diego from 3,500 people to 10,000 people. Among other migrant groups that doubled in size during this time is the Filipino population. Sources point to 50 Filipino people in 1920, which increased to 400 by 1930 (Gueverra 2012: 22, 28).¹¹ These groups would come to fill the bulk of hard labor in this decade, including the growing tourism sector.

Among the few migrant groups that did work in the Navy were Filipinos. After U.S. colonization of the Philippines in 1898, Filipinos were recruited to offset the imperial costs of using U.S. soldiers. The Navy hired Filipino males as domestic servants for white naval officers. As stewards, Filipinos could not advance, thus holding back access to higher wages and benefits. On the mainland in San Diego, Filipinos were employed in hotels, restaurants, and resorts as housekeepers, dishwashers, janitors, porters, gardeners, cooks, and kitchen help. The color line shaped pay for Filipinos, who were paid half the rate of white labor performing the same domestic service task. This privileged the white working class, justifying higher pay afforded by white status (Gueverra 2012). Thus, while the military grew through federal investment, whites would receive increased pay and mobility unlike their Filipino counterparts. It was not until

¹⁰ This is to highlight Lipsitz’ point that “the possessive investment in whiteness is not a simple matter of black and white; all racialized minority groups have suffered from it, albeit to different degrees and in different ways” (2006: 2).

¹¹ By 1930 the population of Filipinos in California was 30,470 people (Gueverra 2012: 22).

WWII that federal nondiscriminatory clauses were practiced and some people of color could partake in well-paying jobs offered by the military (Harris 1974). Thus, this is an example where a policy change could alter employment for those previously excluded.

On the mainland, agriculture, fish canning, and tourism would employ Filipinos as well as the growing Mexican population. In the early decades, San Diego became the “tuna capital of the world,” and the once budding waterfront became an industrial site for an intensified canning industry (Schiff 2012: 3). In the field of agriculture, the export of citrus oranges and lemons also supplied low-wage work. Most of the male Mexican labor force were hired as field hands. Fish canneries employed Mexican, Japanese, Filipino, Portuguese, and Italian females, who cleaned and assembled fish for can processing. Until Japanese competition with the US tuna fleet in the 1950s, the fish canning industry employed whole communities along the waterfront, such as in Logan Heights (Felando and Medina 2012). Nonwhite workers in other industries also lived in the less expensive area of Logan Heights (Gueverra 2012).

As with stereotypes of nonwhites by philanthropic organizations in the early 1900s, people of color often dealt with racial prejudice by employers. Growers hired Mexican and Filipino workers with the assumption that nonwhite workers were cheap, unintelligent, and whose sole purpose was hard labor. A grower asserted of Mexican laborers, “Mexican labor is satisfactory when placed in occupations fitted for. They apparently fit well on jobs not requiring any great degree of mentality, and they do not object to the dirt” (French in Gueverra 2012: 101). Filipinos were also dehumanized. Another grower said, “It must be realized that the Filipino is just the same as the manure

that we put on the land—just the same” (S.P. Frisselle in Gueverra 2012: 101).

Stereotypes of Mexicans and Filipinos reinforced white identity as intelligent, skilled, deserving, and superior. In sum, employers in the military and industry during the 1920s created and continued to exploit the color line.

White racism and federal relief programs, 1917-1939. In the 1930s, while the military continued to expand,¹² especially in aeronautics, other industries retracted when the Great Depression hit San Diego. A resurgence in racism followed. Like the 1880s with anti-Chinese sentiment, white angst played out against minority groups. Because the numbers of migrants were rising and became noticeable throughout the 1920s, in scarce times of employment people of color became scapegoats. Politicians, conservative labor unions, civic clubs, and whites saw people of color as a threat to their livelihoods, and pushed to disenfranchise and expunge migrant labor (Gueverra 2012).¹³ Rhetoric that Mexicans and Filipinos could not assimilate due to their race and color were part of public discourse, marking Mexicans and Filipinos as un-American, out of place, and non-human. Public school teachers also harbored the belief in difference, “He [the Mexican American] is not really part of the real America. Because of language and color, he is foreign even to the so called ‘hyphenated’ American citizen; he may always be” (Walker in Gueverra 2012: 34). Notably, Congressman Richard Welch of California called

¹² The Navy and Army spent \$3.2 million on construction projects in San Diego during the 1930s. Consolidated Aircraft Corporation also moved to San Diego from Buffalo, New York. The corporation brought \$9 million in orders and 800 employees to San Diego. Consolidated would turn into a major resource for employment during WWII (Engstrand 2014).

¹³ In the 1930s, Mexican migration to the U.S. not only declined, but also reversed. Through “repatriation” programs, cities, and counties (including San Diego) gave transportation to those willing to return to Mexico. Some were forced, and were also American citizens or legal residents of Mexican descent (Gueverra 2012; Larralde 2006).

Filipinos a “problem,” arguing “Filipinos are not our own people” (Welch in Gueverra 2012: 33). Mexicans and Filipinos endured violence by whites, including the San Diego Ku Klux Klan chapter, who stabbed, robbed, beat, bombed, and shot at them. Becoming white was forged by dehumanizing the “other,” and xenophobic rhetoric during the Great Depression fused white superiority with the right to employment and expunge nonwhite peoples. The scale of racism embedded in federal policies brought race to the level of population, creating devastating impacts for people of color by advantaging whiteness.

Relief programs set up by the federal government during the Great Depression also did not apply to people of color and migrants. The Social Security Act of 1935, designed to protect the elderly, unemployed, and children through federal aid, exempted agricultural and domestic laborers. Because these sources of employment were occupied by nonwhites and migrant labor, this legislation excluded these groups. Pensions, survivor benefits, and aid to families with children excluded people of color while benefits went mostly to whites. Federal policies created obstacles and prevented nonwhites from receiving social support (Lui et al. 2006).

Race, class, and segregation, 1917-1939. Racial inequality in employment with racial inequality in residential patterns. During the interwar period, residential construction in existing subdivisions grew, and housing developments spread further north and east of the city. Due to the mass adoption of the automobile, developers and homeowners could locate further from the city without the reliance on public transportation (Quastler and Pryde 2014). The automobile changed the nature of suburban development tracts, such as Valencia Park, which was a low-density subdivision with

curvilinear streets. For the working class and people of color, some sections of Logan Heights were the only options. Higher-density housing in the form of apartments and duplexes were built alongside existing bungalow courts.¹⁴ A pattern emerged in the 1920s south and east of the city in Logan Heights. As whites moved out of Logan Heights due to the encroachment of industries shifting eastward and the ability to seek newer single-family housing, people of color began to move into the older area of Logan Heights in greater numbers. Data shows the outmigration of whites coincided with the in-migration of nonwhites (Harris 1974).

This pattern of white outmigration to newer suburbs and increasing concentration of people of color in smaller areas is segregation, a key feature of racialized social systems. This separation of racial groups was enforced in a variety of ways in San Diego during the interwar period. Segregation not only separated groups geographically based on race, but also created an institutional path in which privileges of whiteness increased monetary value (Brym and Lie 2010; Lipsitz 2006). These mechanisms of segregation that linked wealth accumulation with race were solidified through city planning at the local level, racial covenants in the private sector, federal legislation, and real estate agencies before WWII (Thomas and Ritzdorf 1997). These structures have enduring effects on people in Southeastern San Diego today.

¹⁴ Bungalow courts were “well-designed, small houses carefully arranged around a planned open space” (Curtis and Ford 1988: n.p.) Budget sensitive, bungalow courts were a “compromise between expensive and demanding single-family homes on the one hand, and the “indecent propinquities” of apartment life on the other” <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/1988/april/bungalow/>.

Race and city planning, 1917-1939. As sprawl, congestion, industry, and migration shaped patchwork growth in cities across the nation, in the early 1900s cities began to experiment with land use planning and regulation. In 1915, the U.S. Supreme Court endorsed the use of police power by cities to regulate height, area, location and use of buildings within their incorporated limits. Designating land use as commercial, residential, agricultural, and industrial, cities could shape the built environment and stabilize land values. However, zoning was also used as a tool for “social reform” for the maintenance of residential segregation (Silver 1997). Scholars in urban planning have shown that especially in Southern cities, zoning based on race in the early 1900s was overt and widely applied (Hirt 2015; Thomas and Ritzdorf 1997). The goal was to protect white property values by “exclud[ing] incompatible uses from residential areas but also to slow the spread of slums into better neighborhoods” (Silver 1997: 24). Moral in tone, racial zoning would shield the white community from slums and apartments that were considered “causes” of immorality, death, disease, alcoholism, and crime (Baar 1992). Cities outside the South that experienced growth in migrant populations also experimented with racial zoning practices, such as Los Angeles. However, the U.S. Supreme Court declared racial zoning unconstitutional in 1917. Instead, racial zoning was practiced in other ways. Cities pursued racial zoning by “crafting ordinances in which particular land uses like apartments or laundries became the understood technical language for indicating stigmatized groups” (Troutman 2015: 115). One of the ways this was done was by using zoning to separate and exclude multifamily residences and/or apartments from single-family detached homes. In 1926, the U.S. Supreme Court

celebrated zoning and single-family districts in the case *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Corporation*. Legalizing segregation in a new way, districts would set up exclusively for private homes (Hirt 2015).

In San Diego, the movement to segregate residential uses also shaped the city planning process. This sentiment for protecting single-family homes from the “evils” of high-density housing is written in the San Diego City Planning Commission’s legal opinion to the California Supreme Court in 1924:

Good morals are not promoted by congestion of people; and a home atmosphere, the true basis of aggregate morality, is best conserved in the atmosphere of the independent home and out of the shadow of hotel and apartment house life...Who would deliberately choose to put his home under the shadow of an apartment house, or to have an apartment house on each side of his house, flush with the street, cutting off the light, warmth and air from the house and yard?...Adequate zoning, including the exclusion of apartments from residential districts, is universally thought to be proper by every citizen who has given the matter the slightest thought...There exists such a manifest difference between apartment houses and homes - - between apartment house and family life, whether four flat or otherwise, as a modern substitute for the American home, is, we respectfully claim, absurd and ridiculous. (P. 10-11)

In the above quote, the single-family home is positively viewed in relation to its opposite—hotel and apartment living. The world of the single-family home captures the life of an American family that is moral, populated by white citizens, whose environment is pleasant and healthy. Apartment or hotel living, on the other hand, is a corruptible dark force hidden by shadows that gives rise to immorality. This juxtaposition reveals the

“other” as a nonwhite, non-citizen/migrant renter. Against this backdrop of racial othering, the Planning Commission’s opinion appeals to and stands for the voice of white male authority. Thus, protecting single-family homes is akin to protecting white spaces.

Zoning appealed to self-interest in an aspiring white working class. Per the widely supported “Comprehensive City Plan for San Diego, California” by recognized planner John Nolen (1926), zoning is a form of protection that even those from excluded districts could be part of (see Figure 2.4). The City Plan appealed to the interests of owners of factories, businesses, and homeowners. However, zoning promises to level wealth disparity between small home owners and owners in “restricted districts.” Implied is protection from the non-ownership class, or the non-American, nonwhite, migrant. In sum, areas like Logan Heights that expanded high-density housing in the form of apartments, multiple family dwellings, and slum like conditions, were to be contained through the city zoning process.

Race and housing covenants, 1917-1939. Combined with city zoning, racial covenants also played a significant role by securing the boundaries of Southeastern San Diego. Racial covenants are contractual agreements among buyers and sellers of property that limit the purchasing, leasing, or occupying of land by a specific group of people. These racial covenants in housing deeds were most applied to African Americans, but in San Diego were also applied to other nonwhite groups. In San Diego covenants were in practice as early as 1888 and recently as 1957. Previous research by Leroy Harris (1974) documents restrictive covenants in a sample of twenty-nine separate real estate developments in seventeen tracts in and around Southeast San Diego. Of the twenty-nine

deeds in the sample, twenty deeds had racial clauses ranging from general to specific criteria. For example, a City Heights clause for a tract north of Logan Heights said, “This property shall not be sold, leased, rented or occupied by any person other than one of the Caucasian race” (Harris 1974: 176). A more specific clause for Valencia Park found east of Logan Heights said:

It is further provided that no lot shall ever be lived upon or used or occupied by any person whose blood is not entirely of the Caucasian race, it being agreed for the purpose of this paragraph that no Japanese, Chinese, Mexican, Hindu, or any person of the Ethiopian, Indian, or Mongolian races shall be deemed a Caucasian; provided that if the persons not of the Caucasian race be kept thereon by such a Caucasian occupant strictly in the capacity of servants or employed by the occupants, such circumstances shall not constitute a violation of this condition. (Harris 1974: 176, 180)

Locally, Neighborhood Improvement Associations, real estate agents, and individual action enforced these boundaries. In the 1920s the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) implemented a code of ethics preventing the sale of homes to nonwhites (Gueverra 2012). At an individual level and through Neighborhood Improvement Associations, whites encouraged Mexican Americans in Logan Heights to refuse sale of property to African Americans, and whites were violent to Filipinos and Mexicans for traveling into white districts. Racial covenants and policing by individuals shaped interactions among whites and nonwhites in practice (Gueverra 2012). By the late 1920s, segregation was marked in the landscape as “Logan Heights was considered the residential section of the [sic] negroes, [sic] Mexicans and [sic] Orientals” (Norris 1983: n.p.). Thus, racial covenants prevented mobility for people of color, as well as the

possibility of buying into the ideal of homeownership and “American” identity. Racial covenants shaped the geographical boundaries of Southeastern San Diego. Through racial covenants whites could create physical segregation from nonwhites.

Race and federal housing programs, 1917-1937. Like many cities prior to WWII, federal housing policy during the Great Depression actively shaped the transfer of wealth to whites, while continuing to define geographic boundaries of poor and minority areas such as Southeastern San Diego. During the Great Depression, F.D.R. implemented a program through the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) to stabilize the real estate market and protect property values. Active from 1933 to 1936, HOLC helped financially distressed homeowners avoid foreclosure by refinancing qualifying mortgages on a long-term, low-interest basis. The agency nationally adopted uniform appraisal techniques to assess the risk of the loan. Working with local real estate bankers and mortgage lenders, HOLC’s City Survey Program used population, housing, and land use characteristics to name the quality of districts. Most controversially, HOLC’s concern with uniformity in race and land use in naming low-risk areas shaped city patterns of investment, known as “redlining.”¹⁵ “Residential Security Maps” were drafted for lending institutions to simplify the connection between population characteristics and physical environment. These maps were color coded to easily assess risk of default, thus deciding qualification for federal support. However, these maps linked quality of neighborhood with demographics, simplifying the connection between race and place. In other words, the maps made racism efficient (Coates 2014).

¹⁵ Redlining is “the practice of discrimination based on residential location” (Gueverra 2012: 55).

As demarcated in the 1936 San Diego security map criteria, the most secure areas were uniformly white, wealthy, and defined by single family homeownership.¹⁶ These were graded “A” (see Figure 2.5). Descriptions of “A” areas noted “white collar, professional men, artists and writers.” Topography of sloping hills that gave a seascape view, and manicured landscapes aided the grade. Restrictions based on residential use only, and/or racial covenants were judged as positive. Incomes that were defined as “\$5,000 and upward” per year suggested promising affluence. “B” areas also had white residents, but whose topographies were at sea level, homes were older, and income defined at both minimum and maximum levels. A lack of racial restrictions and proximity to low-income residents demarcated A from B areas. For section B-10 of La Playa,

This area across the street from the beach lots is not well integrated and various types of homes are contained therein, occupied by a lower social strata of residents in the fishing industry and other low salaried people.

Class mixtures were enough to separate A from B areas. Yellow areas, or “C” grades, were considered buffer zones between B and D areas. Yellow areas are marked by flat topographies, lower incomes, older homes, lower percentages of homeownership, and proximity to apartments and the presence of minorities. Separating the C and D areas is the presence of renters, older homes and apartments, racial heterogeneity and racial “concentration.” For instance, D-6 in Logan Heights is described below:

¹⁶ I obtained HOLC data files and maps for San Diego courtesy of R. Marciano, D. Goldberg, C. Hou. "T-RACES: A Testbed for the Redlining Archives of California's Exclusionary Spaces" <http://salt.umd.edu/T-RACES>.

North portion occupied by mixed races, colored, Mexican, lower salaried white race, laborers, etc. Range of income \$750 to \$1500. Racial concentration of colored fraternity. Homes show only slight degree of pride of ownership and on the average, are negligently maintained.

In sum, class and especially race, were significant in the determination of graded areas in San Diego. These designations reveal the bias inherent in the grading scheme.

Table 2.2 illustrates HOLC lending trends borne out in San Diego. Although loans were not disaggregated in source documents, including the investment amount, the available data reveals some insights as to loan dispersal. HOLC loans were distributed throughout the city, except for undeveloped areas. Of the 2,426 loans given out by HOLC, over half were in districts that lacked D areas. In other words, most loans were in neighborhoods made up of only A, B, and C areas. Interestingly, Logan Heights was awarded 17.7 percent of HOLC loans. This contradicts the claim that HOLC loans did not go to “hazardous” areas. An explanation for this is revealed in source descriptions and interviews with lending institutions forming the HOLC report. Source descriptions say the area C-17 in Logan Heights was restricted to whites. Many lending institutions in San Diego favored white areas such as Loma Portal, Mission Hills, and Normal Heights while refusing to lend in areas downtown, and Logan Heights. In my view, it is likely that white areas of Logan Heights received support. In addition, areas D-6 and D-9 were special assessment, or “Mattoon” districts. Lending institutions in San Diego were cautious and/or refused to lend to Mattoon districts due to increased rates of taxation, apart from neighborhoods whose incomes were high enough to compensate for such increased taxes,

such as La Jolla. Thus, it is not likely that the minority areas received most investments by HOLC.¹⁷

While HOLC only gave loans for several years, the impact of HOLC grading schemes also played out in the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). In later decades, FHA lending practices privileged white single-family homeownership for new developments. Like HOLC, underwriting practices were biased toward segregated neighborhoods. In addition, underwriters were instructed to consult HOLC maps in their decision-making process for loan approvals (Jackson 1980).

Nationally, because of redlining, few African Americans were offered refinancing or loans during the Great Depression. Without support that whites received, many African Americans lost their homes (Lui et al. 2006). Significantly, the HOLC maps did the mental work of geographic stereotyping by linking race to a neighborhood unit (Gueverra 2012). This linkage had costly effects nationally because the maps associated estimated risks of loan default with entire neighborhoods, marking them as desirable or undesirable for federal loan support. Overall, the maps served as instruments to standardize the method for the disbursement of home loans for privileged groups. In effect, people of color and the poor become renters, while whites set up a secure place in society through home ownership (Lipsitz 1997).

In San Diego, the HOLC maps significantly overlap with the boundaries of contemporary Southeastern San Diego. Those areas marked by red and yellow, such as

¹⁷ There were exceptions. In Essex County (Newark, New Jersey) most loans were in C and D areas (Jackson 1980: 449). A probable reason is that working-class residents were favored in lending practices because they were more likely to pay back loans, opposed to high priced areas (430).

parts of Logan Heights, Golden Hill, Encanto, and Paradise Hills are those that eventually became part of Southeastern San Diego (Figure 2.6). Importantly, parts of Golden Hill and Logan Heights, earlier marked by the outmigration of whites and in-migration of people of color, still suffer from disinvestments today. As said previously, zoning, and racial covenants set up where minorities could move and their opportunities as renters or owners. HOLC maps in combination with federal authority and finance linked race to the neighborhood. Rather than a patchwork of land uses, HOLC maps helped to organize this patchwork into defined zones of residential exclusion. These zones became the color lines that demarcated land values for residents, investors, and the city. New Deal Programs that assisted homeownership in the 1940s through the FHA would again invoke the criteria of race and neighborhood geography, channeling loan money towards whites and away from communities of color (Lipsitz 2006).

Summary. The interim period of growth in San Diego reveals the development of a racialized social system. This period tells a growth in migration by people of color such as Mexicans and Filipinos, as well as African Americans and whites. Migration created population growth, however migrants met a racialized system of labor and housing upon their arrival. While agriculture and construction welcomed and intentionally sought out labor from people of color, during times of economic contraction federal laws and industry stoked the fire of white working-class interests. These interests became privileges in the context of employment in the military, better wages for whites for similar work, and avoiding the most degrading work. In the field of housing racial hierarchy made these privileges in labor and intergenerational wealth tangible.

Calibrated to the American Dream of white male citizens owning a home and having a family, zoning laws, racial covenants, and the federal prevention of homeowner defaults set up white advantage. Racial hierarchy was institutionalized locally through real estate agents and banking institutions, city planning, neighborhood groups, and private citizens. Southeastern San Diego was made through the above processes, however increased suburbanization, freeway construction, and military and commercial growth would change both racial and physical boundaries between the 1940s and 1970s.

Commercial, Industrial, and Residential Expansion in WWII and Post War Eras, 1940 – 1970

Between 1940 and 1970 San Diego more than tripled its population, and grew into a segregated suburban lifestyle split by freeways, discriminatory housing, and inequalities in resources (Shragge 1994). Federal projects such as highway construction and urban renewal remade city geography. Race and class hierarchies became entrenched in this new landscape, carving out the contemporary demarcation and isolation of Southeastern San Diego from the rest of the city and growing suburbs. The privilege of whiteness and resistance to racial and economic injustice surfaced.

Race and military, government, and industrial expansion, 1940-1970. WWII catalyzed unprecedented growth in the city's populace, military, and commercial activities, as well as residential expansion. San Diego became what Shragge (1994) calls a "Federal City," politically organized around the strategy of using Federal military

dollars, opposed to private investment, to generate city growth.¹⁸ WWII cemented this alliance. The presence of military and aircraft jobs provided by wartime contracts and necessary services created a pull for thousands of American workers and immigrants beginning in 1939. In 1940, fifty thousand workers came to San Diego at a rate of 1,500 people per week, increasing the total population to 203,000 people (Killory 1993; Pourade 1977). Over the course of the war, the city population enlarged dramatically to 320,000 people by 1946 (Killory 1993). This rise in population overwhelmed the city's infrastructure, including housing, public transportation, and water demand. However, it also stimulated new growth and federal military funds to offer the capital (Shragge 1994).

Wartime industries as well as expansion in government employment drew many to San Diego, including African Americans and Mexican immigrants. During the wartime period, between 1940 and 1944, the number of African Americans tripled from 4,143 people to 13,136 people (Harris 1974: 63). While this is significant for San Diego when compared to other West coast cities, San Diego lured far more whites than blacks to the city (Harris 1974). For Mexican migration, the story of WWII is different. Due to severe labor shortages in agriculture and railroad construction, the U.S. forged an agreement with Mexico in 1942. Known as the Bracero program, thousands of authorized Mexican laborers came to the U.S. to work on American farms and build railroads. While data is not available for 1940, by 1950 the Mexican population in San Diego 15,490 people (Gueverra 2012: 22). Japanese Americans were forced into concentration camps, many of

¹⁸ Lotchin (1992) similarly argues San Diego's approach to growth as an alliance between war and urban society.

whom were farmers and working in the fishing industry. In San Diego, 1,100 Isei and Nisei peoples (first and second generation Japanese Americans) were displaced (Schlenker 1972). WWII changed the racial demographics of the city, and race would continue to forge a tiered structure in the workplace.

Primary defense employers for African Americans in San Diego were airplane manufacturers and the Navy. Notably, Consolidated Aircraft (later became Convair in 1943 with Vultee merger) hired thousands of workers to build the famous B-24 and PB4Y airplanes. However, despite F.D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802 in June 1941 that banned discrimination in hiring practices based on "race, creed, color, or national origin," racial discrimination prevailed for most blacks seeking employment. A Los Angeles based company, Vultee, admitted to a policy of not hiring African Americans. Consolidated Aircraft on the other hand, did hire African Americans in San Diego, however not proportional to the population. The manager of industrial relations at the company explicitly stated their hiring policy as supporting "Caucasians only." Thus, despite the estimation of 70,000 skilled African American craftsmen available for hire in the shipbuilding and aircraft industries, fewer African Americans were hired into skilled positions, and many were forced into unskilled positions (Nakamura 2012: 233). Other sources of employment were in commercial trades and services, employing African Americans in lower status positions. With respect to WWII, what pulled African Americans to San Diego was civilian employment with the Navy, and not the aircraft industry (Harris 1974).

Race and housing segregation during WWII, 1940-1970. Prior to WWII, housing took the pattern of segregation with Southeastern San Diego becoming a space for people of color separate from white suburban developments. Wartime housing offered a respite from this pattern. Unlike many cities where the housing industry came to a standstill because of the war, the federal government heavily invested in housing in San Diego for its workforce (Killory 1993). Mass migration to San Diego created housing shortages, and the city was unwilling to move forward on federally subsidized low-income housing projects provided by the 1937 United States Housing Act. Despite the subsidies available and neighborhood disinvestment in communities of color described in the previous section, the city of San Diego did not utilize subsidized housing for poor and minority residents. However, defense workers living in makeshift trailer parks, parking lots, and in their cars voiced complaints about poor living conditions and inadequate transportation effecting workplace efficiency. Because of city disengagement, F.D. Roosevelt forced the largest single defense and low-income housing development on the City of San Diego at that time, usurping city power as needed (Killory 1993). Located six miles north of the city on a plateau overlooking a water valley (Mission Valley), Linda Vista covered an area of 1,459 acres (Engstrand 2014). Using assembly line techniques, an entire street of houses was created overnight (Killory 1993). Throughout San Diego, 4,500 units were built in a few years (City Planning Commission 1950). Significantly, because of nondiscrimination orders, Linda Vista and several other housing developments built by federal military dollars, provided an opportunity for people of color to live outside of the confines of Southeastern San Diego. During this period, while occupational mobility was

limited, federal anti-discriminatory housing policies made an impact for people of color. The Linda Vista development retained its nondiscriminatory status, and African Americans remained once the war was over (Harris 1974).

Race and postwar federal housing investments, 1940-1970. Large federal investments continued to characterize postwar San Diego, especially in the making of the American Dream for a white-middle class. Homeownership, union employment, increased municipal investments in the form of neighborhood schools, parks, and recreation, and a “chicken in every pot” signaled the rise in prosperity promised by new welfare state capitalism. The end of WWII and the beginning of the Cold War spelled new commercial growth for San Diego, including mass suburbanization, and linkages with the military. However, Southeastern San Diego did not receive similar investments. Institutional racism continued to effect communities of color through the urban renewal program and highway development (Gueverra 2012).

Like many cities across the nation, federal investment in housing and highway construction fueled suburban growth in San Diego, especially for the unionized construction trades. Between 1940 and 1967 more than 2,500 new subdivisions were recorded throughout the city of San Diego (Page and Turnbull 2013: 74). Many of these new subdivisions were north and east of the city, although ten new subdivisions were created in the eastern or Encanto portion of Southeastern San Diego. Designed for single family homes reliant on the automobile, new structures had garages or carports, and suburban privacy was maintained through cul-de-sacs. The FHA gave low-cost loans in new developments to whites, driving the financing of these new suburban enclaves

(Jackson 1980).¹⁹ New housing, such as FHA regulations that mandated sound structures and mechanical adequacy. Public facilities such as schools, libraries, shopping centers, and adequate water and sewage were also built. Lastly, mortgage interest and real estate taxes could be deducted from yearly gross income, providing a financial benefit for homeowners. However, for low-income communities and communities of color, FHA investments rarely went to multifamily projects and older structures, thus leaving these communities behind (Jackson 1980). Institutional racism in the form of FHA loans and racial covenants continued to prevent people of color from partaking in new suburban homeownership that is the hallmark of financial security for the white middle-class.

One of the notable exceptions to the general trend of discrimination in housing in San Diego is that of Encanto. During the 1950s and 1960s many African Americans crossed the color line into subdivisions in Encanto, taking advantage of the first opportunity to own homes. State Highway 15, or Wabash Boulevard, served as a color line until the mid-1950s, separating white areas to the east from areas of color to the west (Harris 1974). However, moves were made to provide non-segregated housing east of the color line in Encanto. In 1955, a subdivision in Encanto advertised as a “non-segregated” development and also included FHA and GI financing (Page and Turnbull 2013: 79). Another non-segregated subdivision opened in 1957 called Emerald Estates. While it was inclusive, racial tensions were revealed when a plan was put in place that would allow whites to trade their homes in non-segregated areas for others elsewhere (Page and

¹⁹ See previous section for how the FHA biased white single-family homeownership through underwriting practices. See also Jackson (1980) and Cohen (2003) for more specific details about HOLC and FHA loans.

Turnbull 2013: 79). Although the plan failed, many long-term white residents left the area upon the arrival of people of color. One explanation for the unwillingness to share space with people of color is the fear stoked by real estate agents that people of color, especially blacks, brings down the property values of the neighborhood, thus risking the long-term investment value of the home (Lipsitz 2006). Another explanation is that by the 1950s, with residential segregation in full swing whites felt more comfortable in majority white spaces, while fearing the “other.” As whites moved out to segregated suburbs, ethnic differences became less important than race in U.S. culture (Lipsitz 2006: 7).

While investments poured into the creation of new suburban neighborhoods, downtown San Diego, along the waterfront, and Logan Heights were subject to decline and disinvestment. Living conditions continued to erode for these neighborhoods. In the 1950s the city rezoned the greater Logan Heights area from residential to mixed-use and industrial. While mixed-uses were found in earlier HOLC documents, junkyards, auto wrecking, and salvage yards proliferated. Notably, this created antagonism between residents and the majority white business owners, as these unpleasant uses were next to schools and living quarters (Delgado 1998). City planning reports also found the overcrowding of public schools, lack of recreational space, industrial encroachment, aging public facilities, and utilities, as well as older buildings and housing stock needing repair (San Diego Planning Department 1961; San Diego Urban Renewal Commission 1961). Additional reports by civic groups also documented the existence of slumlords, lower educational attainment rates, higher unemployment rates, lower-incomes, and

higher rates of tuberculosis and morbidity rates overall and for infants (Community Welfare Council 1964; League of Women Voters of San Diego 1965; Rosenberg Foundation 1963). As part of a federal program, this disinvestment was targeted through urban renewal.

Race and urban renewal, 1940 - 1970. In the 1950s and 1960s the city began to target these areas, or “blight,” through the Federal Housing Act of 1954 that established the City’s Urban Renewal Program. Using federal dollars, the city created an Urban Renewal Commission and policy platform for community improvements:

The policy of the City of San Diego is the elimination and prevention of blight in the City by the encouragement of sound development and redevelopment by private enterprise with public cooperation and assistance where necessary, and by land use, environmental, safety, health, and housing regulations appropriate to the common welfare of all its citizens. (San Diego Urban Renewal Commission 1963: title page)

Urban renewal arouses civic participation and public good through its mission. It also calls for an active city apparatus to work toward investment. However, while well intentioned, “blighted” areas were those already coded by HOLC and FHA as black, brown, or minority areas (Avila 2014). Conflating “blight” with communities of color constructed neighborhoods and black and brown bodies as a city problem. For example, urban renewal discourse used the metaphor of disease in public and city documents:

Blight is an insidious disease – the cancer of cities. Blight creeps in unnoticed, building by building, block by block. Neglect, deterioration, decay of single properties grows into area-wide slums. (San Diego Urban Renewal Commission 195-:4)²⁰

²⁰ The precise year of this document is unknown. The San Diego City Library dates the document as sometime in the 1950s.

In the above quote, likening blight to cancer invokes a sense of fear. Like cancer cells, the disorder can spread slowly, house by house, and without notice. Blight is implied as a domestic enemy from within. The discourse is moral in tone, and blames residents in blighted areas as drains on property values:

Most of us fight to eliminate blight, slow depreciation, stop deterioration, cure obsolescence in our own homes. We paint, we garden, we improve and remodel according to our tastes and abilities. But, a few do not – through neglect and carelessness, they inflict damage to their neighbor’s property values – they speed area depreciation, encourage neighborhood deterioration. Thus, is sacrificed the long-term good of all to the immediate selfish gain of the few. (San Diego Urban Renewal Commission 195-:3)

Implied is the norm of home improvements, gardening, and painting to which all citizens are responsible. Not fulfilling this aesthetic is construed as neglectful, careless, and self-interested. In such an opposition, those without the ability to pay or participate are disparaged. Blight is also viewed as a drain on the public tax system, unfairly using tax revenues from suburbs to pay for services in neighborhoods of color, “Blight is an expensive luxury, paid for in misery, degradation, and despondency by those living in deteriorating areas; subsidized in tax dollars by those living in good areas” (San Diego Urban Renewal Commission 195-: 3). Pitting suburban neighborhoods against urban communities introduces blame and resentment towards vulnerable populations. In sum, rather than viewing racial discrimination and resource inequality as the source of blight, urban renewal discourse implies people of color create the problem. Thus, in a racialized social system scapegoating occurs to nonwhites and vulnerable populations.

Race and highway construction, 1970 - 1970. Urban renewal throughout the 1950s and 1960s coincided with interstate highway construction. While this study did not

find a direct linkage between interstate highway development and blight, Avila's (2014) case study of Los Angeles suggests that highway development was utilized as a "two-birds-with-one-stone strategy" to raze blighted areas and provide expressways for traffic flow (41). The state and interstate highway programs dramatically altered the neighborhoods and geography of minority communities in Southeastern San Diego especially during the decades of the 1950s and 1960s. Notably, this displaced residents and businesses and intensely altered the character of the neighborhood. The first major alteration of the community came with the Interstate-5 (I-5) freeway in 1963 (see Figure 2.7). The freeway became a major north to south traffic artery that bisected Logan Heights. The western portion of Logan Heights was cut off from businesses and churches to the east, and eastern Logan Heights was cut off from the city. City reports state that 258 permits were issued for demolition of single and multiple family dwellings from 1960-1965, most for the I-5 freeway (San Diego City Planning Department 1966: 3). A second alteration for Logan Heights came with the introduction of the Coronado Bay Bridge in 1969. Not only did it change the character of the neighborhood, but it also displaced more homes and businesses for development. By 1979 the western portion of Logan Heights decreased in population from 20,000 people to 5,000 people (Delgado 1998: n.p.). The bisected area to the west became known as Barrio Logan, and Logan Heights east of the freeway formed the western boundary of Southeastern San Diego. This transformation, especially in Barrio Logan, generated resentment for those that lived there and inspired the Chicano Movement in San Diego (Avila 2014; Griswold del Castillo 2007; Delgado 1998; Gueverra 2012).

Other freeways transformed the area east of Logan Heights, marking what would become the “Southeast San Diego” planning area in 1969 (San Diego Planning Department 1969, see Figure 2.8). The State Highway 15 (Wabash Boulevard), east of the I-5, was completed in 1955. This expressway created a north-south artery to connect areas further inland. This area was not built up; therefore, few buildings were demolished for this section (Page and Turnbull 2013). The northern boundary of Southeastern San Diego is marked by State Highway 94, the expressway that links the downtown with eastern San Diego. This project demolished fifteen blocks prior to 1958. Lastly, Interstate 805, finished in 1975, divided Southeastern San Diego through the middle (not visible in Figure 2.8). This inland north-south route separated the area of Encanto from Southeast portions for city planning (Page and Turnbull 2013). The southern border of Southeast San Diego is National City, the city limit boundary. In sum, Southeastern San Diego received the brunt of highway development that carved through existing neighborhoods of color. This benefitted the shoppers and workers living in the suburbs, who could more easily traverse through the city without having to live in communities reshaped by highways. The freeways sealed off Southeastern San Diego from white affluent suburbs, effectively creating different experiences between whites and people of color.

Resistance, 1940 - 1970. As in many cities throughout the country, the civil rights movement in the 1960s disrupted business as usual for San Diegans. For people of color in San Diego, the civil rights movement brought racial injustice to light, and offered hope for the future. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) set up a San Diego chapter with Harold Brown as the director. Other organizations involved in the movement were the

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Black Muslims, the Urban League, and the black church (Brown in Mayhew 2003: 277). Many demonstrations were run by CORE, and fought against local hiring discrimination by Bank of America, San Diego Gas and Electric Company, and grocery stores. Other targets were the San Diego Real Estate Association and the California Real Estate Association, for their continued denial of the California Fair Housing Act (1963-1966).²¹ Martin Luther King spoke in San Diego several times in support of the right to housing, employment, and education (Mallios and Campbell 2015). Despite what were non-violent peaceful protests during the early 1960s, the San Diego police were fearful of the movement. Former San Diego police chief Wesley Sharp argued that "...Minorities thought they had the right to do anything, and they had no respect for law and order" (Sharp in Mayhew 2003: 220). Many whites, including the City Manager of San Diego, Tom Fletcher, argued discrimination did not exist in the city (The Racial Issue 1965). However, the San Diego Urban League (1963), voiced the concerns of the black community in San Diego:

...The unrest of Negroes focuses primarily on two areas of discrimination – jobs and housing. In San Diego, the plight of our schools, the philosophy and administration of public welfare, police work and attitudes, and inadequate recreation facilities and services are also matters which lie behind increasing tension. (P.5)

In addition to discrimination, police harassment and brutality also became an issue in the 1960s, with police targeting Southeastern San Diego's black residents (The Racial Issue

²¹ The California Fair Housing Act of 1963, or the Rumford Act, formerly outlawed racial discrimination in housing (Gueverra 2012: 59).

1965). CORE, NAACP, and the Citizens Inter-Racial Committee documented cases of police brutality throughout Southeastern San Diego, for which city officials denied (The Racial Issue 1965). The civil rights movement attacked possessive investment in whiteness through resistance, and while the movement did open housing, employment, and education for people of color, Southeastern San Diego would continue to endure hardships during the neoliberal era.

Summary. WWII changed San Diego. Not only did the military make its mark in terms of investment, but also in terms of pulling people to move there. The weakness of the city to provide for housing, infrastructure, and transportation for residents demonstrates the city's lackluster desire to provide for poor citizens, and even defense workers. The war changed the population of San Diego, as thousands of African Americans and Mexican Americans made San Diego their home. Once the war was over, the developing infrastructure for a decentralized consumer economy still folded into trends of racial discrimination and segregation. Backed by the federal government, a middle-class was born as newly developed suburbs north and east of the city privileged by FHA loans, insurance, tax breaks, and new infrastructure, realized the American dream. However, as resources were channeled away from the city, the waterfront, Logan Heights, and Southeastern San Diego, these areas were disenfranchised. Although there was some respite in Encanto with two non-segregated subdivisions, overall black and brown areas were targeted for urban blight. The translation was highway construction, and removal of businesses and homes that defined the communities. Through federally backed segregation, white identity solidified, and as the civil rights movement erupted in

San Diego, some whites (including city officials) thought discrimination did not exist. The struggle for people of color in San Diego is that while civil rights legislation created openings where none existed before, the transfer of intergenerational wealth and privilege given to whites earlier and needed to combat neoliberalism in the oncoming decades, did not materialize. Thus, racial neoliberalism marks the decades from the 1970s until the present, and is the subject of chapters four through six.

CONCLUSION

At the outset of this chapter I sought to discuss the structural forces that gave rise to Southeastern San Diego as a space of exclusion. Public discussions about food deserts often lack attention to structural causes that give rise to low-income areas without supermarkets, and are often quick to remedy the solution with more supermarkets. However, this discussion obscures the more obvious question: why do affluent areas not lack food deserts or food insecurity? Is there a relationship between white affluence on the one hand and people of color and poverty on the other?

With these empirical questions, I brought Bonilla-Silva (1996) to the task using the “racialized social systems theory.” Viewing race as not simply an ideological phenomenon but instead as a set of interlocking systems, the multiple ways in which whiteness benefits while nonwhites take part in second-class schools, medical care, and housing resonated with the racial patterns I was seeing in San Diego. Using this theory, I undertook the painful task of analyzing major historical developments since the birth of the City in 1850, including the development of the city, the kinds of labor employed, where people lived, the birth of transportation, world expositions, world wars, federal

policies shaping segregation and the white nonwhite wealth gap, and of course, civil rights and resistance. I did find a racialized social system in San Diego.

This theory illustrated the ways that since the very beginning of San Diego's history racial hierarchy was present in census documents. Even prior to the U.S. census the Mexican State also had racial hierarchies. The early capitalists that funded real estate and transportation in the city were (white) Anglo elites, and their calls to newcomers were for whites. International Expos brought international attention to the city, and the small group of white men governing growth competed with Los Angeles for the Navy in lieu of factory development. San Diego would have "smokeless skies," prosperity, and tourism. Up until WWI this narrative held. Filipinos, Latinos, Japanese, and African American laborers built the city, worked the farms, and the emergent canning industry. Their wages, segregated living quarters, and poverty were could be life threatening, especially with waterfront pollution. Notably, whiteness as an identity with collective privileges emerged. As a group whites could demand industries to fire Chinese laborers. However, even poor whites were deserving of philanthropy, while people of color, or the "undeserving" created charities of their own. Thus, in these early years of the formation of the city of San Diego whiteness comes with privileges to philanthropy at the very least, and higher waged employment, schools, and access to public spaces and expositions.

World War I changed San Diego as the federal government heavily invested in military and naval operations. Infrastructure, canning, and farming thrived through nonwhite migrant labor, while skilled labor in the military went to whites. Population continued to grow in San Diego, although with the Great Depression this slowed, creating

white superiority drives to extricate nonwhites from the country. Nonetheless, the city engaged in city planning, a key way in which whiteness and resources are made visible. Bringing these activities into governance is one of the ways to bring racism into a social system by institutionalizing it. Racial zoning in San Diego created a dichotomy between the private suburban home and apartment living. Suburban homes stood for whiteness, as through racial covenants they were reserved as such. However, apartment living and renting was reserved for nonwhites. The connection between residence, schools, medical care, and green space mean that when racial covenants were active, these resources and advantages went to whites. Prior to WWII with HOLC, these disadvantages did not change until after the 1960s. Even within the Federal program, color bias migrated into risk assessments, further creating hardships and disinvestments in communities of color.

After WWII, cities began their strategies of demobilization, making use of massive Federal dollars to revitalize cities and transportation. However, this phase in history marked another aspect of Bonilla-Silva's "racialized social system," – that of urban blight. Urban blight changed communities of color in San Diego and inspired the Chicano Rights Movement. The connection between race and blight needs to be brought to light. While urban blight stood for areas needing investment and transformation, like with food deserts, the *why* is extremely important. Those areas targeted for improvement are the areas that people of color have histories in, and have lived in. The "blight" is not caused by the people themselves, but of absentee landowners, "slumlords," lax zoning regulations by the city (that allow "junkyards" next to living spaces). What makes the

neighborhood blighted is not people, as advocates for a racialized social system would argue, but instead policies themselves.

In the last segment of this chapter, blight was used to revitalize the city and modernize the city. This was also the turning point for communities of color who were segregated by the racial social system. The freeway system served the needs of the military as well as suburban consumers. Barrio Logan was bisected and isolated from the east and west. Southeastern San Diego became a planning area through the imposition of freeways such as the I-5, I-15, I-93, and the community south called National City. Bordered by so many freeways, Southeastern San Diego bounds the African American community as well as many Latinos.

Isolating these communities created frustration and anger among blacks and browns. In the 1960s these issues reached a crisis point. Martin Luther King's Visit in 1964 and uprisings in Watts in 1965 raised employment, and housing as key issues for people of color. Frustrated by second-class status, many met white superiority in the police force and also a city government that did not believe racial discrimination was an issue.

To go back to the reason affluent whites do not experience food insecurity is to simply say that in San Diego there is a "racialized social system." Benefits are afforded to whites, who live in white neighborhoods and are served by white public schools and services. Food deserts are not a problem because investments go to white areas. One of the key actors in the food desert debate is supermarkets. This next chapter looks at the

historical industry of retail food to show how supermarkets became key actors in creating food insecurity.

FIGURES AND TABLES

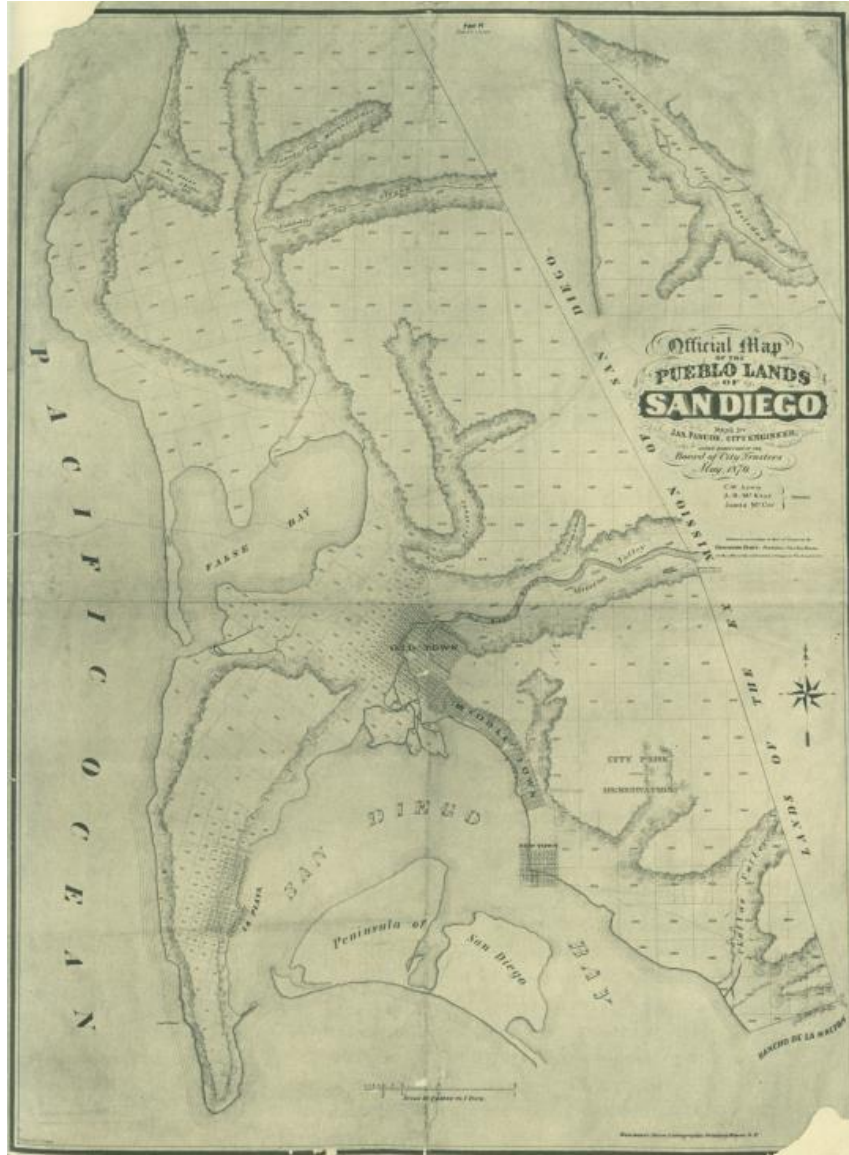


Figure 2.1 Map of San Diego, 1870. Note: Settlement began with Old Town (center), and traversed south along the bay (Middletown) to New Town, now the city center of San Diego. The entry of Anglo-American men pushed the town south from the Hispanic center of San Diego (Old Town) to the downtown (New Town). Source: Pascoe (1870).

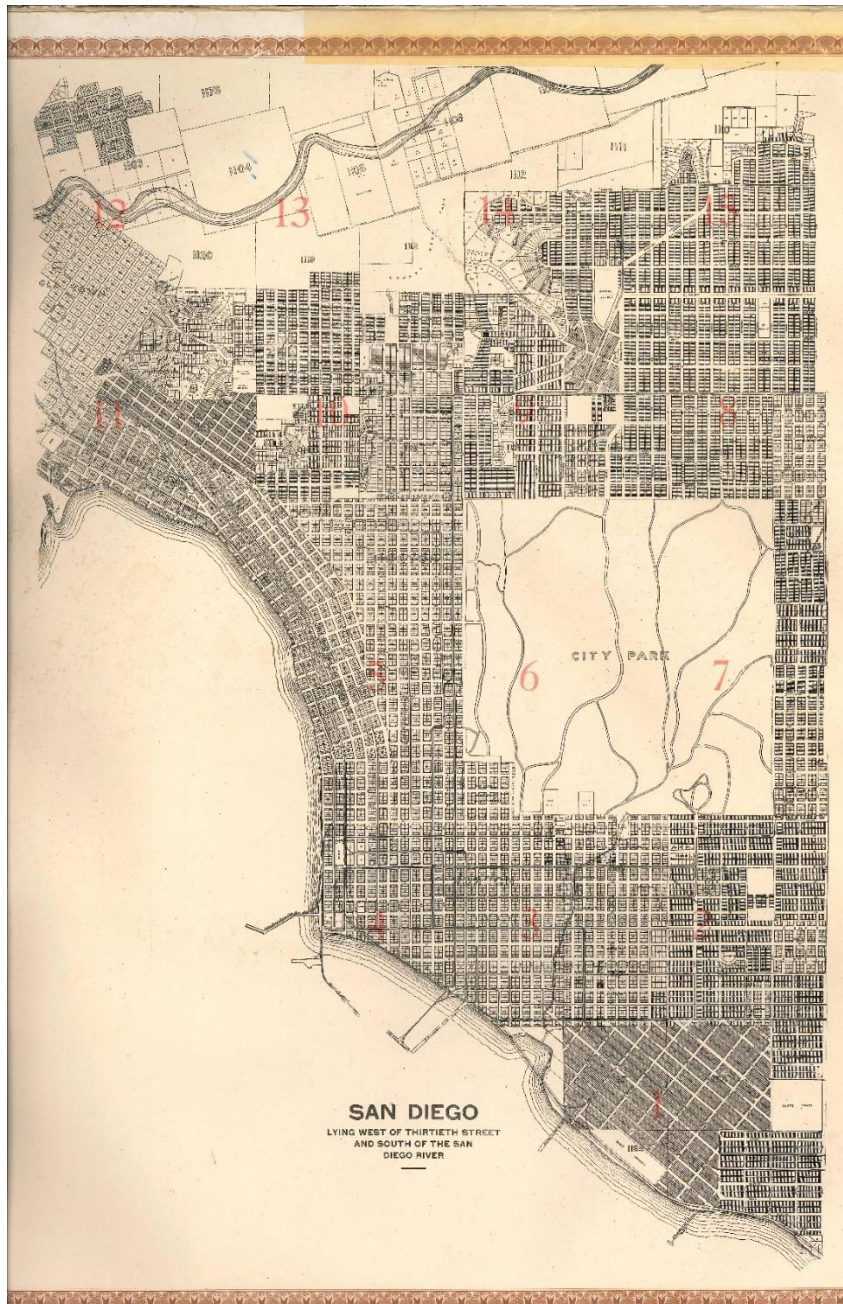


Figure 2.2 Platted map of San Diego, 1910. Source: (W.E. Alexander 1910: n.p.). *Note:* Area 1 is Logan Heights, Area 2 is Grant Hill, Area 3 is Sherman Heights, Area 4 is Downtown, and Area 5 is Middletown.

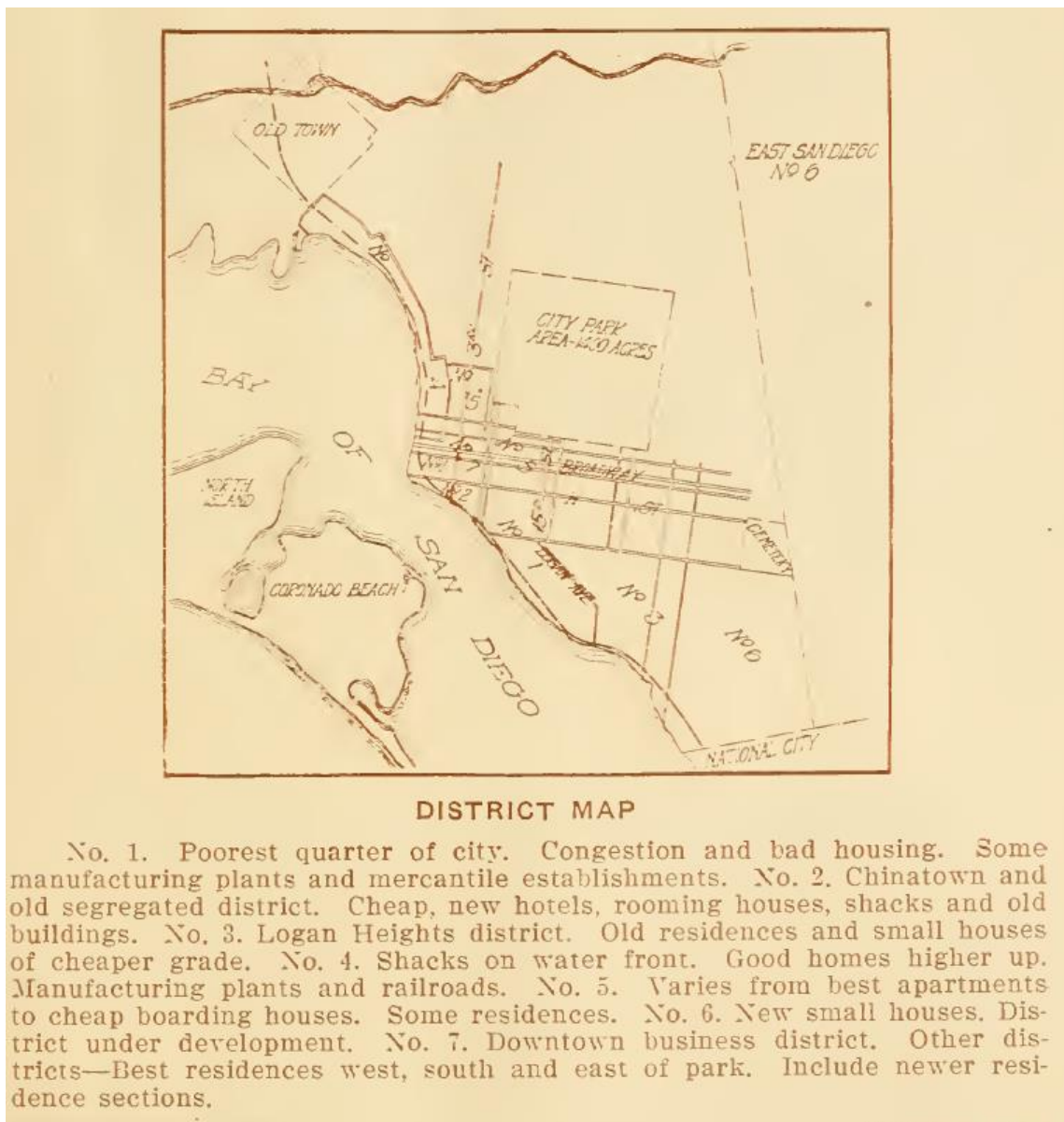


Figure 2.3 Results of Social Conditions Survey in San Diego, 1915 *Note:* Per the researchers, the white areas had the “Best residences west, south, and east of park” (E. King and F. King 1914, p. 12-13).

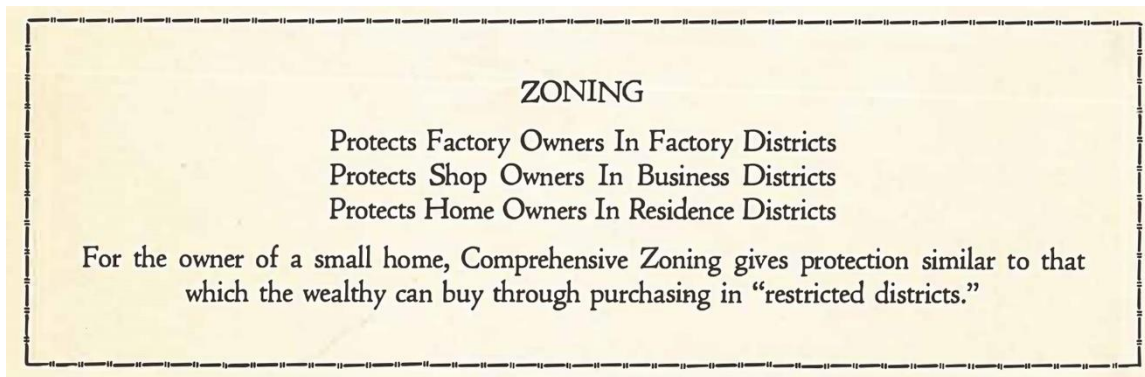


Figure 2.4 Zoning Caption in San Diego City Plan, 1926. Source: (Nolen 1926: 8).

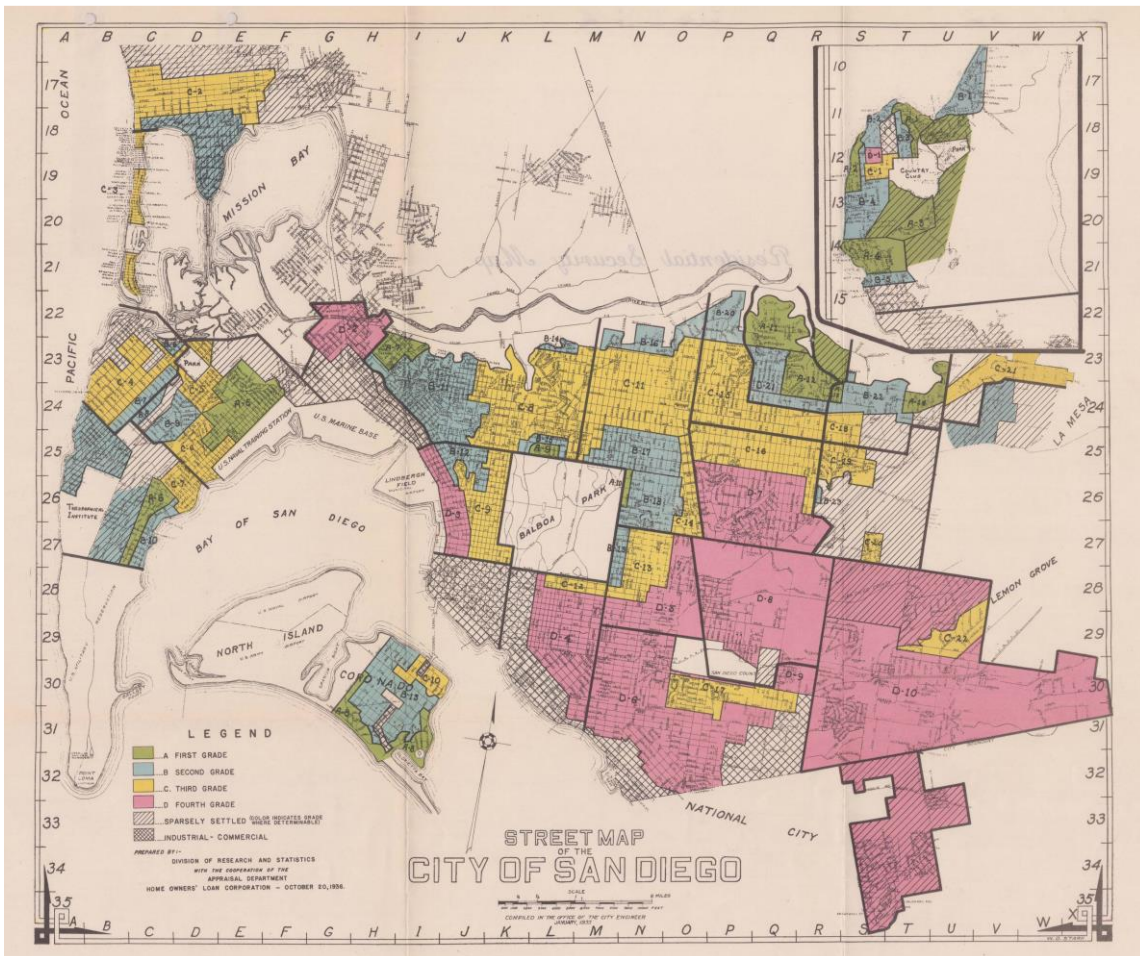


Figure 2.5 City of San Diego HOLC Residential Security Map, 1936.
 Source: (R. Marciano, D. Goldberg, C. Hou. 2017)

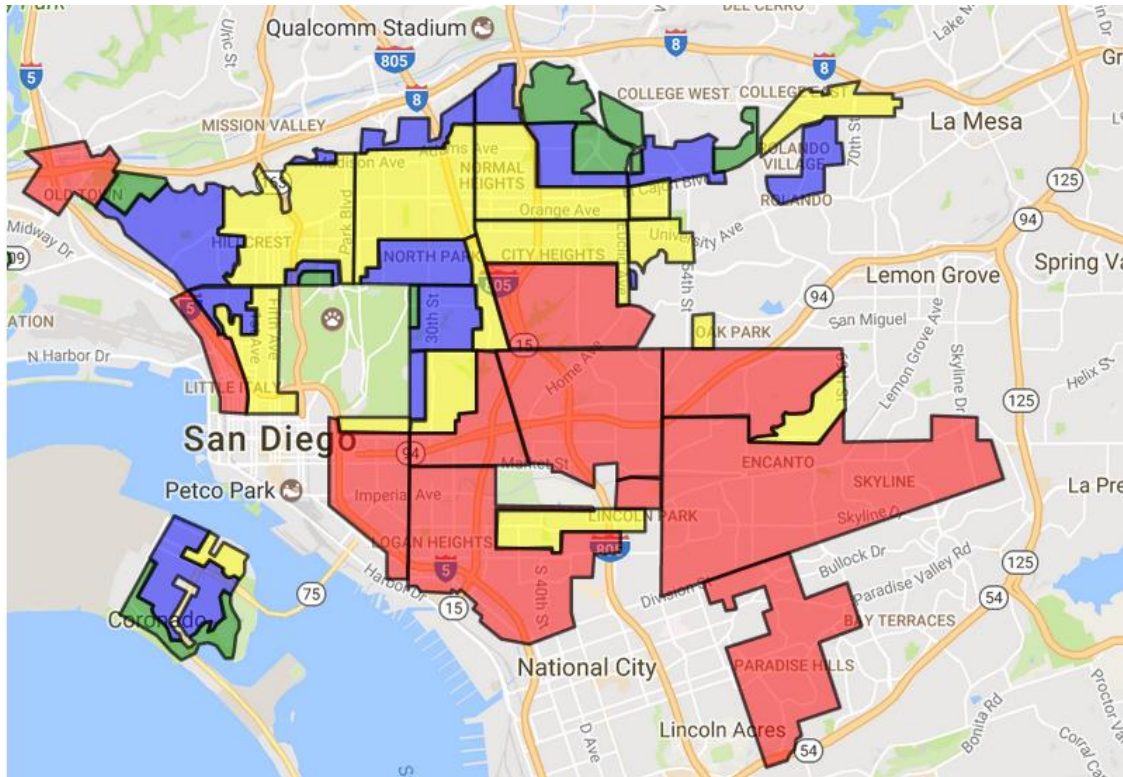


Figure 2.6 HOLC 1936 Residential Security Map in Google Maps, 2017. Source: (R. Marciano, D. Goldberg, C. Hou. 2017). Area A = green, Area B = dark blue, Area C = yellow, Area D = red.



Figure 2.7 Approximate boundaries of Barrio Logan after 1969. Note: The I-5 runs through the center of what once was the neighborhood of Logan Heights. Source: (Smith, Lytle, Pierson, Clowery-Moreno, and Stropes 2011: 53).

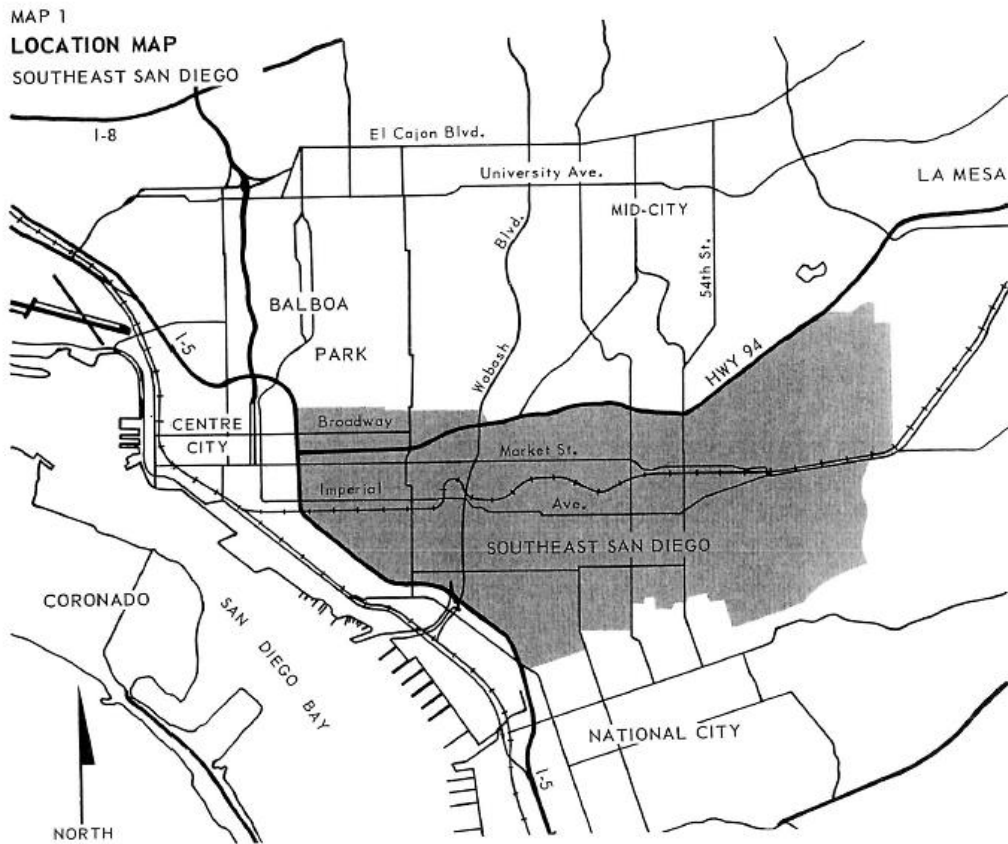


Figure 2.8 Southeastern San Diego, 1969. Source: (San Diego Planning Department 1969: 6) Notes: The I-5 forms the boundary between Barrio Logan and Logan Heights. Wabash Boulevard, or State Highway 15 demarcated the color line until the mid-1950s. Also, notice State highway 94 as the northern boundary.

Table 2.1. San Diego Census Population in 1850

Whites	248
Tame Indians or neophytes	483
Wild Indians or gentiles	1550
Sandwich Islanders	3
Negroes	3
Total population of county	2287

Source: (Smythe 1908: 255).

Table 2.2. HOLC Loan Distribution by District and Grade, 1936

District	Graded Areas	HOLC Loans	Percent Total
Horton's	Business District	6	0.2
Middletown	B-12, C-9, D-3	68	2.8
Mission Hills	A-7, A-9, B-11, B-14, B-15, C-8	430	17.7
North Park	A-10, B-16, B-17, B-18, C-11, C-14	298	12.3
South Park	B-19, C-13, D-5*	120	4.9
Golden Hill	C-12, D-4	175	7.2
Logan Heights	C-17, D-6,*D-9*	420	17.3
Normal Heights	A-11,* A-12, B-20, B-21, C-15	197	8.1
City Heights	C-16, D-7*	171	7.0
Marilou Park	D-8*	26	1.1
Redlands Gardens	A-13, A-14, B-22, C-18	63	2.6
Oak Park	B-23, C-19, C-20*	20	0.8
La Mesa Colony	C-21,* C-22	20	0.8
Encanto	C-23, D-10,* D-22*	25	1.0
Paradise Hills	Undeveloped	0	0.0
Old Town	D-2	24	1.0
Loma Portal	A-5, B-8, B-9, C-5, C-6	54	2.2
La Playa	A-6, B-10, C-7	28	1.2
Ocean Beach	B-6, B-7, C-4	88	3.6
Chesterson	Undeveloped	0	0.0
Moreno	Undeveloped	4	0.2
Pacific Beach	C-2*	49	2.0
Mission Beach	C-3	32	1.3
La Jolla	A-1,*A-2,*A-3,*A-4, *B-1,* B-2,*B-3,* B-4,* C-1,* D-1*	57	2.3
Sorrento	Undeveloped	0	0.0
Coronado	A-8, B-13, C-10	51	2.1
Totals		2426	100.0

Notes: Asterisks show "Mattoon" or special assessment areas. Source: Home Owners Loan Corporation files, 1936 from (R. Marciano, D. Goldberg, C. Hou. 2017).

CHAPTER 3: THE MAKING OF CORPORATE FOOD RETAIL

As documented in the earlier chapter, race and class shapes access to resources. The first part of the story emphasizes the impact of white racism on minority communities in San Diego and access to necessary services for survival. The next part of the story addresses how the corporatization of food shapes meaningful access to nutritious food. This chapter introduces the rise of the supermarket as a key actor in shaping food inequality. Both the growth of suburbia and supermarkets are interrelated, yielding a system of food inequity based on community neglect, labor exploitation, and unhealthy industrialized food sales. To understand the process of supermarket abandonment in disinvested communities, this chapter analyzes the organizational logic of corporate food retailing.

MANAGERIAL CAPITALISM AND THE RATIONALIZATION OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION

A new style of capitalism emerged at the turn of the twentieth century that influenced the trajectory of contemporary food retail systems. Known as “managerial capitalism,” this structure of accumulation rests upon the foundation of managerial expertise, which is made meaningful in the “organized pursuit of efficiency and profit” (Hargadon 2001: 359; Shenhav 1999). Emerging in the contentious labor struggle between capitalists and unions in the late 1800s, engineers promoted a new discourse of managerial rationality that sought technical solutions to these inherently political conflicts. Arguing that rational planning and efficiency could reduce labor conflicts and

increase wages and profits, managerial rationality depoliticized the language of oppression and class struggle. The rise of management in private corporations in the early decades of the 1900s signals this newfound authority of managerial rationality that proliferated through professional societies, new management occupations within corporate organizations, and the formation of business schools (Shenhav 1999; 2008).

Managerial capitalism is also the outcome of a corporate revolution. In contrast to the private corporation of today, up until the 1890s corporations were public enterprises and while large, were few. Legal challenges that granted corporations with personhood and rights as citizens changed their status from public to private entities (Zinn 2013). By the beginning of the 1900s, many private corporations dominated the economy, and were run by the salaried managerial class. The gradual separation of ownership and control from families and single entrepreneurs to a class of managers, occurred with the emergence and professionalization of managerial ideology and practice (Shenhav 1999). This is significant because as corporations were governed by boards of directors, it was managers that were deferred to in running the corporation. Thus, management played a strong role in running these organizationally powerful profit-making enterprises (Fleming 2008).

While the context of managerial capitalism is significant to the emergence and expansion of the mass distribution and supermarkets, the industry itself presents supermarkets as an inevitable and natural outcome of the Great Depression:

History reminds us that the supermarket was actually invented during the Great Depression, delivering an enormous abundance of low cost food to millions of needy American families. We helped nourish, sustain, and

indeed helped these families survive. The supermarket became their lifeline, endowing our industry with a sense of community, responsibility, and a higher purpose that has blossomed over the decades that followed. (Leslie Sarasin 2009)²²

Sarasin's quote is part of an industry narrative that defines the evolution of the supermarket as a natural solution to deprivation during the Great Depression. While this is partially true, the victors also write history. The industry version of supermarket history collapses conflict and struggle to an inevitable process of modernization. Progress, measured by the adoption of principles of scientific management as well as profits, is the engine of this history. The problem with such versions of the truth is that struggles for legitimacy and power are overlooked, obscuring the moments or events in which different paths may have been taken. This chapter contributes to a genealogical history of the supermarket, revealing a more nuanced version of the conflicts, unlikely allies, and institutional structures that made the revolution in retailing possible. In this account, I argue that the structure of corporate food retailing generates the conditions for food inequality.

SUPERMARKET HISTORY

The "supermarket" may be common language today; however, it was not in use prior to the 1930s.²³ It is a modern development that the rationalization of distribution

²² Leslie Sarasin was the President of the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), a professional organization for the food retailing industry. This quote was taken during the "Future Connect" FMI conference in 2009 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_R9vlzbMmQ).

²³ In the early 1900s, urban food retailing included family owned neighborhood stores (mom and pop stores), independent chains, and corporate chains. Independent chains may use managerial techniques

and coordination among mass producers and retailers took shape in the supermarket. Carrying out this feat was not easy. Innovations in technologies and organizational forms do not seamlessly emerge without conflict, as well as a disruption of routines (Shove 2003). These following four sections chart the social and institutional conditions of supermarket development in key time periods: early 1900s, WWII era, post war hegemony in the 1950s, and challenges to the supermarket model in the 1960s and 1970s.

Early Supermarket Pioneers and Retailing Techniques

The first supermarket originated with Michael Cullen, a former manager at Kroger.²⁴ The corporate chain had refused Cullen's pitch of a departmentalized self-service store with parking on the outskirts of town. In 1930, Cullen named his store in Jamaica, New York "King Kullen," advertised as "The World's Greatest Price Breaker." The profit model was based on low overhead costs. The building itself was a large converted garage and minimally equipped. To make rent for the building, Cullen leased out departments to vendors that sold produce, hardware, utensils, paint, and automobile accessories (Hampe and Wittenberg 1964: 318-319; Markin 1963).

like corporate chains, but are distinguished by having far less stores, typically 10 or less. Chains have above 10 stores (Markin 1963: 5).

²⁴ Two supermarket models emerged in the mid to late 1930s. "Cheapy" supermarkets were east coast models, while "supers" were west coast (Markin 1963: 10). The difference between the two styles is due to climate. Supers were drive-in type markets and were L or U shaped with an open front. Like cheapys in the east, supers built in outlying areas supplying plenty of parking, leased departments, and low prices with high inventories. Supers were usually one-story high. However, in the case of the west, development in Los Angeles was less dense, and people in Los Angeles were more dependent on the car (Mayo 1993: 138). Interestingly, Longstreth (1999) and Markin (1963) argues Cullen adopted techniques originally pioneered by drive-in supermarkets and retailers in Southern California.

Other techniques for lowering costs is the adoption of self-service²⁵ and mixed pricing. Unlike today, traditional retailers performed many customer service tasks. Customers presented the grocer with a list and waited while store clerks gathered items, weighed them, packaged them, and tallied the total. Grocers were entrusted with supplying quality items and knowing food grading schemes, and grocers kept products out of view by placing them behind store counters (Greer 1986: 151). In addition, grocers charged above cost for every item. Groceries were costly in this model (*Progressive Grocer* 1952). However, this relationship changed with the adoption of self-service. Self-service placed shopping in the hands of the customer, who handled finding and selecting standardized items. Brands and advertising on packages became important mediators between the product and customers. This lessened the costs of labor, while appealing to customers' sense of independence. Newspapers and in-store advertising that labeled items as "incredibly cheap" created the perception that all items in the store were at bargain prices. However, Cullen's pricing method involved selling items at cost as well as products at 5 to 20 percent above cost.²⁶ Through mixed pricing and self-service

²⁵ The origins of self-service are credited to Clarence Saunders who in 1916 operated Piggly Wiggly stores. However, the application of self-service into a large store is credited to Cullen (Freeman 1992; Greer 1986).

²⁶ In Cullen's 1930 letter to Kroger pitching his idea of his store, he described the mixed pricing scheme, "I would convince the public that I would be able to save them from \$1 to \$3 on their food bills. I would be the 'miracle man' of the grocery business. The public would not and could not believe their eyes. Weekdays would be Saturdays, rainy days would be sunny days, and then when the great crowd of American people came to buy all those low-priced and 5% items, I would have them surrounded with 15%, 20% and in some cases 25% items. In other words, I could afford to sell a can of milk at cost if I could sell a can of peas and make 2 cents, and so on all through the grocery line" (<http://www.supermarketnews.com/archive/letter-kroger#comment-0>).

Cullen could capitalize on low overhead as well as a low-price image (Hampe and Wittenberg 1964: 318-320, 350).

This profit model was incredibly successful. The store sold \$10,000 per week, which was 20 times more than the average small store (Hampe and Wittenberg 1964: 319). One of the reasons for success is the desperate need for cheaper food in the age of the Great Depression. Customers could save as much as 3¢ for major brands. For example, Campbell's tomato soup at King Kullen was only 4¢ compared to 7¢ elsewhere. However, the success of the supermarket also relied on technologies of transportation and space as well, such as automobiles and parking. Automobiles enabled customers to drive to the stores, and bring home more groceries (Markin 1963: 7-11).²⁷ Unheard of at the time, King Kullen customers drove as far away as 30 miles to shop. Parking made convenient spaces for cars near the store, incentivizing more purchases. By 1932, the supermarket King Kullen became a chain with 8 stores and a total annual grocery volume of \$6 million (Hampe and Wittenberg 1964: 319).

Other early pioneers also included former retailers Robert Otis and Roy Dawson, who started Big Bear in Elizabeth, New Jersey in 1932. Building on King Kullen, this operation made use of an abandoned automobile plant, and included 50,000 square feet of space on the first floor for selling products, and upper floors for storage. Like Cullen, the store kept 30 percent of the space for groceries, and leased out departments for the selling of meat, dairy, fruits and produce, bakery items, candy, drugs, tobacco products,

²⁷ Interestingly, the adoption of self-starters in cars during the 1920s also enabled women to make shopping trips on their own. Prior to the self-starter, cars were cranked to start, and were said to be difficult for many women (Greer 1986: 155).

electrical supplies, automobile accessories, and paints and varnish. Free onsite parking was available. Stacks of market baskets were available to the customer inside the door. Self-service ads justified low prices with the expression, “serve yourself and save” (Hampe and Wittenberg 1964: 321). High shelves stacked with merchandise and cashier booths checking customers out aided low overhead and shopping efficiency. Like King Kullen, profits were astonishing to traditional retailers, who considered \$1,000 per week in grocery sales exceptional. Big Bear’s sales during the first week totaled \$75,000, with an average of \$41,000 in groceries alone. The net profit for the first year was 16 times the original investment of \$10,000 (Hampe and Wittenberg 1964: 320-321).

While alarmed by the profits of these early pioneers, existing retailers initially dismissed the model as a fad (Greer 1986). Customers expected these early stores to be cheap, and accepted the sacrifice of service for lower prices. Unconvinced that comforts such as store ambiance, sociality, and service would take a back seat to lower prices, it was not until “cheapy stores” began to thrive that food retailing became political once again (Hampe and Wittenberg 1964).

Supermarket Predecessors and Politics

These early experiments signaled to grocers the profit potential in volume selling on the cheap. However, the supermarket experiments emerged during the era of significant political debate about chain stores, known as the anti-chain store movement. Like its successor, chain stores pioneered volume selling too. However, stores were much smaller in floor space and did not sacrifice services for low overhead in the way

supermarkets did. Chains generated opposition to corporate food retailing by crippling neighborhood stores and cutting out warehousing jobs.

In the early 1900s, chain stores undermined mom-and-pop stores by using a corporate managerial structure.²⁸ While mass production created copious quantities of goods, chain store management realized that mass consumption was not possible unless retailing also underwent a revolution in distribution. Chains were organizationally powerful in their centralization of distribution, finance, real estate, warehousing, and transportation (Greer 1986). Specialization in knowledge about these corporate functions and management of them generated organizational efficiencies and wide geographical reach beyond the neighborhood. The advantages gained by chain stores and community transformation this entailed inspired the anti-chain movement, like the contemporary oppositional politics of the anti-Walmart campaign. Chains altered the retail landscape, eroding the autonomy and community function of small grocery retailing (*Printers' Ink* 1914a).

Mom-and-pop stores were community establishments when compared to corporate chain stores. These establishments were small, family owned, and operated. Working within the local environment, mom-and-pop stores often kept close contact with their customers. These stores made credit allowances, home deliveries, and opened their stores as community meeting places. This depth in customer contact was something

²⁸ The conflict about buying practices encouraged small retailers and independent chains to affiliate with each other and form a larger buying group. These entities are referred to as “affiliated independents,” and can use their power as a group to buy items in bulk more cheaply like corporate chains (Markin 1963: 5).

chain stores eliminated to lower operating costs. That is not to say chain stores did not communicate with customers, however, company policies shaped and tailored interactions.²⁹ On the other hand, chain stores' appeal to saving money trumped customer concern with respect to commitment and social benefits offered by the local store (Mayo 1993: 89).

Chain stores circumvented the status quo of buying practices, creating an advantage over traditional retailers. Organized to sell volume created by mass production, chains bought goods in large quantities or bulk (*Printers' Ink* 1914b). This allowed chains to reduce the unit cost of groceries. Another cost-saving buying practice by chains was to bypass wholesaling by dealing with manufacturers directly (Hurd and Zimmerman 1914a). This practice cut the wholesale jobber position. While doing so meant that chains had to find warehousing space for their own distribution functions, proliferating new stores solved this problem. Opening more stores meant more buying power for bulk and manufacturer direct purchases, and more reduction in unit costs. At the same time, stores were designed and managed for speedy throughput of products, creating higher turnover that justified corporate in-house storage facilities. Standardized store formats cut down on labor and equipment costs in the construction of new stores, as well as lowering costs when the store was up and running (Hurd and Zimmerman 1914b; Mayo 1993).

²⁹ In 1914, the *Printer's Ink* ran an inquiry about the chain store controversy. One query asked how chains can outsell mom-and-pop stores. Analysis revealed that chains behave like machines, whose structure needs the automation of scripted roles for efficient transactions, "...the instruction that many chain stores give their [work]forces all tend to the building of a machine—an efficient, high-powered machine—in which the personality of each individual is merged in the house personality" (Hurd and Zimmerman 1914a: 74).

In the 1920s and 1930s, mom-and-pop stores, independents, and wholesalers challenged corporate chain stores, arguing against unconventional buying practices by these chains and calling for their taxation.³⁰ In 1936, the Robinson-Patman Act took effect, which slashed unfair price controls, false business agents, and advertising allowances that were all part of the bulk buying tactics chain stores used to lower their unit costs (Lebhar 1952). Most states east of the Mississippi River and in California enacted chain store taxes (Beattie 1943). However, this ended in 1938, when the anti-chain movement tried to back chain store taxes by federal legislation through another bill introduced by Wright Patman. Known as the “death sentence bill,” it would have effectively ended all chain stores through added taxation (Ingram and Rao 2004). Poor strategy by the anti-chain store campaign, economic conditions, the co-optation of unions by chains, and an effective advertising campaign by the chain store advocates are some of the reasons behind the failure of the bill. The defeat of the “death sentence” kept chain stores alive, but not without transforming volume based selling in a new way. Because chain store legislation by states was a tax based on the number of stores, *larger and fewer stores* made economic sense (Greer 1986; Mayo 1993: 110-114). By the late 1930s supermarkets continued to increase market share, shifting conventional retailers’ thinking about converting store stock to supermarkets (Markin 1963).

³⁰ Anti-chain store advocates argued that concentrated economic power eroded equality of opportunity and democracy. Monopolies hindered independent ownership and subjected workers to corporate control (Ingram and Rao 2004; Mitchell 2006).

Modernization to Supermarkets

The Great Depression in the 1930s encouraged the growth of supermarkets as economic decline forced budgeting and deprivation for the population, and modernization discourse was employed as a solution to level the playing field between corporates and independents. Disposable income was low, and unemployment peaking at 25 percent. With inequality and economic uncertainty high, saving a penny in food costs was a practical way to get by in tough times (Mayo 1993: 146). In addition, the chain store debate was intractable and tensions were high (Ross 1986). This context created incentives to modernize grocery stores into supermarkets.

Early supermarket experiments were successful and competitive. Supermarkets realized that consumers bought more goods when prices were lower. The new rogue supermarket retailers created concern among traditional retailers worried about newfound competition. Even though chain stores were based on volume, their annual sales at \$60,000 per year were significantly less than yearly supermarket volume of \$500,000 or more per year. During the 1930s, the number of supermarkets increased. In 1932, there were 1,200 supermarkets in the U.S. By 1937 the number rose three times to 3,600. As supermarkets increased in number, traditional grocers quivered (Hampe and Wittenberg 1964: 322-323; Mayo 1993).

In the mid-1930s the retailing industry began a program to rationalize food distribution. Termed “modernization,” the program encouraged retailers to adopt principles of mass merchandizing, or selling in volume (Kline 1952). This move signals the transformation from experiment to adoption of supermarkets throughout the industry.

Modernization techniques and equipment included and intensified the self-service mode of earlier retailers for volume purchases (Dipman 1937). Store equipment such as shelving, refrigeration, and new lighting created the opportunity for displaying more products with less labor time. In 1937, the introduction of full shopping baskets with wheels allowed customers to increase their purchasing volume by relieving the exhaustion of holding a small arm basket. Wheels on carts made for easier movement and flow in the store. Individual pricing on items became a regular practice to ring up customers more quickly and accurately. Modernized stores also reworked store layouts, experimenting with both positioning departments and products for greatest exposure and routine (Greer 1986; Hampe and Wittenberg 1964).

While modernization was said to equalize the playing field for all retailers, throughout the 1930s and later decades, modernization served as one of the barriers to entry in the growing supermarket retailing industry. Supermarkets were capital intensive in their modern form, and mom-and-pop stores and independent chains had to finance their own stores individually. For most retailers, capital requirements were too high. Corporate chains had the capital to finance their stores. The stability of corporate supermarket chains and their growing popularity among customers encouraged developers to seek corporate supermarkets as anchors in newly developed shopping centers. Developers offered lower rental rates for corporate supermarkets while developers only took chances on independent chains when competition was low (Mayo 1993: 165).

Independents, mom-and-pops, and chain stores modernized. However, corporate chain stores had a unique advantage over smaller family owned retailers. Because corporate chain stores owned more capital and had managerial teams, these organizations marshaled resources to modernize and locate stores more quickly at a lesser burden (Markin 1963).

Summary. In the early twentieth century, food retailing was family owned, community oriented, and specialized in function. Prior to the domination of the car, food stores were within walking distance and customers went to multiple shops to buy items like cheese, meat, bread, and produce. With mass production in full swing, perceptive chain retailers understood that rationalizing food distribution by bringing specialized functions under one roof led to greater store efficiencies in throughput and profits. Through organizational management, corporate chain stores overtook neighborhood mom-and-pop stores. Early pioneers of supermarkets emerged in this terrain of uncertainty. Reaping the advantages of buying power, adopting self-service, and economizing on operating costs, created enormous profits for these rogue chains who bet on the cost benefit analysis of customers in the Great Depression. The growth in supermarkets, profitability, and the promise of rationalization during the 1930s led to a food retailing system change. The shift to modernization signaled the turn from experimentation to adoption of the supermarket form. The ideology of modernization eased tensions around corporate control by promoting efficiency. In reality, modernization was not an equal playing field. Instead, modernization helped corporate chains whose organizational structure already had built in management and efficiencies

dedicated to that end. Neighborhood stores were increasingly losing ground to corporate supermarket chains. The organizational and technological scaling required of WWII demands further affected their disadvantages.

WWII Impacts on Supermarket Growth

Prior to WWII, grocery retail publications like the *Progressive Grocer* and *Chain Store Age* encouraged retailers to adopt the modernization process.³¹ Conversions to larger stores and simultaneous store closures were occurring, however growth stalled during the war as the national economy shifted to a wartime economy. The war created new limits, strategies, and tactics for promoting and managing volume shopping (Greer 1986; Hampe and Wittenberg 1964; Mayo 1993).

Rationing and retailer strategies. During WWII, the federal government issued strong regulations for the diversion, manufacturing, and production of war materials. Regulations created limits to the volume-shopping model in the grocery store industry. Rationing for the wartime economy meant fewer raw materials for building and converting stores. For perishable goods, self-service relied upon the technologies of refrigeration, and self-service meat departments were still producing a higher overhead to function. While manufacturers easily converted processed foods into standardized containers, the meat department proved difficult to convert to self-service. For instance, the meat department used trained butchers that took customers' orders, cut the meat,

³¹ For an overview of modernization trends, see the October 1952 issue of *Progressive Grocer* and June 1950 issue of *Chain Store Age*.

wrapped, and weighed it, and wrote down a price on the package. Deskilling and streamlining the process needed refrigeration and packaging, but the war effort diverted these resources. The skilled pre-packaging of perishable food continued to be a source of higher labor costs (Mayo 1993; Zimmerman 1955).³²

In addition, government controls froze the price structure for wholesale and retail food prices. These price controls affected the growth of volume shopping by introducing food and oil rationing. Federal regulations mandated food rationing for both retailers and customers. Ration books issued by the Office of Price Administration (OPA) from 1942 through 1945 limited the range of what food and the quantities civilians could buy. Meat butter, sugar, eggs, and condensed milk were highly controlled, especially canned goods.³³ Produce was a bit more accessible, although rationed. The OPA encouraged women to create Victory Gardens to supply their own produce and poultry, and offered rationing cookbooks to encourage the practice (Berolzheimer 1942; Greer 1986).

In areas where the supermarket had already made an impact, gasoline and rubber rationing affected business. Civilian gasoline rationing meant less customer traffic. Customers curtailed the use of automobiles due to the diversion of rubber toward the war effort. Neighborhood stores were less impacted by this trend as they were less dependent on the automobile for customer traffic. Retailers also used gasoline, rubber, and food rationing to their advantage by advertising produce availability and carpooling services.

³² Because of the redirection of canned foods, some grocery stores adopted frozen foods (especially fruits and vegetables). However, limited refrigeration and high capital investment restrained the adoption process. With the end of WWII frozen foods were in demand (Hampe and Wittenberg 1964: 154-155; Toops 2010).

³³ For instance, the Campbell Soup Company produced products solely for the war effort (Greer 1986: 135).

Retailers used the wartime campaign to generate a positive image. They created in-store promotion materials, emphasizing “good eating habits, good nutrition, and the importance of not wasting food” (Mayo 1993: 158). To offset less automobile traffic some retailers encouraged carpooling and created carpooling exchange boards, advertising this as a courtesy. Retailers also urged customers to bring their own bags, thus limiting operating costs (Mayo 1993; Zimmerman 1955).³⁴

Labor shortages and union activities. WWII produced severe labor shortages in the grocery industry. This impacted mom-and-pop stores disproportionately. During the first several years of the war, “...over 81,000 grocery stores closed, the majority of them family owned” (Mayo 1993: 158). However, some mom-and-pop stores that modernized and many chains survived labor shortages by hiring women, and at less cost by arguing women were less experienced.³⁵ Labor shortages and the growing union movement also created pressure to implement self-service in stores, including in-house departmentalization.³⁶

³⁴ Safeway Stores offers an example of how a dominant supermarket chain faced the constraints placed by WWII. Safeway’s annual report to stockholders announced that: “During the year 1942, your company was subject to many of the burdens placed upon all business by the war. Restrictions were imposed which limited the amount of merchandise that could be purchased or sold by it, rationing programs affecting food products were instituted, the use of metal for many types of containers was limited, and truck transportation from the warehouses to the retail stores was curtailed. In many parts of the territory in which your company operates, there have been serious shortages of meat, butter, eggs and other food products which at times have made it impossible to maintain an adequate supply of these commodities in the retail stores. It has also been necessary for your company to make many adjustments in its employment policies as a result of the labor shortage which has been prevalent throughout the United States and Canada. Former employees who are now members of the armed forces total 5,129. Many of the men who left the company to serve in the armed forces have been replaced by women. Your company, however, has been able to make the necessary adjustments and to continue its operations” (Safeway Stores, Inc. 1942: n.p.).

³⁵ See FN 4 above.

³⁶ Supermarkets used their wholesaler network to obtain non-grocery products; thus, going around the earlier practice of leasing out concessions within the store. During WWII supermarkets brought these

During the chain store era, grocery management and unions came into conflict, although this was not always the case. Before the advent of grocery chains, Retail Clerks International Association (RCIA) and Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America organized grocery clerks and butchers in the 1890s. The power of these unions was weakly dispersed. The grocery retailing business spread out over mom-and-pop stores, small grocery stores, and growing independent and corporate chains. In the early decades of the twentieth century, neighborhood stores lost their business and employees to corporate chains, and so more clerks and butchers worked for the chains. With consolidation in the grocery retail business, unionized warehouse workers and truckers also found themselves working for these corporations. During the 1930s strikes broke out among large chains such as A&P and Safeway. Unable to subvert union activity, corporate chains made deals with unions to trade in support against the anti-chain store movement (Mayo 1993: 153-155; 184-185).³⁷ In exchange for union formation, chains and labor became allies. This furthered a corporate model of food retailing.

Unions made inroads with chains, however supermarkets changed the relationship between labor and grocery management. The supermarket was all about volume shopping and efficiency, and chain management knew that the adoption of self-service could

items into the stores, working to “sustain a dollar volume of sales per square foot of retail space” (Mayo 1993: 161).

³⁷ Interestingly, grocery mom-and-pop stores and chains were former competitors in the early 1900s. When supermarkets began to compete, the former foes worked together to publicly condemn Big Bear pricing practices. The Grocery Manufacturers of America (GMA) received complaints about Big Bear and passed a resolution to condemn the pricing practices in 1933. GMA applied pressure to newspapers to halt advertisements, which resulted in the adoption of Big Bear’s separate mail fliers (Hampe and Wittenberg 1964: 321).

reduce the size of the workforce and the power of unionized labor. For instance, with mom-and-pop stores products had to be retrieved and measured for the customer, requiring more clerk labor. In supermarkets mass producers decided sizes, and store and brand advertising performed the functions of transmitting information as well as packaging, pricing, and product location. Substituting labor with both technology and rational organization reduced the need for unionized laborers, and altered the terrain of negotiation between unions and management. During the height of supermarket growth, grocery chains sought to lower overhead by reducing commitments to full-time laborers. Although unions were successful by organizing part-time and full-time workers, supermarkets succeeded in lowering the need for full-time employees. In 1950, 70 percent of the labor force was full-time while 30 percent was part-time. A decade later full-time employees dropped to 55 percent and part-time laborers increased to 45 percent (Mayo 1993: 153-155, 184-185). By rationalizing food shopping, corporate supermarkets could reduce the full-time labor force, as well as the skills that once justified higher pay (Kainer 2002).

On the other hand, independents fared differently with union activity. Independent stores were not primary targets of unions because such activities were more expensive. Unions needed to negotiate each store separately. Thus, for the independents, increasing labor costs for chains meant the ability for independents to put more capital into purchasing products to compete with chain supermarkets. Taking advantage of non-unionized labor helped independent stores and chains by reducing labor costs (Mayo 1993).

Summary. Stores modernized throughout the 1930s, and while growth stalled due to the diversion of materials for the war effort, mom-and-pop stores fared the worst. Price freezes and rationing hindered volume shopping but supermarkets used these disadvantages to their benefit. By engaging in rationing, creating carpooling services, and advocating for diversion of materials, corporate supermarkets created a patriotic image and generated public support even while mom-and-pop stores went out of business.

In the 1930s, union activity increased in the retail field, particularly for corporate supermarkets. Former adversaries during the anti-chain store campaign, corporate chains and unions became allies to support modernization efforts. However, corporate supermarkets knew that self-service would reduce laborers and the power of the union. As self-service was implemented and stores captured grocery departments under one roof, unions found that organizational efficiencies and incorporation of technologies destabilized full-time and higher paying employment. On the other hand, independent stores took advantage of their low profile and lower wages by using that capital to compete with corporate chains.

Post War Supermarket Hegemony

By the 1950s, supermarkets were a market tool opposed to a political controversy within the grocery retailing industry, although conflicts about the impacts to local economies, food quality, store location, and food prices became important in later decades. After WWII, the U.S. adopted the strategy of organizing the economy around consumption to generate growth (Cohen 2003). The advantages of scale created by

organizational efficiency between food manufacturing and retailing made transforming to volume shopping a logical choice. Supermarkets were tools in this consumer oriented logic.

Earlier experiments proved to grocery retailers that selling in volume generated higher profits. However, tensions within the industry needed untangling before volume shopping could work like a well-oiled machine. Relationships between manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, grocery retailers, government agencies, and the public required consensus about the move to forming an industry. In 1937 supermarket operators met at the first Super Market Convention, formally launching the Supermarket Institute (SMI) (Hampe and Wittenberg 1963: 328). Among one of the many roles played, this organization worked at harmonizing tensions between actors in the emerging food system. The SMI encouraged and promoted fair prices for manufacturers, distributors, and wholesalers, a key source of antagonism within the industry. The SMI also worked with the federal government during WWII rationing, offering advertising and promoting rationing policies throughout the industry (Greer 1986). Lastly, the organization promoted research on the business itself, especially studying consumers. Consumer demand studies became the focus of analysis and oriented the industry to the fulfillment of consumer needs and wants (Hampe and Wittenberg 1963).

With the economic advantage gained by supermarkets, and the large markets available to actors down the chain, the industry emphasis on the consumer generated attention. Prior to WWII, customers were not the sole focuses of the volume machine. Producing for the troops and sacrificing for them made the singular focus on the customer

as the primary purpose in the machine a logical impossibility. Instead, the consumer was the outcome of the organization of the corporate food industry:

Establishment of the consumer as the focal point of all activity in the lifeline...It must be pointed out that leaders at all levels of the food industry contributed to this development by adopting what is currently called the consumer-oriented marketing concept. (Hampe and Wittenberg 1963: 332)

SMI's focus on the consumer brought the industry together, and supermarkets became powerful actors in the food industry network. In effect supermarkets became the "consumer's purchasing agent" (Greer 1986: 154). As supermarkets gained more control in the marketplace, farmers, processors, and wholesalers realized the efficiency in producing solely for supermarkets. These actors adopted the goal of serving and marketing to the consumer.³⁸ For instance, SMI research showed that consumers wanted pre-packaged fruits and vegetables. Farmers and processors coordinated their work to supply this demand for the supermarket consumer. The demand for new supermarkets in new suburban communities skyrocketed in the 1950s, outstripping the supply (Hampe and Wittenberg 1963: 330-333; Mayo 1993).

Supermarkets and suburbanization. After the war, investing in a society built on consumption became the way to manage demobilization without sacrificing the productive machine that generated national wealth. The birth of the white middle class

³⁸ This consumer oriented marketing concept is important in shifting the balance of power in the food chain from producer-driven volume selling to consumer-driven retail volume selling (Kinsey and Senauer 1996). Key actors in the food system are consumers, although retailers have more organizational power to influence the chain due to knowledge of their consumers. Knowledge about consumers becomes increasingly more knowable with the digital age. Retailer knowledge about the consumer is used to gain control of other food system actors. Then retailers can impose additional terms on behalf of the consumer.

was an outcome of this machine, and suburban expansion and consumerism went in tandem (Cohen 2003).

Two key factors contributed to suburban expansion and the growth of a consuming public. First, population growth exceeded projections. Known as the “Baby Boom,” population increased to 165 million in 1955, 180 million in 1960, and 190 million by 1964. Rising population fueled demand for food, and changing household structures contributed to a rise in convenience foods. Along with an increasingly younger generation, there was a 20 percent increase in households, and older population segments. Second, economic development and labor union activity generated rising incomes and stability. Higher wages, shorter working hours, and leisure time contributed to consumer spending (Hampe and Wittenberg 1964: 395). Thus, consumers had buying power, and the need to spend.

With suburban growth and private car dependence, access to supermarkets became tethered to having an automobile. If one looks at the number of stores before and after WWII, leading chains decrease in store numbers, but increase in sales volume (Table 3.1). For example, in 1939 Safeway owned 2,859 stores with an annual sales volume of \$386 million. By 1949, stores decreased to 2,177 units but increased sales volume threefold to \$1.2 billion. This trend coincides with the increasing importance of large stores in the same period (Table 3.2). In 1939 stores with sales over \$300,000 made up just 10 percent of stores. By 1948 stores with sales over \$300,000 yielded 39 percent of stores. This paradox of growing population but decreasing store numbers verifies the argument that as the industry adopted volume selling, or modernized to supermarkets, the

closure of small stores occurred with larger stores increasing in importance (Safeway Stores, Inc. 1948).³⁹ In these same years, corporate chains closed many of their small stores in urbanized areas, opening larger ones in suburbs. This shows a strategic pattern of “...abandoning small stores located in the inner city and expanding in suburbia with supermarkets, and at the same time supermarkets were growing larger” (Mayo 1993: 162-163). Independents that were working to build scale as well also closed their smaller stores, called “suprettes,” and moved to the suburbs (Mayo 1993). Thus, chain supermarkets abandoned urbanized areas. Supermarkets and the access to food offered by the revolution in distribution became dependent on having an automobile and suburban homeownership. Without these, supermarkets were obstacles to the once convenient neighborhood store.

Cars made traveling to supermarkets and buying in volume possible. Other domestic patterns synchronized with supermarkets as well. Supermarkets brought in goods that made sense to buy if one had the technology and space. For instance, consumers in masse during the 1950s and 1960s adopted household goods such as refrigerators, electric mixers, as well as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and dishwashers (Toops 2010). These appliances created new consumer patterns that interlocked domestic practices with supermarkets. Simultaneously, these new suburban appliances were available to those who could afford them and for those who had space to harbor them, such as on counters and in kitchen cabinets. To bring more products into the

³⁹ Safeway stated stores were closed that did not make volume sales, and justified these closures to “better serve customers” (Safeway Annual Report 1948: n.p.).

stores, supermarkets had to sell the product off the shelves as quickly as possible. Thus, supermarkets displaced the burden of buying and using these goods onto the suburban household. Remarkable on the success of lowering costs to consumers, market analyst William Girdner remarked, “He [the customer] and his automobile thus perform some of the functions both of wholesaling and retailing...the net reduction in marketing costs is real and unmistakable” (1940: 58-59). Per industry logic, the most valued consumer was suburban, who could absorb retail costs through storage space. The suburbanite becomes the visible and privileged consumer:

Suburbanites established a new social and economic atmosphere...
Supermarkets followed this moving population, adjusted operations to
serve it, and capitalized on the opportunities to increase the importance of
the supermarket to suburban living. (Hampe and Wittenberg 1963: 335)

The supermarket became a key actor in the nation’s shift to a consumer economy. With a focus on the suburban market, supermarkets built their stores in affluent white privileged suburban areas. At the same time, consumerism subsumed earlier critiques of monopoly capitalism, transforming the political act of consumption for the public good into one for private needs and wants (Mitchell 2006). While supermarkets grew, store closures left inner cities and urbanized areas vulnerable to food insecurity. As a consumer society took shape, this narrow focus on suburban areas intensified the division between areas with food abundance and those areas that became food insecure.

Store location strategies. The design and location of stores became important to organizing a new kind of food consumption with supermarkets. Store location has always been an important consideration for grocery retailing, as retailing depends upon attracting customers and selling goods in the store. As city space changes with technological

innovations and competition, capturing trade becomes an issue for grocery retailers (Applebaum and Spears 1951). Chain stores were early innovations in learning how to use space and organization to obtain customers across the constraints of localized shopping. As the corporate chains invested in supermarkets, marketing and managing tools were adapted and applied (Applebaum and Spears 1951; Harwell 1951; Kaylin 1948; Schmid 1948). The strategy of siting new supermarkets worked in parallel with the new consumer economy that boomed after WWII.

Supermarkets grew larger over time, placing more pressure on them to extract sales from their market trade area. A market trade area is “the area from which the store obtains or draws its customers” (Applebaum and Spears 1951: 15-34). When a store gains in square footage, a market trade area must increase in order keep the minimum sales volume per square foot. This is one of the reasons why stores get larger but also farther away from urban centers. Stores were competing for larger and larger territories, and by the 1960s, the location of supermarkets in urban sites was saturated (Mayo 1993: 191-192).

In post WWII suburbia, supermarket location strategy was to follow the money. Supermarkets made use of developers as part of decreasing risk and maximizing profits. Developers were key contributors to the adoption of a consumer society through their construction of shopping centers. Developers created shopping center complexes in the 1920s along major traffic arteries, and began to use corporate chains in the 1930s to anchor the shopping center and bring in customers (Liebs 1995; Longstreth 1999; Mayo 1993). Developers offered benefits to corporate chains, thus creating incentives for

supermarkets to work with them. For instance, developers took the risk of finding profitable sites and reasonable financing. Developers also offered rental discounts to corporate supermarkets, thus offering prime spots to food retail corporations opposed to independents.

Shopping centers reinforced boundaries between housing and shopping, and intensified the privatization of consumption. One of the reasons why shopping centers appealed to consumers is their convenience. Shopping centers were bounded and centralized and offered one-stop shopping. Connected by major thoroughfares and with plenty of parking space, shopping centers were time efficient. That shopping centers were private property also limited the display of public critiques, such as union picket lines. This contrasted from the earlier mixed-use commercial development found on linear street arteries. While these streets were congested by traffic and had limited parking, they were nonetheless also public (Liebs 1995; Longstreth 1999).

In the 1950s, several types of suburban center shopping malls were noticeable. The size of the mall, measured in square feet, varied based on the size of the population served. Neighborhood shopping centers were the smallest at 40,000 square feet, community centers were 150,000 square feet and regional centers were 400,000 square feet. Regional centers served a population base of at least 100,000 people (Mayo 1993: 165-166). Large corporate supermarkets leased in community centers from developers. Under some circumstances, developers made leases to supermarket chains for regional centers but were reluctant when studies showed that after five to six minutes of driving time supermarkets were not the main pull factor (Mayo 1993: 166). While not located in

many regional centers, corporate supermarkets still located in bigger community sites, benefitting from large trade areas.

While most corporate chains used suburban centers as a proxy for new supermarket locations, many of them became savvier in their approach. As suburban expansion was rapid and corporate chains depended more on fewer and larger stores, opening a new store in an area that may have a “short life” was riskier for supermarkets. Therefore, supermarkets preferred leasing instead of buying property. Alpha Beta Food Markets, Inc. and Safeway Stores, Inc. used a policy of “buy-build-sell-lease,” program. This strategy was to buy the land, build the store, sell the store to the bank or insurance company, and then lease from the new owner. This strategy allows more flexibility for supermarket chains to open and close stores; they are only subject to the lease, and at the same time have investment capital flowing for building and leasing more stores (Mayo 1993; Safeway Stores, Inc. 1939, 1940, 1941, 1945, 1948, 1949).

Factors considered in siting a store were patterns of population growth, income, transportation networks, city planning requirements, and store saturation (Applebaum and Spears 1968; Mayo 1993: 192). For instance, Publix used helicopters to place stores. The owner George Jenkins argued that a bird’s eye view sped up the identification of locations based on connections between housing patterns, arterial roads, and highways (Mayo 1993: 192). Safeway used a similar pattern but based on maps and surveys (Figure 3.1). On the other hand, Kroger selected sites based on previously successful stores (Mayo 1993: 192). The outcome of such analysis was that “Management obviously wanted to build a supermarket in a large, high income area with a good transportation

network” (Longstreth 1999: 192). They also wanted approval from city planners but no competition from other supermarkets. In sum, by rationalizing store location strategies (e.g. developing and applying store location techniques), supermarket retailers could predict profitable locations and assess individual store contributions in relation to the entire corporate stock. Thus, removing stores from a network became a cost benefit risk analysis.

Mergers and acquisitions. In the late 1950s and into the 1960s, supermarket chains began the practice of merging and acquiring other supermarket firms to expand market trade areas. By acquiring other chains, this increased the number of stores without the significant investment and potential risks created by building new ones. Stores that performed well stayed and were remodeled; however, those considered unprofitable were removed. This also contributed to closures of smaller stores in inner cities (Mayo 1993: 181). This technique of acquiring retailing chains in other regions allowed the corporate chain to spread the risk across wider territory. This way, stores in one region can “carry” stores in other regions that are losing buying power or having economic hardships.

Filling in the gaps. In the 1960s, convenience stores took advantage of the gaps in service and time not offered by supermarkets. Large stores meant more time to buy a few items, and hours were typically until 8:00 p.m., and closed on Sundays. Seven-Eleven stores (formerly Southland Corporation) quickly grew to offer “quick, limited item sales on the customer’s terms” (Mayo 1993: 205). Stores were small, ranging from 1,000 to 4,000 square feet and limited parking for 5 to 15 cars. These stores offered items that were impulse buys such as cigarettes, beer, soft drinks, candy, ice cream, ice, bread, some

canned goods, and toiletries. These higher turnover products replaced items such as fruits, vegetables, and meats (Mayo 1993: 207). Convenience stores began in southern states (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas) and proliferated during in the post WWII era. By 1970, convenience stores were found across the U.S.⁴⁰

Independent stores also took over some locations previously leased or owned by corporate chains. Independents did remodel these stores, although many were less convenient than suburban corporate chains, such as less floor area, fewer parking spaces, and lower sales volume (Mayo 1993). However, unlike supermarket chains, these stores offered more ethnic foods.

Summary. The shift to a consumer driven economy in the post WWII era advantaged corporate supermarkets. Corporate supermarkets became hegemonic. However, this buy in required coordination and outreach among all actors in the food industry. Since the late 1930s, the SMI eased tensions between actors in the food system while offering large markets for actors down the chain. By the 1950s, the growth of the corporate supermarket offered enough evidence to secure support from farmers, producers, and wholesalers. Thus, consumers became the focus for all actors in the food system, reorienting the industry to supermarkets and fulfilling needs and wants identified by consumer research. These changes coincided with increasing populations, changing household structures, and suburban expansion for a new growing white middle class. Consumption became increasingly depoliticized. No longer about the public good,

⁴⁰ Another aspect to consider in the corporate food landscape is fast food. For an overview for this history, see Schlosser (2001).

consumerism became and end in and of itself. However, abandoning the public good also occurred among retailers. As suburbia grew and supermarkets got larger, chains closed their doors in urbanized and inner-city areas. This process worsened conditions in areas once served by neighborhood stores, whose retail geography now included convenience stores with less product choice and higher prices. Consequently, suburban areas gained access to food in abundance while urbanized areas were food deprived.

Public Challenge to Supermarket Hegemony

In the 1960s, a wave of consumer groups and environmentalists critiqued the supermarket for both food pricing and food quality (Belasco 2007; Turner 1970; Wellford 1972). Consumer groups began to challenge food manufacturers and industrial farmers for the use of fertilizers and increased use of additives that add to flavor and food preservation. In addition, food coloring in meats, cereals puffed with air but lacking nutrition, and the substitution of synthetics in chocolate candy bars were issues raised among consumer groups (Mayo 1993: 208). These groups argued that food production practices and food processing jeopardized not only the environment, but also human health (Lyson 2004).

Consumer groups criticized supermarkets not just for selling these products but for actively taking part as well. Retailers had long contracted with manufacturers to offer products under the supermarket label, and supermarkets could now be understood as contributors and benefactors of selling unhealthy food. Consumers were aware that a long

shelf life enabled by preservatives helped the supermarket's bottom line (Belasco 2007; Cross 1970).

In the 1960s, consumer groups targeted supermarkets for high food prices (Belasco 2007; Cross 1970; Marion, Mueller, Cotterill, Geithman, and Schmelzer 1979). These groups argued that overhead costs, promotion techniques, and price manipulations inflated the price of food. As supermarkets were competing with themselves and no longer the small stores, what distinguished supermarkets was the in-store designs. Consumer groups criticized ambitious designs as adding to food prices.

Consumer groups also attacked deceptive promotion techniques. Supermarkets did not always keep or stock on-sale items, and "store layout and shelf placements enticed customer[s] to buy more profitable items" (Mayo 1993: 208). Critics blamed increasing food prices on store prizes and trading stamps. Supermarkets where less competition existed raised prices on items, while trade areas with more competition experienced lower prices. This was less obvious to consumers, but was prevalent in areas dominated by a corporate chain. In sum, "critics and consumers increasingly criticized how supermarkets were designed, promoted, and located to maximize profits" (Mayo 1993: 208).

Summary. A wave of critique emerged during the 1960s that challenged the hegemonic status of supermarkets as good actors. Environmentalists and consumer groups raised concerns about harmful pesticides, chemicals, and additives widespread in processed food. At the same time, these groups charged that supermarkets were more concerned about their profits than consumers, citing marketing tools such as tricks to

encourage unnecessary consumption. Disheartened by the risks inherited by scientific and technological progress, critics charged the industrial food system could not be trusted.

CONCLUSION

This chapter began with the food retailing industry's view of itself. As the FMI president asserted, supermarkets emerged from the Great Depression to provide consumers with more and cheaper food as a public service. This perspective paints supermarkets as an inevitable progress towards food equity. This history is mundane, technical, and conflict free. What is missing from this account are the social and institutional requirements that make supermarkets possible, as well as the struggles of ownership, labor, and consumer politics that animate this history. In other words, the industry view is a depoliticized version of supermarket adoption that obscures power conflicts and normalizes corporate food retailing.

The context of managerial capitalism is significant to the emergence and expansion of the supermarket industry, a key actor in shaping access to food. The ideology of managerial rationality cloaked in the scientific language of modernization, depoliticized struggles of ownership, labor, and food access, thus paving the way for corporate hegemony. A second way in which managerial rationality is important to the emergence of supermarkets is through the adoption of efficient management systems, in which modernization becomes an end in and of itself. Modernization becomes a task that while ostensibly is in the pursuit of the public good, instead values people only as customers/consumers in their market trade areas. At the same time, the politics of

consumption shift from public concerns about economic concentration and opportunity to fulfilling individual needs and wants. The turn away from public goods has consequences. Minority groups and those living in urbanized areas are invisible to the supermarket project, and are systematically excluded from services offered to affluent communities and districts. While corporate food and supermarketing became hegemonic in the mid-1900s, signaling a closure of the once contentious politics that animated the anti-chain store sentiment in earlier decades (Mitchell 2006), this did not last. Consumer critiques of the industrial food system, supermarkets, and food quality generated a wave of consumer politics. And in the last two decades a resurgence in the politics of food equity and environmentalism has emerged in contemporary movements around food justice. It is to contemporary food movements that we now turn.

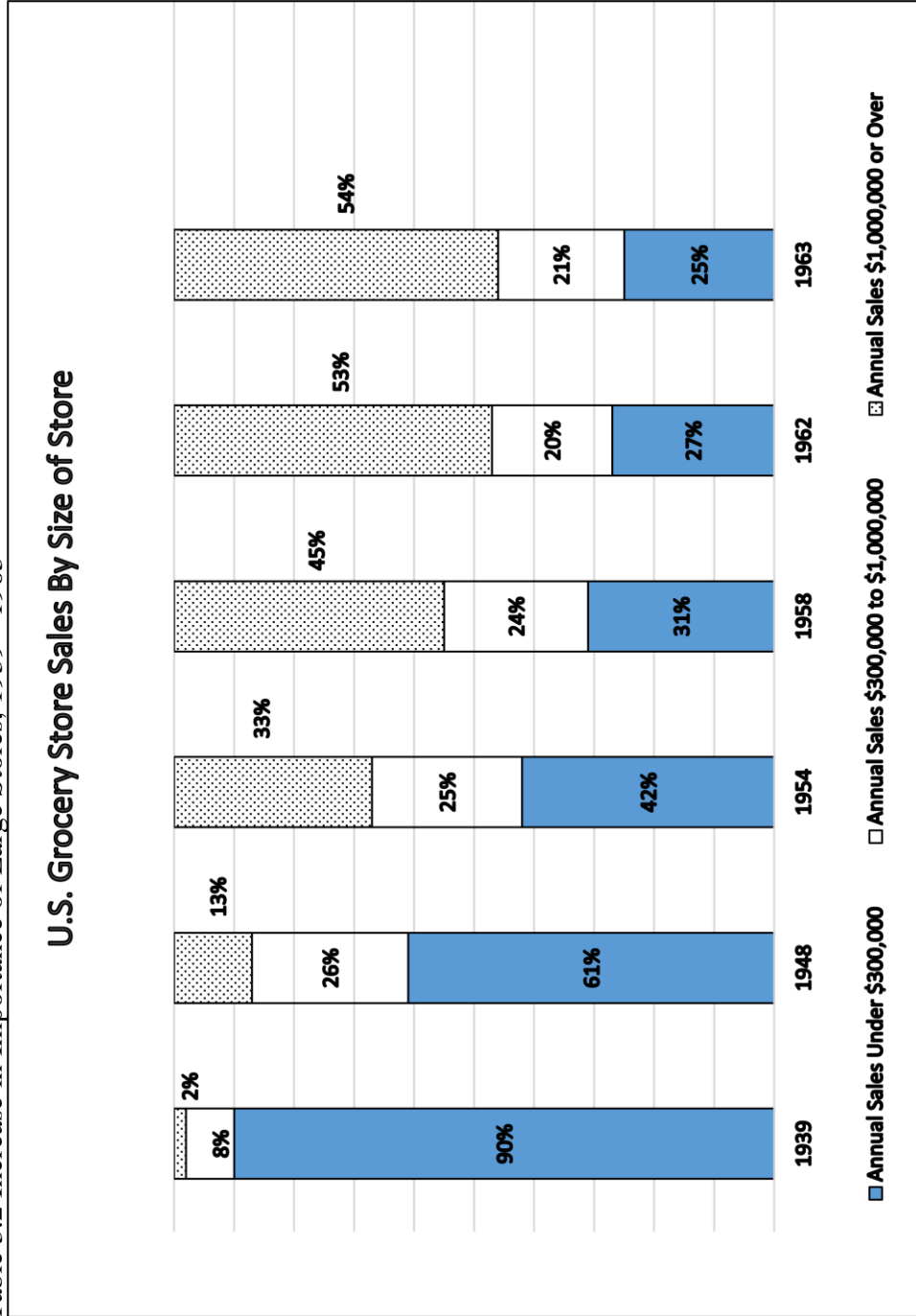
TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 3.1 Stores and Sales of Leading Food Chains (sales in millions of dollars), 1925 – 1949

Chain	1925		1929		1939		1949	
	Stores	Sales	Stores	Sales	Stores	Sales	Stores	Sales
A&P	14,034	\$440	15,418	\$1,054	9,260	\$976	4,600	\$2,837
Safeway	1,050	39	2,661	210	2,859	386	2,177	1,193
Kroger	2,259	116	5,494	287	3,958	243	2,204	807
American	1,792	109	2,730	143	2,272	115	1,671	409
First National	1,731	49	2,002	76	2,244	124	1,082	354
National Tea	761	47	1,627	90	1,073	57	655	274
Colonial	480	14	811	32	552	46	374	169

Source: Markin, Rom J. 1963. *The Supermarket: An Analysis of Growth, Development, and Change*. Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press. P. 17

Table 3.2 Increase in Importance of Large Stores, 1939 - 1963



Source: (Hampe, Jr. E.C. and Merle Wittenberg 1964: 333).

Selecting and Operating Store Locations



1. CONTINENTAL Properties Company, a Safeway division, maintains maps of every town and city of more than 5000 population, where your company operates. Maps show traffic arteries, shopping centers, present and projected Safeway store locations. Surveys point to best potential store locations.



2. SAFEWAY engineering and research men lay plans for new stores, aiming at maximum convenience for customers and employees. Important factors are fixture layouts, availability of shopping buggies, size of parking lot, etc. Local architects carry out these plans in accordance with local building standards. Safeway policy is to lease, rather than own, its store locations. So as to exercise complete control over design, plans, and construction, however, your company buys the land, constructs its own building, and then sells the land and building to an investor who is willing to give the company a long-term lease on the property. All negotiations for both purchase and sale of properties are carried on through real estate brokers.



3. LIGHTING in stores, among other factors, is under constant year-round study by Safeway experts. Purpose here is to achieve a system of lighting which will give the stores cheerful illumination and provide maximum readability for merchandise on display.

4. NEW EMPLOYEES and returned veterans are paid regular wages while they learn the most efficient methods of store operation, in Safeway training schools. Training involves instruction in company policies as well as actual practice under store conditions.



5. NET RESULT of this system of selecting sites, constructing stores and staffing them: food stores with access to maximum neighborhood traffic, designed for maximum shopping and operating convenience, and operated by trained personnel.



Figure 3.1 Safeway Stores Selection and Management Operation. Source: (Warren, 1945: 18).

CHAPTER 4: RE-EMBEDDING MARKETS

Alternative food activists challenge the conventional food system by strategically using market-led approaches such as farmers markets, urban agriculture, and community supported agriculture. Over the last decade, a debate has emerged among scholars that questions if market based approaches can create food justice under the structural conditions of neoliberalism. Scholars are polarized around whether the “market as movement” approach can be a transformative tool for sustainable food system change (Alkon 2014). For those calling for a reassessment of market based strategies, collective action should shift to the state. For those who view markets as the dominant framework through which a new participatory politics can emerge, the state is important but not the only means through which transformative politics is reached. In my view, market-led initiatives do not always prevent political and collective engagement. For those that see market based strategies as a primary, but not the only pathway to food justice, these strategies can create openings to build consciousness around food system inequity. This engagement includes enlisting politics that go beyond farm to fork, redistributive practices that attend to the needs of the community, and the cultivation of a communal, opposed to the self-improvement seeking individual (Alkon 2014; Levkoe 2011).

Alternative food projects seek to wrestle neoliberalism’s primacy of the market back into place in many ways. By revaluing land, labor, and money, alternatives create pathways for imagining what a self-regulating market subjected to social values looks like (Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy 2013; Hess 2007, 2009). However, we should

not accept such projects uncritically. Using the neo-Polanyian critique of Nancy Fraser (2011, 2014), this chapter reveals the ways in which two alternative food projects work to re-embed the market. I ask the following question: in their attempts to re-embed the market, what ways are the alternative food projects engaging in marketization, social protectionism, and emancipation?

The first part of the chapter introduces the scholarly literature on neoliberalism and alternative food movements. Second, I introduce the neo-Polanyian framework from which I examine the two projects outlined in the introduction. Third, I analyze how markets are re-embedded in the alternative food movement, and whether these practices reproduce a neoliberal political economy.

NEOLIBERALISM, MARKETS, AND CONSUMPTION

Neoliberalism is a theory, ideology, and political economic project in practice. Theoretically, neoliberalism is the philosophy that “proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey 2005: 2). In practice, states decrease direct interference and economic regulation, while actively using state power to protect private property rights and market institutions. This includes privatization of public resources and spaces, deregulation, or elimination of regulations unfavorable to business, minimization of labor costs, reduction of public expenditures, devolution of governance responsibilities from the nation-state to states and local governments, and commodification (Heynen,

McCarthy, Prudham, and Robbins 2007). Neoliberalism advocates the extension of market principles to rule governments, institutions, and individuals (Rose 1996).

In the U.S. context, neoliberalism has undergone two main phases (Peck and Tickell 2007). The “roll-back” phase begins in the 1980s, when Keynesian social protections (e.g., public goods) were cut. Policies that protected the poor such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), school lunch programs, and Medicaid were devolved to individual states, while offering less money for these programs (Hackworth 2007; Steger and Roy 2010). Direct consequences of these reforms were increases in homelessness, hunger, and poverty. Rhetoric of a bloated inefficient government, and claims that the poor caused their own fates, justified widening inequalities. People of color were harshly targeted by this discourse, which made the figure of the black “‘welfare queen’ into a powerful metaphor for the idea that hard-working, law-abiding Americans were being exploited by the lazy and criminal poor” (Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011: 33). Thus, neoliberalism is also a racialized discourse that scapegoated people of color, and paved the way for an assault on social protections.

The second “roll-out” phase began in the 1990s. This period is characterized by the application of market based logic to the delivery of social services. This included the tools of state re-regulation to create private and public partnerships and more Draconian policies that reinforced neoliberal norms and practices on populations (Peck and Tickell 2007; Spence 2011; Wacquant 2009). In the roll-out process, the proliferation of third-sector organizations (e.g., voluntary and community organizations, non-profits) stand in for what the state previously administered. For example, the rise of charitable food banks

skyrocketed in the 1980s and 1990s to manage hunger relief (Poppendieck 1998). The use of charity, opposed to public entitlements, further dehumanized vulnerable populations.

Critics argue that markets and consumerism play a vital role in neoliberal policymaking, fundamentally altering the roles of citizenship and democracy. Neoliberal ideology envisions markets as the most efficient way to make policy run. Ideologically, neoliberalism “fetishizes the market by describing it as working on its own, rather than as comprising social relations and human labor” (Lafferty 2015: 230). Free markets are viewed as tools for efficiency, and citizens are recast as consumers of government services. However, by translating public goods into markets, the state abandons its regulatory responsibility for the public good to that of corporate interests and individual consumers. The downfall is that citizens voice their claims as consumers, reducing democracy to a collection of market transactions. In this scheme, government protected rights become commodities, “whereby individual consumers define and address social and environmental problems in the private sphere” (Lafferty 2015: 224).

Critics of neoliberalism also argue that subjecting public problems to markets individualizes social risks, again normalizing private consumption and self-responsibility (Rose 1999; Szasz 2007). The growth in the organic food industry is one example. As Guthman’s (2004, 2007, 2008a) work on the growth of the organic food movement in California has shown, organic food labeling became a way for people to “opt out” of the current industrial food system (1176). Frustrated with the state’s unwillingness to regulate industrial agriculture, the organic food movement pushed for labeling instead.

While labeling subjected organic produce to regulations, thus leaving the conventional food system intact, the scarcity and preciousness of organic produce translated into higher market prices. Because organic products are costlier than conventional products, quality food is accessible for those who can afford to pay, while those who cannot rely on the voluntary sector such as food banks and charities, for which nutrition is secondary (Poppendieck 2000). In other words, organic food labeling has supported a bifurcated food system – one for the wealthy and one for the poor. As public risks are individualized and consumerism becomes the means to solve collective problems, inequalities in access occur. By substituting markets for collective action to regulate industrial agriculture, organic food has now become a niche market for the affluent.⁴¹ In my view, at issue is whether a consumer-based entry point can go beyond the supply and demand logic of translating public goods into private commodities. In other words, in a neoliberal society, can consumers also engage as citizens?

Neoliberalism and Alternative Food Movements

In the last decade, there has been a growing split in the scholarship on alternative food movements and the degree to which food activism may be reproducing neoliberal consumer subjectivities (Allen and Guthman 2006; Guthman 2008a, 2008b, 2008c; McClintock 2014; Pudup 2008; Rosol 2012). As part of the “roll-out” phase, many alternative food projects work to fill in the gaps in social protections created by state

⁴¹ Agribusiness now produces most organic food, undermining the original intent of the food movement’s goals to subvert industrial agriculture (Guthman 2012; Hauter 2012).

retrenchment. Farmers markets, farm to school (FTS) initiatives, and community gardens have re-emerged as social spaces designed to produce change in resistance to neoliberalism and the industrial food system by connecting people with food locally, building support for local markets, acting as sources of education and knowledge about sustainable production, and building community. However, concern in the literature has grown as scholars are beginning to see the growth in neoliberal subject formation in their project sites, thus raising the question of whether resistance merely reinforces market logics in their governance and subjects (Allen and Guthman 2006; Guthman 2008a, 2008b, 2008c; Pudup 2008). Rather than act as critical sites for resistance to neoliberalism as a project, scholars have instead seen “discourses of personal responsibility and individual success, consumerism, and choice,” thus warning these projects reproduce subjectivities to live in an age of an unresponsive democratic state and market orthodoxy (Allen and Guthman 2006: 410).

On the other hand, scholarship also shows strategic engagement with neoliberalism.⁴² In these studies, activists use a bottom-up approach to problems generated by neoliberalism and the industrial food system, and use their work to raise consciousness and build civic action (Andrée, Ballamingie, and Sinclair-Waters 2014; Kloppenburg and Hassanein 2006). A more nuanced approach illustrates a blend of practices and subjectivities, instead asserting empowerment within alternative food

⁴² What I mean by “strategic engagement” is that movements are aware of the shortcomings of neoliberalism and use their work as a platform to build civic action as well, not just isolated consumers. While using the role of a consumer as a starting point, these projects comment on broader inequalities produced in a neoliberal regime such as that of race and class.

projects among urban marginalized communities (Hayes-Conroy 2010; White 2011a, 2011b). By paying close attention to the contexts in which these projects emerge, or as Brenner and Theodore (2002) call *actually existing neoliberalism*, more recent examples are revealing the complexities and contradictions within the neoliberal project, as well as potential anti-capitalist tendencies. More recent accounts that challenge neoliberalism within the food movement are worker cooperatives, food workers' movements, and the use of collective campaigning to restrict harmful production practices (Alkon 2014). Far from complete, this literature suggests that market-based approaches are neither ignored or accommodated, but instead can be harnessed in "creative and interesting ways" (Alkon 2014: 28).

Reproducing neoliberal subjects. As depicted above, neoliberalism within the alternative food movement is complex, as movements to change the industrial food system are also embedded in neoliberal programs. These new social conditions necessarily shape social movement strategies, moving away from sole use of traditional methods that pursue state-mandated labor protections, regulations for the environment, and the poor (Alkon 2014). The main strategy of these new movements is the "market as movement" approach, whereby the tool of consumer demand is used to drive producer changes (Alkon 2014; Allen and Guthman 2006; Pollan 2006). Movements also use education and craft programs. The tool of education from "farm to fork," awareness campaigns through farmers' markets, FTS programs, and community gardens reflects this approach of building from the ground up to affect change. Activists within the

movement support alternative food businesses and entrepreneurial efforts to build those food businesses.

At the very least, the alternative food movement has worked to undo the inequities within the food system as it has globalized and distressed both communities and the environment; however, neoliberalism as market orthodoxy intersects with the very strategies the movements employ. Critics assert the local approach is a “dangerous political bargain” that can further justify state retrenchment and complete the full circle of rendering individuals as bearers of collective social risks such as poverty and poor health; thus, providing the “service” of healthy food and lifestyle changes and social esteem for those acting self-responsibly through the market and logic of choice (Goodman and DuPuis 2002).

Several studies, notably Allen and Guthman (2006) and Pudup (2008), found that FTS programs and community gardens in the California Bay Area reproduce neoliberal subjectivities. In Allen and Guthman’s (2006) analysis of FTS projects, they criticize FTS programs in California for using the positive correlation between standardized test scores and nutrition to justify program funding. Such moves perpetuate performance indicators used to separate deserving from undeserving schools. In addition, rhetoric about obesity works to make children responsible for weight management and leads to stigmatization. Mandated wellness policies create hierarchies between those able to fit into a neoliberal ideal of self-controlled subjects (e.g. thin and healthy) versus undisciplined subjects (e.g. obese and unhealthy) by reporting weight on student report cards. Lastly, FTS program goals prioritize consumer choice as the main mechanism of governance: “FTS advocates

look to choice as a mechanism for creating change, framing their programs in terms of the rights of children to have choices rather than in terms of their rights to nutritious food” (411). By prioritizing taste and consumer education, the logic is to expand choice and markets opposed to state protections and collective action uniformly for all schools. For Allen and Guthman, FTS programs work to challenge the problem of poor nutrition in schools, but advocating for piecemeal solutions that lack the broad protections of a federal program. In addition, FTS programs reproduce the hierarchies that justify widespread inequalities in access.

Pudup (2008) also showed the workings of neoliberalism in the famous Edible School Yard (ESY) in Berkeley. A “farm to table” educational program in an affluent school teaches children how to grow, prepare, and eat food using the ecological systems approach. Integrating nature and community, this project aims to create a second generation of consumers who demand local food. In part, the program boasts reading lists about cultural practices of cooking and eating globally, but itself does not integrate the more contentious curriculum on the exploitation of farm labor or immigration. The critique Pudup asserted however, is that the students may come to see the comprehensive approach in de-politicized terms, or as Hayes-Conroy (2010) states, “have little to no connection to broader political struggles” (82).

The literature above suggests that the market as movement approach may have the potential to create market consumers who are self-responsible, knowledgeable individuals with the drive to pursue healthy diets and lifestyles with little or no demands for the collective good. By ignoring the plight of vulnerable populations in food production,

corporate actions and state policies that create or worsen poverty are not held responsible. Such strategies may also unintentionally reproduce unevenness in food access. However, recent scholarship suggests that food justice movements are informing more individuals about the politics of food, opening pathways for political consciousness (Alkon 2014).

Resisting neoliberal subjects. Part of the inspiration for those working in alternative food movements is social change - breaking down or altering links in the commodity food chain that gives rise to inequities. Rather than seeing the “market as movement” approach as uniformly neoliberal and fixed, Gibson-Graham (2006) suggests viewing alternative food projects in terms of their differences. This allows envisioning opportunities, the possibilities of unexpected outcomes, and constraints. If market orthodoxy works by imposing an ideology of uniformity, then paying attention to differences within projects matters.

Hayes-Conroy’s (2010) work on public school garden and cooking programs (SGCPs) in Berkeley, CA and Nova Scotia, Canada similarly investigated the intersection of alternative food movements and neoliberalism. In her studies, federal and state governments supported these projects for social welfare, or of “targeting health problems among disenfranchised populations” (77). Government grants and volunteer labor funded these projects. Instead of students’ engagement leading to depoliticized consumers, students were aware that governments were responsible for funding and defining regulations for rules and procedures in the classroom (80). Coming from various experiences with food, students brought their own implicit and explicit understandings of food politics to conversations with their peers during the program, commenting on the

industrial production of mad cow disease, illnesses in chickens, and thus no milk at home (83). Rather than depoliticized consumers, the SGCP venue offered a means to generate conversations among peers who shared in a general distrust of corporate agribusiness, while making connections to local food. Although the projects were responding to the need via grants and volunteer labor, the outcome itself was not apolitical consumers. Instead, students were more engaged in food politics.

In the U.S., confronting racial privilege in access to food also played a role in the SGCP program. SGCP teachers and activists challenged the stereotype that fresh produce is exclusively a “white activity,” and legitimated the disproportionate struggle many students of color experience with access to quality foods. The program shared how to cook, grow, and purchase food with limited budgets, produce, and ingredients for different family members at home. For Hayes-Conroy (2010) SGCP pedagogy is a co-production that opened new worlds of food for students and cooking skills adapted to their needs.

Additional studies showing the “market at movement” approach leading to participant empowerment is exemplified in the cases of D-Town farmers in Detroit (White 2010, 2011a, 2011b). Detroit has suffered neoliberal retrenchment and a state that has all but abandoned poor African Americans with respect to access to food, services, and employment. The D-Town project - a critical project of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DCBFSN) - specifically challenges racial inequities in the industrial food system through urban agriculture projects to “grasp larger control over the food system to build self-reliance in our community” (Malik Yakini, as cited in White

2010: 196). The farm produced thousands of pounds of fresh and high-quality produce per year that encourages participation in local farmers markets, employment in sustainable agriculture (e.g. beekeeping), and an upcoming food co-op (DCBFSN in White 2011b). Interestingly, the DCBFN is a non-profit organization that argues it can care for the needs of the Detroit Black Community better than the state (White 2010).

Within the literature on food movements that use the “market as movement” approach, there is a difference among projects in strategies and practices. Additional projects that differ from Allen and Guthman (2006) and Pudup (2008) are projects that use neoliberalism creatively, such as worker cooperatives, food workers movements, and non-profit campaign alliances, to act against harmful agricultural practices in production and labor processes (Alkon 2014). For example, Mandela Marketplace, a non-profit in West Oakland, challenges neoliberalism through their co-op structure as a worker-owned business, opposing the upward redistribution of wealth. These worker cooperatives generate anti-capitalist practices including workers who are owners, equally shared tasks, and pay connected to hours worked. While still using a market to generate local foods, jobs, and a workers cooperative, the means is through individual consumer purchases. However, when also combined with political education programs, Mandela’s Market place goes beyond self-responsible consumers.

Thus far, this chapter has laid out the intersections between alternative food movements and neoliberalism. The literature shows that alternative food projects aim to undo the corporate food system by using a variety of approaches to make markets more just. However, scholars are wary about whether these movements re-entrench the very

inequalities they aim to change, namely hierarchies of race and class. Thus, a more nuanced analysis is needed to distinguish the kinds of ways that alternative food projects re-embed markets from the standpoint of social justice in our contemporary context. Nancy Fraser's articulation of critical theory with Karl Polanyi's work on resistance to free-market capitalism offers an analytic frame to situate social justice concerns from the perspective of race and class. This second part of the chapter sets up Fraser's analysis as a tool to analyze the empirical projects in San Diego.

FRASER'S NEO-POLANYIAN FRAMEWORK

Nancy Fraser critiques Karl Polanyi's distinguished theory in *The Great Transformation* to offer a framework for understanding the development of 20th century capitalism. *The Great Transformation* charts the rise and fall of the self-regulating market during the 19th and 20th centuries, finally to the rise of fascism and world war. Market liberalism in the 18th century rested on two key assumptions about the relationship between government and the governed: atomism and autonomy (Krippner and Alvarez 2007). Atomism is the belief that humans are self-interested, utility maximizing agents that truck, barter, and exchange by nature. Therefore, governance of exchange is unnecessary, "In such a world, there is no opportunity for fraud, collusion, corruption, or vice of any kind, hence no need for government meddling in the economy" (222). A second presumption is that markets are naturally self-regulating, subject only to supply and demand, and form an autonomous sphere separate from that of culture, politics, and society. Both assumptions justify why government should leave the governed alone.

However, Polanyi argues against this epistemology, saying that self-regulating markets are fictions as they have always been “embedded in social institutions and subject to moral and ethical norms” (Fraser 2011:139). Instead of a market regulated by itself, it is social relations that govern markets through kinship, community, and state institutions, as well as religious, communal, and legal norms (Fraser 2014: 544). With attempts to disembed the market by removing restrictions on the buying and selling of land, labor, and money, “it means no less than the running of society as an adjunct to the market. Instead of the economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system” (Polanyi 1944: 60). Referring to market liberalism as a utopian project, Polanyi illustrates how the attempt to free markets from their social roots results in the consequences of dislocation, hunger, and destruction of nature.

Polanyi’s account charts a counter movement (i.e. double-movement) that wrestles markets to social regulation. Subjecting Polanyi’s account through a critical feminist lens, Fraser argues that in tempering free markets counter-movement activists missed a third component – that of emancipation. For instance, while WWII may have brought union labor, rising wages, and social security, it also re-entrenched gendered assumptions of the family wage, and allowed racism to continue in the workforce. Instead of emancipation, social protections re-embedded extant hierarchies. Thus, when analyzing ways to re-embed markets, Fraser’s framework asks us to consider struggles for emancipation as well.

As food justice movements seek to build community, undo social hierarchy, and create new livelihoods, Fraser’s theoretical standpoint allows us to interrogate alternative

food movements with a critical eye towards emancipation. Currently, many scholars are asking the question of whether such movements are reproducing neoliberalism, that is, the privatization of environmental risk, and consuming ethical goods for consumption's sake (Allen and Guthman 2006; Guthman 2008a; Pudup 2008). Additionally, scholars critique alternative food movements as exclusionary, that is, not accepting of race and class differences (Alkon and Agyeman 2011). To use Fraser's contribution, we can rephrase the earlier question with more complexity: as markets are re-embedded, in what ways are the alternative food projects engaging in marketization, social protections, and emancipation? The next section of the chapter tackles this question by focusing on the ways in which these projects seek to re-embed the market.

SOUTHEASTERN SAN DIEGO: MARKETS FOR FOOD JUSTICE

We are shooting for equity. I do not know what that looks like yet, but food equity means that I can eat what I want to eat, and it is not based on where I live or how much money I have. (Diane Moss, Executive Director of Project New Village)⁴³

Project New Village (PNV) is an African-American led community organization in urban Southeastern San Diego. The non-profit organization's mission is "supporting the health and well-being of neighborhoods in Southeastern San Diego," through their flagship project "The People's Produce Project." The icon denoting the organization's

⁴³ Project New Village public meeting, May 23, 2012 at PNV office in Southeastern San Diego. Those from the environmental movement could interpret this quote as not supporting food justice in that the solution can be to simply create more consumerism, thereby destroying the planet. However, PNV is supporting a sustainable infrastructure of consumption in their farming and retailing activities, and are not advocating a corporate global food system.

leading project is that of vegetables (beans, carrots, and green lettuce) carved into a map of the neighborhoods of Southeastern San Diego (see Figure 3.1). This flagship project is a food justice project that now consists of two key components: the farmers market and community garden.⁴⁴

The inspiration for the project began through cross pollination at the California Community Food and Justice Coalition meeting in City Heights, San Diego. The core ideas of food justice and community food security resonated with the leader of the project, Diane Moss. With respect to food access, PNV has distinguished their landscape as lacking produce (“food desert”) but having an overabundance of fast food (“food swamp”).⁴⁵ Identified as a neighborhood that lacks access to affordable nutritious food, Southeastern San Diego also bears disproportionate burdens of chronic disease linked to limited access of produce. Consistent with national studies of resource poor communities of color (Morland et al. 2002, 2006), when compared to San Diego County and City, Southeastern bears the highest proportion of deaths at 59 percent from the top four diseases: stroke, diabetes, asthma, and cancer (County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency 2012).⁴⁶

⁴⁴ PNV also hosts an annual *César E. Chávez Community Tribute and Celebration* to “promote equal rights and justice for all Americans,” and a Grower’s Group for those who are interested in food and farming (<http://whatsnewinthevillage.com/tag/cesar-chavez/>).

⁴⁵ Project New Village public meeting, May 23, 2012 at PNV office in Southeastern San Diego. At first Diane rejected the label “food desert” as it connotes worthlessness, and prefers to refer to the Southeastern food landscape as an overabundance of fast food restaurants (“food swamp”) than fresh food restaurants, “If you just look at where we are, there are two markets that do not have good produce, but for those two markets there is about eight fast food restaurants, so we want to use that definition.”

⁴⁶ Presentation by Curley Palmer, Health Information Specialist at the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), April 21, 2012 at PNV *César E. Chávez Community Tribute and Celebration* in Southeastern San Diego.

In addition to the food access are problems of disinvestment in the educational system, social services, and infrastructure in Southeastern San Diego. In comparison to the City and County of San Diego, lower incomes, higher rates of unemployment, and poverty characterize Southeastern. Households in Southeastern have higher rates of households with no vehicle, and rely more on public transportation to work. Also, the percentage of households receiving food stamps is more than double City and County averages. Southeastern is primarily Latino and African American, with whites representing 10 percent of the population (Joassart-Marcelli and Bosco 2014). Project New Village mobilizes around these inequities in their collective action framing. The leader of the project, Diane Moss, often discusses these overlapping inequalities in public events and forums, online media, and publicly at the garden and market.

Thus, for Diane and others in the project, creating a neighborhood community food system is a source of empowerment and “was something that we could do, that we could have an impact on. We could change the community in which we live and we could have greater access to fresh fruits and vegetables.” The project secured an abandoned site in the neighborhood of Mt. Hope, for which the city redevelopment agency charged \$1 and a three-year lease guarantee.⁴⁷ In the fall of 2011, their non-profit status and land permit were granted. The organization also set up the first farmers market in the neighborhood a few miles to the east of the garden.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ The site originally consisted of a small building and parking lot occupied by the San Diego Urban League.

⁴⁸ Project New Village public meeting, May 23, 2012 at PNV office in Southeastern San Diego. It took several years to get this garden approved through the city because the property was zoned for industrial use. PNV was part of a much broader movement (the “1-in-10”) in San Diego to re-regulate land use for community gardens.

As Diane Moss described, building social justice through sustainable food practices is also inspired by Will Allen’s project “Growing Power,” to which Moss says, “solidified for me the work that needed to be done in Southeastern San Diego.” Growing Power is a project of empowering African American communities who have experienced oppression through slavery who then become targets by fast food industries in disinvested neighborhoods (Ohri-Vachaspati, Zeynep, Rimkus, and Powell 2014; Schlosser in W. Allen 2012). The legacy of racism is that white communities’ disapproval of fast and unhealthy food has shifted to targeting black communities that already face the burdens of resource inequality (Schlosser in W. Allen 2012). Diane Moss expresses the need to undo social and market exclusions through an emancipatory approach that includes creating community as well as a local food economy:

Our whole approach is people based if you will. We do community engagement and civic engagement...through our relationship with SECD (Southeastern Economic Development Corporation). We started looking at land use and different ways land can be used to grow things, not just community gardens, but small farms, edible landscape, all kinds of ways that we could take these blighted areas in our community and make them into an opportunity to make food, to generate jobs, to have wealth in our community.⁴⁹

In sum, Project New Village uses the approach of creating a local market to generate support for their project goal: health and wellness in Southeastern San Diego. PNV challenges health risks posed by unhealthy food found in fast food restaurants and corner stores. Through their approach, PNV promotes participation via economic relationships to tackle community needs. Additionally, because PNV recognizes this issue as an issue

⁴⁹ Project New Village public meeting, May 23, 2012 at PNV office in Southeastern San Diego.

of civil rights and social justice, demands for access to healthy food is coupled with demands for employment, education, and beautification of living spaces. Importantly, by connecting food injustice to racial injustice through Will Allen, this expands the alternative food movement beyond the confines of white privilege, a critique often leveled at alternative food movements (Alkon 2012).

Creating Markets

Creating a local economy via markets is one of the strategies used by PNV. They recognize the need to bring producers and consumers together to build a local market that can draw in wealth for the community. For PNV, their goal is to create a local economy by tapping into the need for employment as well as the consumer desire to eat healthy, nutritious food. However, PNV is at a structural disadvantage with respect to farmers because low-income consumers cannot afford higher prices by default. In the literature, wealthy communities have fostered such markets because ethical goods are coveted, more accessible to the privileged, and resonate with privileged consumers who can “opt out” (Alkon 2012). In these advantaged areas, higher prices lure farmers to these markets, which may or may not be local.⁵⁰ Despite this barrier, PNV’s hope is to get around this disadvantage by growing produce from within the neighborhood.

We may be a poor people in some respects, we may have health disparities, *but we got big lots*, and these empty lots look like places where we can grow things, and so now since we can have community gardens in

⁵⁰ For instance, according to the Farm Bureau director in San Diego County, most farmers in North County San Diego travel to sell their produce in Los Angeles farmers markets (two hours away). Because the price premiums are higher in affluent places like Santa Monica, farmers are attracted to markets there. We do not see farmers markets in low-income areas because farmers are seeking more money for their labor.

places, we have a good relationship with the agriculture department, and we are going to have certified growers, we might be the farmers market in the county where neighbors sell to neighbors.⁵¹

Unlike the model where farmers may come from outside of the community, in the PNV model it will be “neighbors selling to neighbors.” Thus, their aim is to link local and community farmers to consumers of healthy food Southeastern San Diego. Using markets will create wealth, but do so for the surrounding community.

Another hurdle PNV is relying on is that of adequate consumer demand. The assumption is that by creating the farmers market and doing advertisement and outreach, PNV can tap into demand:

When we started to look at a farmers market, we thought who is going to come to the farmers market? Why should we go there other than the Food 4 Less? It is going to cost me more to buy fruits and vegetables at this farmers market, why should I go? So, here is my lucky escape. So, two young people go to the produce manager, and said to the produce manager, “Do you have any apples that are not shiny? Because Dr. Oz says shiny apples are not good for us.” So, I have been repeating these kinds of messages. So, if we open the farmers market, people will come and make the right choices.⁵²

PNV recognizes that creating a market needs both supply and demand, and is hoping that higher prices will outweigh consumers’ need to be healthy.⁵³ As such PNV is also relying on the assumption younger generations and critical consumers will push stores to stock healthy food that ideally would come from the PNV garden. Thus, PNV is engaging in

⁵¹ Diane Moss, at the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN) public conference on May 4, 2012.

⁵² Diane Moss, at the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN) public conference on May 4, 2012.

⁵³ Prices at this farmers market are less than markets in wealthy areas. Nonetheless, unless those on limited incomes use subsidies, prices are higher.

the “market as movement” approach advocated by the popular Michael Pollan, “You can simply stop participating in a system that abuses animals or poisons the water or squanders jet fuel flying asparagus around the world. You can vote with your fork, in other words, and you can do it three times a day” (2006a; Alkon 2014). The assumption is that consumers are key actors in this system, and can build local economies by “voting with their fork.”

However, this also relies on turning nature and social justice into a commodity. The process of certification for the farmers market and vendors ensures the labeling of “certified produce,” as well as “local” produce. While farmers could not label their produce “organic” without certification, farmers often said their produce was chemical free and organically grown. Additionally, like all ethical goods, an aspect of moral goodness is commodified as well (Alkon 2012). In this market, social justice is commodified, as non-profit juvenile justice organizations such as Second Chance advertise and sell their produce at PNV market.

In sum, marketization occurs in the efforts to create a market, rest it on the principle of supply and demand, and foster the commodification of ethical goods. However, ethical norms and social protections can also govern markets.

Creating Protections

In this section, I clarify the ways that PNV is tempering the effects of neoliberal capitalism by developing social protections. PNV is working to rectify legacies of inequality described in chapter two as well as those inequalities worsened by neoliberal

political economy. Thus, the social protection mode overlaps with that of emancipation. However, for analytical purposes I will attend to each separately.

Part of the social protection that PNV is offering is through implementing and destigmatizing food stamps (known as CalFresh in California or SNAP nationally) and other safety net programs. During this fieldwork, the PNV site was only one of a handful of the 65 farmers markets in San Diego County that advertised and promoted the use of federal dollars for healthy food.⁵⁴ The PNV market also advertises and encourages the use of WIC (supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children). Offering more tools, PNV takes part in federal EBT, or electronic benefits transfer. SNAP funds placed on this card can be used at participating outlets. Instead of actual stamps, they look and behave like debit cards. By behaving like a debit card, a recipient of subsidies is indistinguishable from regular customers, thus less stigmatic. The PNV farmers market and website promote acceptance of these federal dollars.

In addition, PNV was one of the five farmers markets to receive a County of San Diego grant called the Fresh Fund from 2011 until March 2012. The program matches up to \$20 dollars in public subsidy funds, essentially offering low-income participants an extra \$20 dollars for produce at the market for free. Public subsidy dollars included SNAP, WIC, and Supplemental Social Security (SSI).⁵⁵ This helps to offset capitalist

⁵⁴ Interestingly, at a national level California ranks next to last for food stamp participation rates. San Diego lost out on \$354 million in federal dollars due to underutilization. According to California Food Policy Advocates, each CalFresh dollar spent generates approximately two dollars in economic activity. Importantly, food stamp participation rates are not caused by a lack of need, but instead paperwork enrollment and maintenance, poor outreach, and stigma (Shimada 2010).

⁵⁵ San Diego was the largest recipient of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* (CPPW) grant from 2010-2012 at 17.8 million dollars. The County program is known as "Healthy Works." Some of those moneys went to funding the Fresh Fund Program.

labor markets. This is also significant as farmers markets often privilege affluent consumers (Alkon 2014). In addition, one could enroll in the Fresh Fund at the market, thus avoiding the bureaucratic and stigmatizing trips to welfare agencies. The goal of such promotion is to take not only the sting out of markets by making dollars count twice for consumers (and benefit farmers), but also to bring the issue of poverty into the less stigmatizing space of a farmers market where low-income consumers are many recipients. Thus, by de-stigmatizing food stamps, PNV is asserting the social patterning of inequality rather than an individualizing one (Mills, C.W 1959).

PNV also emphasized social protections by offering a non-competitive environment for both farmers and community garden growers. This meant no booth fees for vendors, and a \$5 dollar per month plot fee for garden participation. Like safety net programs, PNV linked farmers to the County Agriculture department, aiding backyard growers or farmers with their certification applications. This worked to build trust among PNV, growers, and the County Agriculture Department as well as help with the burden of bureaucratic paperwork. Popular farmers markets, such as that in Santa Monica, often have waiting lists for farmers that span years, and as such require their farmers to be aware of county agricultural rules and regulations (Avery 2012).⁵⁶ However, PNV offered immediate access for farmers who grew in the vicinity as well as from the PNV

These funds were originally from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, a stimulus program in the wake of the 2008 fiscal crisis (County of San Diego HHSA 2016, http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/programs/phs/chronic_disease_health_disparities/CPPW.html).

⁵⁶ Laura Avery presentation at the California Small Farm Conference in Valencia, CA. March 5, 2012. (<http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/?blogpost=7104&blogasset=51570>)

garden. This offered social protection by giving access to the market and garden space for locals, thus working to protect and create a better livelihood for them.

PNV's acceptance of low-income farmers and of the non-profit juvenile justice organization (Second Chance) are ways to bring these projects into the market to help with livelihood and funding. Second Chance uses urban gardening as a training platform for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. At the Second Chance booth, youths sell local honey, lettuces, tomatoes, oranges, carrots, and onions. Also displayed is an information sheet for the non-profit program, alerting consumers that proceeds go to youth stipends, garden supplies, and materials. A local displaced farmer from southeast Africa, Akashinga, came weekly to the PNV farmers market, bringing produce grown from a community garden plot in a nearby neighborhood. Akashinga, in her early 20s, began farming again several years ago when sick from cancer. Working the plot with her sister, the space allowed her to heal from chemotherapy, while growing produce from her native country for her family, and the farmers market. Both Second Chance farmers and Akashinga used sustainable gardening practices, and while commodifying nature, protected nature as well. At the other end, the market protected the non-profit program as well as local farmers. While commodifying social justice and in the context of an insecure neoliberal capitalist environment, PNV is creating social protections for vulnerable people.

Other social protections included PNV's offering of knowledge to their farmers and gardeners and email list serve of entrepreneurship opportunities. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) in City Heights often hosted events for their clients to build

their own businesses, often through microcredit. PNV linked participants to these workshops, and planned to offer their own.

The goal of PNV is to create a local economy whose effects are protecting the community from the predation of processed and corporate foods that create illness long term. Part of PNV strategy is to expand the offerings in their community by working with retailers, which is consistent with building alternatives within the marketplace opposed to restricting bad actors in the corporate food regime (Alkon 2014). Rather than targeting unhealthy food retailers through political campaigning, PNV aims to work with local retailers by supplying them with lower cost produce and helping with funding for store makeovers. For example, a small corner store in the neighborhood sells mostly liquor and offers a small choice of low grade produce. It is convenient for residents, and accepts food stamps. But the store is also problematic for residents who desire fresh produce offerings. One of the strategies is to incorporate these retailers by building relationships and offering services. According to PNV:

Once we get this [the community garden] going, we will make sure we invite him [the store owner] here. What I would like to do is to find some money to do a storefront makeover, and say “we will get this done for you” but for us, you will have to expand the produce section.⁵⁷

Some local food retailers want to offer a better choice of produce, but suppliers offer cheaper prices only in quantity. Produce not sold at once loses its appeal, and becomes a

⁵⁷ Project New Village public meeting, May 23, 2012 at PNV office in Southeastern San Diego.

loss for the storeowner. Furthermore, stores need proper refrigeration and gondola space.

PNV is now working with a small local retailer next to the garden:

They do not buy fresh. They only buy from some distributor and then they must buy a certain quantity...So you get old stuff sometimes. So that is in the plan... [The store] can just come over here and buy – and they can just get what they want.⁵⁸

Thus, PNV is protecting their neighborhood by enrolling local stores in the cause, aiding with store conversions (funded by a government program), and profitability by supplying the produce at a cheaper price than conventional suppliers. As such, PNV is working to promote consumption of healthy food by expanding choices in the neighborhood, keeping in mind the strategy to generate jobs within the community by supplying local retailers through the community garden.

Lastly, the food justice project would not be so without an environmental piece. For PNV, protecting nature comes from supporting local farmers who are using sustainable growing practices and supporting a local economy that minimizes fuel consumption. As Taylor, a farmer from Second Chance said, the purpose of local food is “to keep to Mobile, Exxon, and those people out of our grocery stores, by providing local food rather than stuff that comes from a thousand miles away.”⁵⁹ Protecting the environment by supporting local is also part of the project of creating green spaces. The garden is one such space that beautifies the landscape in the larger effort to make Southeastern San Diego more pleasant and safe to walk in. As Diane said, having green

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ <https://www.secondchanceprogram.org/youth-program/>

spaces everywhere is part of this larger project for not only revering nature, but also making the environment a space where people can live, work, and play. Such a sentiment is what environmental justice advocates highlight in their campaigns (Taylor 2000).

Creating Emancipation

In this section, I pinpoint the ways PNV asserts emancipation. On the one hand, we can see de-stigmatization as expanding social protections, and as creating emancipation from the larger society wide stigma against using “welfare benefits.” We can also view entrepreneurship as a form of emancipation for those previously excluded from education and wage markets.⁶⁰ As part of the PNV local economy initiative, they are working on bringing academic and community training for participation in the food system such as urban agriculture, food production, and business management training. Currently, the area lacks these resources that other communities have. To the north of Southeastern, the affluent community of La Jolla has the University of California San Diego, and to the west San Diego City College is downtown. However, part of the broader mission is to use the community educational center, the Educational Cultural Complex (ECC), as a local training ground for not only certificates but also academic degrees. PNV is now engaged in dialogue with those at the ECC to start programs in Southeastern San Diego. As Diane states,

A key piece is finding some resources to make this work. The sustainability piece for me is on the front end: people coming through the

⁶⁰ The legacy of institutional racism has undermined the services and support for people of color in Southeastern San Diego. In the absence of genuine support, I argue there is an emancipatory quality to entrepreneurship for these communities.

door wanting to take the classes, and that there are no empty seats. Coming out of the door there are job opportunities, and there are entrepreneurial opportunities that make sense. We are eating better, people are happier in the neighborhood, and [they know] that we are concerned about it.⁶¹

Emancipation is having an educational training system close to home that people can access, and is linked to the overall project for sustaining social reproduction and the environment. Another emancipatory aspect is to offer opportunities to those previously incarcerated, and injured by war. A PNV leader said about the educational component:

I still see this as more hood-driven. Now we are coming full-circle to making the Educational Cultural Complex as operational as an academic institution. But also as a training-ground, especially given the society that we live in now. A lot of the population that we have worked with might not be able to get regular jobs, quote-unquote, because of criminal records, or whatever...people coming back from the war theater with various kinds of issues. This might be a good thing for them.⁶²

Thus, included in the project are those denied full participation in market society and those injured by warfare.

While education serves emancipatory purposes, so also does civic participation and inclusion in community events and workshops such as that of the annual *César E. Chávez* Community Tribute and Celebration. At this event, the mayor and councilmembers often attend, and dialogue about what is needed and can be done in Southeastern San Diego takes the stage. PNV also creates youth civic engagement, and

⁶¹ Diane Moss at Project New Village public meeting, May 23, 2012 at PNV office in Southeastern San Diego.

⁶² Project New Village public meeting, May 23, 2012 at PNV office in Southeastern San Diego.

mentors youths in the juvenile justice program. Young adults are brought to City Hall where they learn about governance and how decisions are made, and to speak for decisions that may affect their community. Thus, through civic involvement and bringing politicians into dialogue, PNV is fostering political consciousness and more engaged citizenry.

Lastly, if emancipation is about challenging social hierarchies such as that of race and ethnicity, PNV also works to build dignity among African-American and Latino peoples. At the market, soul music, Motown, and jazz are often played, and at garden events live African drum music is featured. Latino cultural heritage is also important, as the annual community tribute celebrates *César E. Chávez*. Lastly, at the end of my fieldwork PNV was considering a reading group. Readings suggested were those by African American food activist, Will Allen, as well as Native American activist, Winona LaDuke. However, discussions of slavery and worker's rights at the market, garden, and events fostered a critical identity as well as appreciation and acceptance for cultural heritage.

For PNV, creating community is part of their platform to generate emancipation from dislocation and alienation. As community events, especially at the garden, people living near each other were conversing about the garden, but had never previously met. There were discussions about what kinds of vegetables to grow, and what people did for a living. People who were passersby also visited the garden, curious about the project. At the grand opening day, one of the original gardeners publicly spoke at the event to encourage people to be part of the garden:

And if you have kids or grandkids, or are retired and you want to do something nice – this will be the perfect spot to get together. The most wonderful part of the whole thing is watching your vegetables grow, and the excitement that kids get by tasting them, and knowing that they had something to do with it. So, it is just wonderful to see people here. We hope you get more people and decide to be part of this whole great organization and community.⁶³

As this quote reveals, the garden became a site where people could play, work on gardens, learn about gardens, teach children, and be together. Working against the anonymity one encounters in an urban space, the garden worked to protect and emancipate people from such relationships.

In sum, emancipation is efforts to undo or remedy the effects of social hierarchy, stemming either from society, markets, and/or culture. By giving opportunities for those left out of the wage system, the PNV market serves as an emancipatory tool. In addition, those who are unable to take part in college or community education classes due to class or age status will have access to the curriculum should PNV's relationship with the local community college and community center work. Changing racial and ethnic identity into that of a source of positivity opposed to an oppression through cultural events and reading groups is a source of emancipation. Finally, citizens are empowered as they engage with politicians and civic action at the garden, market, and City Hall.

Drawbacks. PNV is engaging in a project driven by creating markets, social protections, and struggles for emancipation. Nonetheless, there are tensions in this food justice project. The first tension involves defining the boundaries of the local or

⁶³ Anonymous, at PNV public ceremony in Southeastern San Diego Community Garden, July 28, 2012.

community and at PNV this happened in two ways. First, while PNV is engaged in protecting the neighborhood by building a local food system, it could be argued the project excludes migrant laborers who are now trapped by the industrial food system. This dimension of food justice was noticeably absent in PNV discussions. Second, because the nature of the project is to benefit the Southeastern community, those that may have needed help but lived elsewhere were not included.⁶⁴ This presented a contradiction when a farmer that had lived 15 miles south of the neighborhood wanted a plot, but was denied because priority was for Southeastern residents. social protections for the neighborhood and residents can re-enforce hierarchies within the food system (e.g. migrant labor), and between communities. This lends support to the critique that local food movements can be exclusionary by bounding the local (Goodman, D., Dupuis, and Goodman, M. 2012).

The second tension in the project is the reliance on city owned land and instability of federal funding. As in the case of New York City, city government can refuse to renew the lease or take back the right to garden (Staeheli, Mitchell, and Gibson 2002). If the city finds a better use for the land (meaning more tax dollars), or the garden becomes a gentrifying force in the neighborhood, then the project itself can be undermined. A related problem is the stability of funding. By supporting the commodification of social justice, such as buying produce from the Second Chance organization, the cause gains support in the short term. However, one wonders whether the longer-term solution for

⁶⁴ There is a demand for community gardening spaces for those who wish to grow for their families but also farmers markets. I heard on several occasions that community garden plots were scarce, and had long waiting lists.

Second Chance is the stability of federal funding, which an underlying marketization approach does not lend itself to. Thus, marketization is only a partial solution for supporting such projects.

A final tension is that of gender. While the garden itself could be used as a tool for entrepreneurship or supplementing a family's food budget, issues of gender were not discussed throughout my fieldwork.⁶⁵ However, many garden participants were female and seeking to supplement their family's diet. While the organization is run by a female, the issue of women's work as care work did not come up. Although women do most of the care-work, signifying the gender hierarchy in social reproduction, such struggles were not vocalized. Next, I turn to the second alternative food project at the U.S. – Mexico border.

AT THE BORDER ZONE: FARMING MARKETS FOR NATURE

People need to [learn about sustainable food technologies and farm to fork]. Food needs to be where people live. You know, it can be done...Food should be something we think about all the time, how it is grown, where it is coming from, the quality of ingredients that are making that food. (Mel Lions, co-founder of San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project)⁶⁶

San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project (SDRS) is a non-profit educational program in South San Diego one mile from the US-Mexico border whose mission is to

⁶⁵ This does not mean that gender oppression was never discussed, only that it was not salient in my fieldwork. I know the planned reading group did incorporate Native American and African American women's perspectives.

⁶⁶ Mel Lions Interview, May 9, 2012 at SDRS site in San Diego.

create and support a sustainable food system in San Diego County by “encourag[ing] the growth and consumption of regional food” (www.sandiegoroots.org). The organization works toward “more ecologically sound, economically viable and socially just food system in San Diego” by building awareness from “farm to fork” (www.sandiegoroots.org).

The icon denoting the organization’s leading project is a tall wild willow tree, which refers to the original willow trees that form the southwestern boundary of the six acres working farm (see Figure 3.2).⁶⁷ The farm is in the Tijuana River Valley Nature Preserve (USA), a rural farming area. The wild willow also captures the sense of the “nature as wilderness,” or nature as separate from urban life. Mel Lions describes this desire for getting back to nature in their site criteria:

We wanted it to be in a river valley, not too far from the city because we wanted to be able to have people from the city to be able to come to the farm, and not be so far away, because we wanted the community to be part of this. We wanted to be semi-wild even, lots of nature around. We just did not want to take some industrial piece of farmland and do agriculture; we wanted to have native wildlife around us.⁶⁸

Through sustainable farming practices humans and nature can coexist harmoniously, creating benefits for both. To generate this awareness, the farm hosts school field trips, public and group tours, potlucks and film nights, weddings, as well as a working site for sustainable farming classes through the University of San Diego.

⁶⁷ In addition to the Wild Willow Farm Project, SDRS also consists of an urban agriculture program focused on building gardens throughout San Diego (Victory Gardens San Diego). However, for the purposes of this study, the Wild Willow Farm is the focus.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

In addition to their outreach SDRS farms on site, and markets their produce at their farmstand, through the Ocean Beach People's Organic Food Co-Op (People's), and a community supported agriculture program (CSA). The Healthy Works grant funds the project, and is one of five gardens chosen to take part as a regional gardening center which function as "community based hubs for garden education and training" (San Diego Childhood Obesity Initiative 2013).⁶⁹

The inspiration for the project began through the efforts of a small group of local food supporters in 2001 to save an iconic organic farm in rural east county San Diego from large-scale retail development. The Benson's farm, in part funded by People's, represented the future of local sustainable agriculture in the fight against an industrial food system that supported suburban development, environmental degradation, and alienation. Mel Lions, one of the project founders of SDRS, said the Benson farm produced the "best produce in San Diego, all the best chefs in the best restaurants couldn't get enough of it."⁷⁰ The farm also sold their vegetables including specialty crops like Hopi watermelon at farmers markets and People's, still the only cooperative in San Diego.⁷¹ They also had 25 members for their CSA. The farm also collaborated with People's to host fieldtrips for elementary and middle-school children to visit and learn

⁶⁹ (<http://ourcommunityourkids.org/coi.aspx>). The other garden centers did not include the PNV site, however are: The International Rescue Committee, Olivewood Gardens & Learning Center, San Diego Youth Services, and Solana Center for Environmental Innovation.

⁷⁰ Mel Lions Interview, May 9, 2012 at SDRS site in San Diego.

⁷¹ The Benson farm took pride in creating healthy soil which they argue is the foundation of healthy food. "We grow living soil, and the living soil grows the plants...That's sustainable agriculture" (Todd Benson in Hunt 2003). They oppose petrochemicals and genetically modified seeds, and advocate for saving family farms and the practice of seed saving. For example, the Hopi watermelon seeds grown in the summer of 2002, were hundreds of years old and passed down from person to person (Hunt 2003).

about growing food on a working farm.⁷² Although the fight to achieve the \$8 million in funds to buy the farm was unsuccessful, the small group of activists expanded over the decade and by 2010 secured the land in the Tijuana River Valley to continue their mission to create a local and sustainable food system in San Diego.

Creating Markets

Like PNV, SDRS invests in creating a regional food economy. They too, believe in the “market as movement” approach advocated by Michael Pollan (2006a). For SDRS, the demand for ethical products is there, but the goal is to grow food everywhere such that this demand will overcome the industrial food system and force it to change. As Mel Lions, the founder of SDRS argues:

If we have front yard gardens, community gardens, co-op gardens, school gardens, and little farms, dispersed everywhere, and people in their neighborhoods are participating in the food system, and providing the food that that community needs, then we have lost the need to have these cogs in the wheel who spend all their day doing the same thing [industrial farming and retail].⁷³

In other words, if there is mass participation in the regional food system, then it will fix the need for a migrant labor force. By voting with the ethical dollar, the need for industrial agriculture and global retailers will be “chosen out” by regional San Diegans. As such, SDRS envisions their farm as two-fold: offering education for sustainable

⁷² The co-op helped to subsidize the educational programs at the Benson’s farm. The co-op helped by supplying staff and transportation to the farm (Lions and Weightman 2011).

⁷³ Mel Lions Interview, May 9, 2012 at SDRS site in San Diego.

farming practices unique to San Diego ecology, and secondly supporting the provision of regional food by retailing it at their farmstand at Wild Willow, People's, and through the CSA previously mentioned.

SDRS also commodifies their produce as ethical. This message is marketed by word of mouth to those who attend their potlucks, events, or tours, and by the ethical retail outlet People's. The farm cultivates the ethical dimension in at their farm, as tour guides show sustainable food practices in action. Part of their goal is to create consumer awareness, but as Lions has described to me, the demand is already there. It was not until 2006 with Pollan's *Omnivore's Dilemma* that their project really kicked off. While they do believe that demand is there, SDRS is seeking to influence that supply, thus opting into supply-demand mechanics for social change.

Creating Protections

SDRS engages in social protections in several ways. First, SDRS aims to protect the environment not only regionally, but also for the planet. By learning sustainable agricultural techniques unique to the San Diego region, such as that of farming in drought, SDRS contributes to a set of farming practices that are ecological. For instance, SDRS works on dry-farming techniques, practices used in times of little water. They also practice permaculture to strengthen soils and grow food chemical free. To limit waste at their farm, SDRS recycles all organic material and refrains from using plastics to cover their growing crops. They argue this improves the nutrition in their food, thereby generating positive impacts on human health. In their view, these practices aid the project

for human survival on a finite and ecologically fragile planet. Their project also helps to protect sustainable agricultural knowledge from the global food industry.

Secondly, SDRS works to develop and protect a new generation of sustainable farmers. As shown by the USDA, the current generation of farmers is aging, thus prompting the USDA to begin programs for filling in these gaps (USDA 2015).⁷⁴ It is unclear whether these gaps will be for sustainable farmers; however, the USDA is offering funding for specialty crop growers, organic certification, and conservation practices. In this respect, SDRS aids in this future generation by using the farm space as a site where those in the urban agriculture program at San Diego City College can volunteer and practice sustainable farming techniques. The program developed a seed saving project, and created marketing channels for farmers to sell produce at the on-site farmstand, for People's, and the CSA. Thus, SDRS protects a new generation of farmers by supplying practice space to learn on, and supporting the certification program at San Diego City College. As a source of information about the food system and sustainable food techniques, SDRS also acts as a resource for the community through their community classes on how to garden. Recently, SDRS has begun selling their produce at the Ocean Beach farmers market and began accepting CalFresh and WIC, thus supporting social protections for low-income consumers.

⁷⁴ USDA press release, "USDA Announces Nearly \$18 million to Train, Educate the Next Generation of Farmers and Ranchers," October 30, <https://nifa.usda.gov/press-release/usda-announces-nearly-18-million-train-educate-next-generation-farmers-and-ranchers>. At the California Small Farmer Conference in Valencia, the convention theme prioritized creating the next generation of farmers; specifically, how to do so when the "farmers of the future generation will not look like those of today." (<http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/events/12conference/>)

Recognizing that nature is a resource that is commodified and destroyed by industrial agriculture, SDRS aims to protect nature from both consumerism and industry. By generating a regional economy around sustainable agricultural techniques, the goal is to undermine the industrial food system. Secondly, SDRS is aiming to protect nature from further commodification. Through their potlucks, at Earth Day, and yearly Cultivating Food Justice Conference, they promote the non-GMO campaign, vehemently opposing intrusion into the substance of nature and its privatization.

Creating Emancipation

Emancipation overlaps with protection as well for SDRS. Not only is SDRS working to create a new generation of sustainable farmers, but their goal is to emancipate these farmers from a reliance on industrial agricultural techniques. By offering the education, certificates, and social support, SDRS is working to undo the stigma of the “hippie farmer” that is in commune with nature and thus reluctant to use the chemical and industrial side of farming. By confirming sustainable agriculture (really permaculture), SDRS is working to change deep rooted assumptions about the masculinized farmer. In addition to undoing the stereotype of a male farmer, many participants in their farming program were also female.

Emancipation is the practice to undo hierarchical oppressions located in social relations. Like PNV, SDRS seeks to create community by reducing anonymity in social relationships, building trust, and fostering a sense of shared belonging at the farm. In this way, they work to emancipate people from commodified capitalist relations. As such,

they advocate in their market relations and tours a re-connection to nature, farmers, and community.

Community building at the farm is clear in the large potlucks that happen every month, along with the film series, and volunteer days. One of the themes that emerged from the Sustainable Roots' group is the notion that as a culture, people live in "silos." This is a way of saying that people are often in their own worlds, disconnected from the totality of social and civic life. As Greenameyer from SDRS says:

We are so compartmentalized - I know this and about that [referring to specialized knowledge] - and it is everything from what we study to the job we do, everything is automated, assembly line. You know if one person could build a car that would be a great skill, but now you have someone putting in a windshield, a person putting in the brakes, you know nobody really knows what the whole is exactly.⁷⁵

This silo effect is altered by practicing farming and communicating with the farmer. In addition, trust is another aspect of culture they seek to remedy. As Misha Johnson states, building trust happens when people build face-to-face relationships:

If we have people who come visit our farm, and we have hundreds of people a year who come to our farm, if not thousands, then they know how we grow the food and they trust us. And I think selling food to people based on trust is the original way, and it is the best way to do it.⁷⁶

Misha's sentiment captures the priority placed on building trust through direct relationships, and by prioritizing people coming to the farm to grow, learn, and interact

⁷⁵ Bob Greenameyer Interview, June 7, 2012 at SDRS site in San Diego.

⁷⁶ Misha Johnson Interview, May 14, 2012 at SDRS site in San Diego.

with people and farmers. In addition to growing, some within the organization have been encouraging the use of bartering and trade, to de-monetize social relationships.

And that is like the model that we are doing here is we are saying that to get everything you need you do not have to go out and pay for something and buy labor. You have neighbors and going to the farmers market is an example. I have worked at the farmers market for Suzie's farm and we would grow a lot of vegetables, but you could exchange honey, and the person down there, with growing nuts and fruit. And you grow food, and you will always get more than you need. And you can get a full diet without ever spending a dime just by growing your own food because you can exchange and barter with everybody and you lower the price of food. I think we've all here experienced an excessive amount of lemons, or loquats, or avocados, people showing up here with bags of them. And at the last potluck, there you had all those loquats. (Misha Johnson)⁷⁷

A prime example of re-valuing labor and situating labor within cultural context, Misha advocates the use of bartering and exchange and thus a de-commodification of food.

Lastly, using sustainable agricultural techniques can also be viewed as a way to release nature from the deep intrusions that now characterize the new wave of commodification. By opposing GMOs and bioengineering, they are working to emancipate nature from the "alteration of its internal grammar" (Fraser 2014: 552).

Drawbacks. Several tensions emerge in SDRS' work to re-embed the market. As with PNV, the first tension emerges around the issue of what constitutes the local, and the community. SDRS is inclusive to the surrounding community, farmers, consumers, and anyone who is interested in their farm. However, a tension emerges with respect to substantive access to the project. Away from the hurriedness and problems of disinvested

⁷⁷ Ibid.

urban space, primarily white participants and leaders drive to the SDRS site (sometimes from 45 minutes away) into a quiet, peaceful nature preserve. For those without the time and potential expense, inclusivity for the overall project may be a problem. On the other hand, this natural setting is an important advantage and asset for SDRS as an organization. Because of this natural setting, SDRS directly links to the hegemonic wilderness ethic in mainstream alternative food movement discourse and captures many (sometimes paying) visitors and volunteers (Alkon 2012). The result of privileging the nature as wilderness ethic is that SDRS discursively dismisses nature as also a place to live, work, and play.

A second tension that emerges is that of discursively excluding the issue of migrant labor in awareness campaigns and discourse. That the border is a mile away from the Wild Willow Farm site makes this omission even more curious, given the heavily trafficked area at the U.S.-Mexico border and historical relationship between migrant labor and industrial agriculture in the U.S.

Finally, such projects like SDRS do rely on grant funding. Like PNV, the instability of federal funding or private sector donations can bring the program into serious hardship. Thus, like PNV, marketization is only a partial solution for supporting such projects.

CONCLUSION

At the outset of this chapter, I posed the question of whether alternative food movements reproduce neoliberalism in the attempt to re-embed the market. Using Nancy

Fraser's critical feminist lens, I applied the triple movement (i.e. marketization, social protections, and emancipation) to analyze neoliberalism from a more nuanced perspective. By looking at the ways these projects work to re-embed markets, we see the tensions that surround the practices of creating markets, protections, and emancipation in these two sites.

The findings show these projects do carry neoliberal tendencies. These projects engage in the market as movement approach advocated by Pollan and the mainstream alternative food movement (2006a, 2006b). Both projects claim that market forces will support a local food economy. However, SDRS fetishizes the market more so than PNV. For SDRS, market forces are assumed to lead to institutional change within the conventional food system, and in this way, places more emphasis on private consumerism in place of public citizenship. For PNV, market forces are necessary to make a local economy work, but the goal is not to transform the conventional food system writ large, but instead make a local economy work for their community. In this sense, consumerism is more political as each dollar serves the purpose of community survival.

A second critique levied at alternative food projects is that of social protections. It is argued that in their mainstream neoliberal form, alternative food projects reproduce neoliberalism by excluding low-income participants from purchases. Alternative markets rely on preciousness to increase prices, in theory to pay farmers a fair wage for their work. However, this positions the low-wage farmer against the low-wage consumer. Both projects aim to protect their farmers and consumers from the ravages of free market capitalism. From the beginning PNV accepted and promoted consumer food subsidies,

and supports low-income and non-profit farmers (Alkon 2012). SDRS uses grants to subsidize their farmers and now takes part in accepting consumer subsidies as well. In sum, they both engage in social protections as alternative food projects. Nonetheless, scholars critical of alternative food projects argue that state responsibilities to regulate the conventional food system and offer social services are displaced to the third sector (e.g. NGOs and charity), and thus reinforce neoliberalism. Both projects appear to support this conclusion. PNV actively de-stigmatizes consumer food subsidies and takes on the role of mediator between the agriculture department, and health department. PNV also distributes healthy food, something that many activists today argue, is an entitlement at the very least. SDRS also offers healthy food, and accepts consumer food subsidies as well. On the other hand, given contemporary mistrust of the state, perhaps alternatives can generate civic engagement. However, without directly protesting corporate agriculture or a neoliberal state, these two projects work towards creating alternative markets and local economies alongside existing conventional systems.

Second to last, with respect to neoliberalism, the question is who is emancipated? Is it only the privileged consumer that matters and can disregard the public good? When we look at both projects, both do work to undo existing hierarchies and seek to reveal the social relations bound up in food as a commodity. For SRDS, their project brings a younger, sustainable farming generation to the table to counter the corporate food system. Rather than a hyper-masculinized version of machine scorching earth farming, SRDS creates farming practices that are less intensive, promote stewardship, and include women. SDRS works to emancipate, or make space for, non-hegemonic farming

practices. PNV also engages in emancipation. After decades of institutional racism and the onslaught of neoliberalism, PNV uses their food project to tackle the forces of systemic disinvestment targeted at their community: unemployment, a lack of public and consumer services, people going off to or displaced by war, racism, and poverty. Their emancipation is a different kind, including both farmers and consumers as well.

However, both projects discursively marginalize the migrant labor force that makes industrial food systems possible, and in practice do exclude. For PNV, their boundaries of the local prevent participation by low-income people from outside the neighborhood. For SDRS, their site privileges those who can afford transportation and weekend visits. In this way, bounding projects to the local is not without tensions. Goodman et al. argue that “reflexivity” can benefit movements in a substantial way. This would mean that, “The local is not idealized as a space insulated from power relations and anomic global capitalism but is acknowledged as a publicly contested site of political-economic struggle, exploitation, and accumulation” (8). Such acknowledgement may encourage both projects in different directions with a reflexive eye towards marketization, protection, and emancipation.

Lastly, despite differences in these projects, to consider only consumerism in alternative food movements is a circumspect activity. By paying attention to differences and practices on the ground, we see a variety of ways in which alternative food projects harness their position to create markets, social protections, and challenge existing hierarchies. However, as this analysis clarifies, both movements have opportunities to

make their projects more responsive to resisting neoliberalism and the corporate food system. Reflexivity is one such way.

FIGURES



Figure 3.1 Project New Village iconography. (<http://www.projectnewvillage.org/>)



Figure 3.2 San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project iconography. (<http://www.sandiegoroots.org/index.php>)

CHAPTER 5: NEOLIBERALISM, THE STATE, AND ALTERNATIVE FOOD MOVEMENTS

Scholars of alternative food movements have competing views about the role of the state in providing healthy food to communities. Most critics of the neoliberal turn in alternative food movements are wary of the use of individual consumption and markets in place of established social movement strategies that target the state. These critical scholars suggest a reinvigorated collective politics that mandates state protections for labor, the environment, and the poor, and not just alternatives to create justice (Alkon and Guthman 2017; Guthman 2007, 2008a). On the other hand, recent scholarship of African American, Latino, and indigenous communities suggests that states are not always benevolent actors. Not only does the police state disproportionately target people of color, but historically the state has been unwilling to secure necessities of life for marginalized populations (Gottlieb and Joshi 2013; McClintock 2011; Norgaard, Reed, and Van Horn 2011; White 2010, 2011a, 2011b). Thus, for communities of color, it is possible that local food movements and alternatives can be a strategic response to the legacy of state racism and a neoliberal political economy. This suggests the need for a more nuanced analysis of alternative food movements and the openings and closures posed by neoliberalism.

Scholars that study neoliberalism point to the dual nature of the state that is both rewarding and punishing. State support and legitimacy rewards projects that adhere to norms of market governance (Hackworth 2007; Spence 2011). The mainstream alternative food movement whose strategy for action is primarily market driven,

consumer centric, and appeals to white privileged clientele, captures both sides of the political spectrum (Alkon 2012). Like critics of alternatives argue, movements that use a market driven approach is not a contentious issue in neoliberal times. However, while movements by communities of color also adhere to norms of market governance, they also face the punishment turn of the neoliberal state. The findings suggest that neoliberalism is not race neutral; neoliberalism contributes to and worsens the legacy of racism in the struggle for food justice.

This chapter charts the two sides of the neoliberal state in two alternative food projects. While doing fieldwork in San Diego during the spring and summer of 2012, both projects received positive support and accolades by local government for their engagement in market governance. However, despite the peaceful image of community gardening, market, and educational activities, the police state was present. San Diego police officers frisked PNV youth garden participants and patrolled the garden site. Likewise, at SDRS the Federal Border Patrol performed random drive through checks and policed overhead air by helicopter. The entrance of these state actors had different effects on the movements themselves. Police presence and intrusion subordinated PNV participants and shaped movement strategy. For primarily white citizens at SDRS, the Border Patrol was a nuisance but tolerated. Thus, race played a role for both projects. However, despite the use of markets, race negatively impacted movement activities for communities of color. In conclusion, analyses that “bring the state back in” must also pay attention to how movements of color navigate the punitive forces of neoliberalism.

Under a neoliberal regime, it is the primacy of the market that takes center stage; but not without shifting relations with the state. Drawing from governmentality literature, I first focus on the primary ways in which the role of the state has shifted under neoliberalism. Second, I examine the intersection of neoliberalism and alternative food movements with an emphasis on the state. Third, I analyze the role of the state in two alternative food projects.

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE STATE

Neoliberalism is not simply a policy framework or ideology, but also a governmentality. Broadly conceived, governmentality is a “systemic (rational) way of thinking about the attempt to direct (govern) human conduct” (Spence 2011: 12). Neoliberalism gained traction in the U.S. during the latter twentieth century when both the political right and left problematized the welfare state (Larner 2000; Rose 1996). For neoliberals, welfare states “made people less free by forcing them to rely on government rather than empowering them to make their own choices within the marketplace” (Spence 2011: 12). Those from the right argued that bureaucracies created rigidities and dependence on social protections that undermined individual freedoms (Dean 1999).⁷⁸ Therefore, under a neoliberal regime, the welfare state is reconfigured to unleash and

⁷⁸ Those on the left critique the welfare state for several reasons. First, social provisions support horizontal distribution among workers, but do not help workers vertically to get out of poverty. Second, the welfare state does not contend with the causes of insecurity for which social protections become necessary. Instead the welfare state compensates for them (e.g. work-related diseases are compensated for by provision of medical and unemployment benefits). Third, social protections often come after the harm occurs rather than act to prevent them. Fourth, social provisions are under constant threat by fiscal crises of the state. Fifth, the welfare state is cost inefficient by requiring an administration to ensure clients are “deserving” of benefits. Finally, the welfare state eludes the very problem itself, that of capitalism (Offe 2006: 72-74).

create markets, and shape and instill norms of the market in institutions and in individuals (Peck and Tickell 2007). This is no less than a remaking of society and culture in terms of market rationality.

Neoliberal governmentality reinvents the relationship between the state and citizen subject through the prism of market rationality. According to neoliberal doctrine, human beings are primarily economic actors, who are made into competitive individuals to take part in market society. This ideal citizen subject is an entrepreneur, or in Foucault's terms "*homo oeconomicus*" (1979: 226). This new subject is made possible by recasting Marx' concept of "labor" and "worker" in terms of human capital. For Marx, workers apply their labor power to make products that capitalists then sell for surplus. The exploitation of labor power produces capital. Capital is the product of a system of exploitative social relationships and not inherent in people (e.g. human nature). However, neoliberals transform the logic of Marx and argue instead that workers harbor their own capital to develop and sell for a wage (Spence 2011: 24-25). A worker's income then, is the return on their investment in themselves, as capital. This puts the responsibility on workers to see themselves as atomized entrepreneurs who must develop themselves to sell in a world of enterprises. Rather than work taking place at the factory site, every social activity and relationship from health, education, marriage, and children can be revised as a cost benefit calculation of an individual's return on their capital investment.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ A significant consequence is that in a neoliberal regime the critique of capitalism as an exploitative relationship between capitalists and workers is eroded by implying that "...everyone from a minimum wage employee to a C.E.O. considers themselves to be entrepreneurs" (Read 2009: 28). Neoliberalism negates the existence of social structure, thereby making it hard to imagine possibilities.

All domains of society are remade as opportunities to invest in one's capital. Neoliberal market rationality needs citizen subjects to act as individual entrepreneurs.

Consumption also plays a significant role in a neoliberal society as markets and commodities become the dominant focus and form of distribution. Consumption is also the domain through which entrepreneurial subjects buy and build their capital (i.e. consumers of health, consumers of education). Thus, entrepreneurial subjects engage their capital as citizen-consumers, and to be full members in this new order, one must pay to take part. Those who cannot consume or invest are treated as second class citizens.

The relationship between the state and citizens shifts under neoliberal governmentality. The role of the state is to incentivize and invest in entrepreneurial behaviors, and does so through deregulation, devolution, and privatization. Each of these mechanisms sheds the responsibility of social protections from governments onto individuals, yielding a state of insecurity (Wacquant 2009). With the aim to remove impediments to free markets and flows of capital, deregulation rolls back market rules designed to protect the public good in the domains of labor, environment, and social security. Rather than the absence of governing, deregulation is a way of governing citizens by making them individually responsible. It is, as Read argues, "a form of governing through isolation and dispersion" (2009: 34). It becomes the task of the new entrepreneurial subject to figure out how to survive in this context.

Devolution similarly produces insecurity by design to "free up" the entrepreneurial subject. Devolution is the transfer or delegation of responsibilities from the federal government to state, county, local governments, third sector organizations,

and individuals. For example, federal policies aimed at protecting children and the poor such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), school lunch programs, and Medicaid receive less funding, and are placed on the shoulders of the individual state. These programs may or may not be funded. Neoliberals argue devolution incentivizes individuals to take responsibility for themselves as entrepreneurial subjects.

The third way in which states encourage entrepreneurial subjects is through privatization. This occurs when the government agencies (e.g. federal, state, county, local) sell key functions to private companies or corporations, a practice also known as the “outsourcing of government” (Holland 2007: 10-11). Examples of privatization include private military services, private sector prisons, bottled water, and school vouchers. Privatization allows markets to shore up the responsibilities of government previously defined as “public” (Read 2009). These concerns are reconstituted in the private realm, further individualizing responsibility and instilling a sense of insecurity.

Under neoliberal governmentality, the state displaces responsibility onto others, opening a new terrain for individuals to invest in their own capital. In this competitive field, there are rewards and punishments. For those able and willing to partake in neoliberal capitalism, the return is a secure lifestyle of comfort and inclusion into society. However, a system of punishment is activated for those not able or willing to take part. This is the harsh reality that scholars refer to as the “carceral” turn, or the turn to punishment by the state and civil society (Lissovoy 2012; Spence 2011; Wacquant 2009).

In the last several decades, scholars have noted the upsurge of punishment with the rise of neoliberal governmentality. As the welfare state has withdrawn and market

insecurity has rolled out, a “culture of blame and externalization” has emerged as well (Lissovoy 2012: 740). As people are made responsible in the context of growing insecurity, the vulnerable are targeted and punished for the state’s lack of responsibility. By scapegoating the vulnerable, the state is not held accountable. Punishment takes the form of the prison industrial complex, using corrections and law enforcement to target the poor and people of color, attacks on immigrants, and stigmatization (Lissovoy 2012; Sudbury 2004, 2005). The punishment arm serves the purpose of reminding a successful entrepreneurial subject of their “rightful” social position, as well as what they could become.

In sum, neoliberal governmentality literature points to a larger project of reinventing society through the market, with entrepreneurial subjects at the center. As a political rationality, neoliberalism remakes the state and citizens by drawing upon a philosophy of economic man. Using the tools of deregulation, devolution, and privatization, the market is unleashed and the state works to support projects that instill market values and market rationality into everyday life. For those unable or unwilling to develop their entrepreneurial capital, the state and neoliberal culture acts as a form of punishment. However, for those who embrace the new order, benefits of security and comfort are reached at the expense of the punished. In the next section, the articulation of neoliberalism, the state, and alternative food movements is discussed.

THE STATE AND ALTERNATIVE FOOD MOVEMENTS

There are two competing views of the state among scholars of alternative food movements. The first strand of literature is critical of the market as movement approach

and argues for state regulation. These critics argue that relying on markets to create changes in the food system not only abandons the state as a regulatory mechanism, but offers false hope. In their view, states are responsible for providing access to healthy, affordable food and should be held accountable (Guthman 2007, 2008a). The second strand of literature is skeptical of the state to distribute public goods in the wake of neoliberalism, and thus advocate support for people building their own markets. In these studies, locally owned and community controlled markets can resist atomization and distribute sorely needed support, and scholars argue for the possibilities embedded in these alternatives (Alkon 2014). However, they are also sensitive to the ways in which the state is the harbinger of racist social policies that have led to a more doubtful view of the state as an ally in food justice projects. Overall, the literature converges around three key issues with respect to the intersection of neoliberalism and alternative food projects: the state and certificate/ labeling, the state and food access, and the state and community abandonment. In the following paragraphs, I will attend to each.

The State and Certification/Labeling

One of the dominant ways that the alternative food movement aims to challenge the corporate food system is by selling ethical commodities such as “organic,” “local,” and “fair trade.” As alternatives to conventional commodities, the intent of ethical goods is to protect producers and the environment from exploitative practices inherent in capitalist markets (Raynolds 2000). For goods to be ethical, producers must adhere to a set of production standards, and agree to modes of enforcement, either by states and/or

third-party certifiers. Once granted, producers can then label their products in the marketplace, where they capture price premiums in exchange for ethical behavior (Guthman 2007). Importantly, these schemes are *voluntary*. Instead of the state mandating that all producers (both conventional and alternative) adhere to these ethical standards, states instead support alternative sets of production practices alongside existing ones. Alternative food advocates argue labeling offers an avenue to support producers and protect the environment, while encouraging producer changes in conventional markets (Pollan 2006a; Raynolds 2000).⁸⁰ However, critics argue that ethical labeling works as a form of neoliberal governmentality (Guthman 2007).

Voluntary labeling can be viewed as a technique of neoliberal governmentality. The growth in ethical commodities has surged since the roll-out phase of neoliberalism, when the governments' stance toward deregulated capitalism stopped short of industry regulation to encourage voluntary efforts by corporations, NGOs, and individuals (Guthman 2007). Opposed to state command and control regulation, the state has shifted responsibility onto others, encouraging change through the marketplace. The entrepreneurial subject is mobilized in this scheme, as well as a system of rewards and punishments. To clarify, I will make use of Guthman's work on the organic food industry (2003; 2004; 2007; 2008a).

In the latter half of the twentieth century, organic food boomed as an ethical commodity. Originally part of the counter-culture of the 1960s, farmers engaged in

⁸⁰ In the case of Unilever, labeling was strategically used to embarrass the corporation, which shifted their GMO practices (Guthman 2007).

organic production practices in resistance to the corporate food system (Belasco 2007). Frustrated with the state's refusal to prohibit harmful agricultural practices, activists instead sought to create an alternative as "a way to opt out of the current [industrial] system" (Guthman 2008a: 1176). While California had adopted organic certification since the 1970s, organic standards were nationalized in 2002, opening a new market (Rigby and Brown 2007). Contrary to the environment and equity goals of the organic food movement, critics argue organic regulations have been watered down by corporate influence, and unlocked the takeover of organics by corporations that sell *both* conventional and organic foods (Guthman 2004; Hauter 2012).⁸¹ In the case of organics, voluntary labeling does not change regulations for the industrial food system, and while labeling does make organics possible, it also creates organic's exclusive value and price premium justification (Guthman 2007, 2008a).

Organic food buying also plays a role in activating entrepreneurial subjects. The growth in organic food has occurred in the context of public concern over industrial practices such as the use of pesticides, mad cow disease, ammonia in meat products, as well as diet related diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. With neoliberal policies that cut health care as well as income support, the "white, thin, healthy/skinny body" takes on a new valence.⁸² This white body signals self-constraint, discipline, and economic gain, while the opposite is marked as shameful and a "drain on the state"

⁸¹ In my interviews, some farmers previously aligned with organic methods eschewed the 2002 regulations, and embraced permaculture instead. To show resistance to the co-optation by corporations, these farmers claim, "beyond organic."

⁸² A "thin" body is not necessarily a "healthy" one (Guthman 2012). Instead, I am referring to the way a culture of neoliberalism marks bodies.

(Guthman and DuPuis 2006). The “unhealthy” body becomes a scapegoat for neoliberal policies of deregulation, privatization, and devolution, the product of which is insecurity, poverty, and a two-tiered food system in the first place. Thus, while organic food consumption may signal a successful entrepreneurial subject who makes the right choices, for those reliant on or use the conventional food system, their bodies and “choices” are stigmatized and punished.

In sum, critics of the role of the state in ethical food practices call attention to the voluntary nature of labeling and the state refusal to issue command and control regulations in agricultural policy that prevent degradation of the environment, labor, and public health. For Guthman (2008a), the state should be the “provider of services, regulator of externalities, or provider of subsidies” (1175). Scholars critical of labeling also oppose the stigmatization and scapegoating that occurs in neoliberal culture, which racializes and values the “white, thin, healthy body” as the normative ideal (Guthman and DuPuis 2006).

The State and Food Access

In recent years, the problem of food access has emerged in public discourse through the term “food deserts.” These are low-income areas that lack access to a supermarket.⁸³ Codified in the 2008 national Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (USDA farm bill), the federal government commissioned research to identify the barriers

⁸³ “Access” is defined by distance to a supermarket. For urban areas, low access means the nearest supermarket is greater than .5 and 1 miles away. For rural areas, low access means the nearest supermarket is within 10 and 20 miles away (ERS and USDA 2017).

to accessing food in low income communities. The Food Access Research Atlas (FARA) is an outcome of this inquiry, which geographically shows areas that are low income and have low access to food throughout the country (ERS and USDA 2017). While the FARA connects poverty with disinvested neighborhoods, the concept itself fits within a neoliberal logic. Environmental justice scholars praise the adoption of the term into policy circles, thereby opening a new terrain on this problem (Agyeman and McEntee 2014). However, the FARA implicitly supports market rationality, thus making food deserts a tool for neoliberal policymaking.

Food deserts became a new object of government, whose technical definition endorses supermarkets as a solution, thus shifting responsibility from the state to the private sector. In addition, like the voluntary nature of labeling, the private sector is encouraged to help with the problem. In this way, the state limits its role to suggestion, thereby avoiding a direct mandate to end hunger itself. The state devolves responsibility and frames the issue in terms of market rationality, working to incorporate the poorest groups into consumer economy as active, self-governing, entrepreneurial (and consumer) subjects.

On the other hand, in my field research I have found the term “food desert” has generated significant debate among food activists. Some food activists take issue with the top down approach of corporate supermarkets as a solution, arguing this leaves out community input as well as other alternatives that low-income and communities of color may want such as farmers markets, community supported agriculture, and community gardens. Others take issue with mainstream foods in supermarkets, arguing instead for

foods that are culturally appropriate or meaningful to them. Activists also take issue with the federal stance on food deserts for not considering the role that institutional racism plays with respect to poverty and supermarket locations. While neoliberal governmentality hails the atomized supermarket consumer, food desert discourse nonetheless opens space for contestation that challenges the imposition of (super)market rationality.

The State and Community Abandonment

The last issue with respect to scholarship on the state, neoliberalism, alternative food movements is that of community abandonment. Scholarship in this domain takes a critical approach to the state for its role in producing hunger. Drawing from institutional racism, these accounts look at the ways in which state policies and practices disproportionately undermine the autonomy and wellbeing of indigenous communities and communities of color.⁸⁴ In this argument, lack of healthy food is an effect of political and economic policies that devalue people of color and their neighborhoods through systematic disinvestment. The needs of communities of color are treated as secondary, and in the context of color-blind racism, also undeserving. Community activists are skeptical that states will urgently respond to their needs and initiate food justice projects to fill in for the state (Norgaard, Reed, Van Horn 2011; Brown and Getz 2011;

⁸⁴ Indigenous movements are especially wary of the state due to genocide. A current example in California is the Karuk Tribe, in which state projects such as genocide, stealing lands, and forced assimilation has resulted in hunger in a material sense, but jeopardized their survival as a people (Norgaard, Reed, Van Horn 2011).

McClintock 2011). To illustrate the nuance with respect to state involvement, I will use White's (2010, 2011a, 2011b) work on Detroit as an example.

Once a major industrial city made famous by Henry Ford and the automobile, Detroit went into rapid decline beginning in the late 1900s. Outsourcing of the automobile industry and white flight to newly developed suburbs diminished the tax base and created harsh living circumstances for many of Detroit's remaining black residents. Conditions of joblessness, abandoned buildings and neighborhoods, decline in public necessities such as sanitation, education, and transportation disproportionately destabilized the black community.⁸⁵ With respect to the food landscape, the city has thousands of "fringe food retailers" and in 2007 lost their major grocery store chain, Farmer Jack.⁸⁶ For many black activists in White's studies, the state lacks the political will to fight for them and serve their needs. The needs of black residents are subordinated to white communities, thus treating black residents as second-class citizens (2010, 2011a, 2011b).

In this context, state abandonment of the black community has led to the formation of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, and the community urban farming project driven by D-Town farmers. Like many community gardening projects, D-Town farmers lease their land from the city. Farmers grow and sell their produce through their buying club, as well as offer critical information about food,

⁸⁵ See Jennifer Carrera (2014) on sanitation inequality in Detroit, MI.

⁸⁶ Fringe food retailers are stores that offer few healthy food choices and charge more for their lesser quality food items. Mari Gallagher defines them as "liquor stores, gas stations, party stores, dollar stores, bakeries, pharmacies, and convenience stores" (2007: 5-6).

nutrition, diet, and exercise. While D-Town farmers “do not oppose or resist those who appear to be denying them the right to healthy food,” D-Town farmers put their energies into delivering food security in their community (2010: 206).

D-Town farmers contest institutional racism embedded in state policies by actively engaging in work that secures their right to food.⁸⁷ They argue the federal government does not regulate harmful agricultural practices such as the use of genetically modified foods, pesticides, carcinogens, and bouts of salmonella. However, privileged communities have ways to ensure they have access to ethical foods, such as ample retail outlets and farmers markets. As a participant in the D-Town farm project argues, “They [whites] have better access to fruits and veggies in their own neighborhood. People in the suburbs make the choice to engage in urban farming. For D-Town farmers, it’s a necessity” (Kwamena in White 2010: 199). Because of institutional racism, black residents neither have the political power, investment from retail outlets, nor income to afford quality food. The state is complicit in these practices, therefore relying on the city and government to secure their rights is not a logical choice. Instead, D-Town farmers assert community control and self-reliance.

In many ways, the case of D-Town farmers in Detroit is not simply about access to food, but the ability to lead dignified lives. Black residents are treated as unworthy of the same public services guaranteed by race and class privilege. Instead, D-Town argues

⁸⁷ In constitutional terms, the U.S. does not guarantee a right to food. Rights are defined in terms of freedom from government, or rights against government. This does not oblige governments to intervene in securing citizens’ sustenance. However, the international community has made room for this kind of intervention in the UN Declaration of Human Rights (Lappé 2011).

they can secure rights better through their educational programs that assert positive black identity around healthy foods. At the local level, claiming this moral authority to deliver dignity and resources has allowed D-Town farmers to “enter into dialogue with the city and external agencies as competent experts, as individuals with a greater ethos” (208). In an unanticipated way, this project has opened a new political space for D-Town farmers with the city. Therefore, food justice activities centered around building local markets has opened the possibility of greater community food security, control, and autonomy in a racist state that inadequately serves people of color.

The Detroit case offers a nuanced account of neoliberal governmentality. On the one hand, when communities engage with market rationality their success is rewarded by the state. On the other hand, advocates of neoliberal governmentality would argue Detroit farmers are doing what neoliberal governmentality is designed to do: shed responsibility onto individuals to foster self-reliance. It therefore relieves the state of their responsibility. However, with D-Town farmers, they assert that institutional racism embedded in state practices justifies keeping the state out. At best, the state may be able to deliver food, but not dignity. In addition, this responsibility is shared by communities, not atomized individuals that are self-serving. Therefore, D-Town farmers use neoliberal conditions to strategically combat insecurity by creating local food networks.

In sum, two different perspectives on state intervention emerge with respect to the neoliberalism and alternative food movements. In the first camp, these scholars argue that the state has shed its responsibilities to the public good, resulting in abandonment for the poor and people of color. Markets are a lost cause and offer false hope, because what is

needed is state command and control regulation, not more markets. The second camp has not given up on alternatives. While the state has shifted responsibilities through neoliberal governmentality, the state has not been responsible to people of color and indigenous communities in the first place. Therefore, alternative food projects can be sources of resistance even while engaging in some aspects of neoliberalism, like self-reliance and markets.

The literature on the state, neoliberalism, and alternative food movements clarifies the ways in which the state sheds responsibilities through deregulation, privatization, and devolution. The practice of labeling does confer legitimacy by the state and consumers. However, in the case of organic food, labeling does support the neoliberal norm of unloading responsibility onto others while allowing a problematic conventional food system intact. Labeling can also act as a means for co-optation by corporations, and support competitive consumption with punishments for those unable or unwilling to conform to this mode of governing. With respect to food access, we also see mixed results. The uptake of food desert discourse by the federal government has opened a new terrain of public awareness about food access. On the other hand, the state shifts responsibility onto corporate supermarkets and individuals, which is not supported by all food justice advocates. “Food access” takes the urgent sting out of “hunger.” But, this discourse has opened critique and animated alternative food movements in critical directions. Lastly, state abandonment strikes at the heart of the debate. With the grafting of neoliberal policies onto histories of institutional racism, food justice opens up a new space. While adopting some aspects of neoliberalism, such as labeling and discourses of

food access, Detroit exemplifies the adoption of responsibility, an opening in local governance, and critical engagement as a community. Thus, alternative food projects can be spaces for contesting neoliberalism.

One aspect that these studies have not yet met is the role of the state with respect to law enforcement and policing. Neoliberal governmentality works by both the carrot and the stick – PNV and SDRS encounter this in diverse ways. Using two alternative food projects, the empirical part of the chapter engages this gap to shed light on the ways in which institutional racism interacts with neoliberal governmentality through the lens of the state.

SOUTHEASTERN SAN DIEGO: THE HAND AND FIST OF THE STATE

Neoliberal governmentality is about the “conduct of conduct” (Dean 1999). New relationships of governing are formed as the state sheds responsibility while working to animate the entrepreneurial self. While competitive practices take root, entrenched norms of institutional racism do not disappear. These practices interact with neoliberal policies, opening different pathways. For PNV, this entails both enacting neoliberalism but also resisting it.

In this section, I attend to the ways in which neoliberal governmentality works in and through the food justice project in Southeastern San Diego. The goal is to understand the ways in which PNV engages with neoliberalism and the state through certification/labeling, food desert discourse, and community abandonment. I add the new

category of law enforcement as one of modes of neoliberal governmentality that communities of color must navigate.

State and Certification/Labeling

Like the mainstream alternative food movement, PNV engages with market rationality by adopting certification and labeling practices. These standards open a new field of opportunity for PNV, allowing them to assemble alternative food markets and govern through consumption. Central to participation in the alternative food movement is the ability to claim ethical values (i.e. organic, local, natural, sustainable), thereby translating these ethical claims into monetary rewards, status, and legitimacy. They are also a basis for political conversations about health and the food system. The actors that PNV enroll in their project are local farmers and entrepreneurs, the market itself, consumers, and residents. We can think of these actors as forming a network linked by practicing alternative food standards that generate new values and conversation for the actors involved.

PNV enrolls in the larger alternative food movement through participation in the San Diego County farmers' market program. By taking part in the certification program as a Certified Farmers Market (CFM), PNV becomes part of the San Diego CFM listings, and gains recognition in formalized County and Farm Bureau websites and publications. The formal label as a CFM legitimizes the PNV market, thereby using the language and symbols that set up relations of trust with consumers. Wielding certification also allows PNV to tap into localist discourse by highlighting their short supply chains, providing

community farmers with work and income, as well as supporting sustainable production values like “organic,” “natural,” and “chemical-free” (Carolan 2016). In exchange for participation in the CFM program, PNV can sell alternative food and values for producers, consumers, as well as for the community.

Farmers can enter the value network by enrolling through PNV. Upon approval of the farmer, PNV assists with the county application process. To sell at a CFM, farmers must obtain a Certified Producers’ Certificate (CPC) from the County Department of Agriculture. Application fees, on-site inspections, commodity lists and estimated production amounts are necessary for the application. At the CFM, inspectors audit farmer practices to ensure correct records and items on display, and the proper certificate shown at the farm table. Organic labeling is an added process completed with the County Department of Agriculture. This label requires a fee, on-site visits, and a detailed list of products used in the growing process. If farmers earn an income greater than five thousand dollars, a third-party must also certify the organic farm (San Diego County AWM 2017a; 2017b).

A relevant point needs to be made with respect to the mundane aspects of certification, labeling, and neoliberalism. While labeling within the AFM is a result of the state’s refusal to adopt ethical practices across industrial agriculture, this does not mean less government. Instead, the state is activated to support the creation of new markets, such as organic and local CFMs that provide consumers with “choice” (Guthman 2007). Thus, to take part in the AFM, one must engage in neoliberal practices. In this way, PNV

is strategically drawing from a neoliberal framework to set up value relations that monetize ethical values for their farmers, consumers, and community.

The CFM creates benefits for PNV, including farmers, consumers, and residents. The PNV CFM is the only farmers market in the Southeastern San Diego community where fresh, local, and organic produce can be found. Subsidies for certified producers as well as consumers is indispensable for their success. These subsidies allow low-income people to be full consumers at the markets. However, several tensions emerge by using voluntary labeling and certification practices. First, the case can be made that supporting alternative markets indirectly creates a two-tiered food system by not mandating all producers (conventional and organic) engage in ethical production. Consumers then, become regulators through their purchasing by supporting local and organic production standards. In this way, the state displaces its responsibility onto consumers and the state is not held accountable. Second, the success of PNV leaves the state off the hook for providing public goods, thus reinforcing the notion that it is not the state's (or city's) responsibility, but instead the community's (Alkon and Guthman 2017).

A third tension involves the creation of neighborhood value. The SESD CFM has enhanced the status of the neighborhood. City Council Members, County Department of Agriculture, The San Diego County Farm Bureau, and local churches praise PNV's efforts. Local newspapers and media networks commend PNV's demanding work to raise the standing of the neighborhood. By improving the amenities and perception of the community, a risk is gentrification. PNV's participation in the AFM opens their project into the domain of value capture. If these values increase to the arousal of investors, the

potential for gentrification grows stronger (Anguelovski 2015; Staeheli, Mitchell, and Gibson 2002). The success of PNV hinges on whether they build not only consumers, but also politically conscious residents as well.

The next two sections engage with the intersection of institutional racism, neoliberalism, and food justice. Food desert discourse often elides the deeper questions of institutional racism with respect to food access, and neoliberal critiques pose the engagement with market rationality sheds state responsibility and undermines state accountability. The case of PNV sheds light on the ways neoliberalism and institutional racism interact, creating possibilities and constraints for the food justice project.

State, Food Access, and Community Abandonment

The national conversation about food deserts has opened dialogue around access to food in Southeastern San Diego. The turn to urban gardening in the neighboring community of City Heights⁸⁸ as well as work with Will Allen's organization Growing Power influenced PNV's actions to create a local food economy, and to positively affect related social problems like illness, poverty, alienation, violence, and neglected landscapes (see Chapter 4). Access to healthy food has been a problem for decades in Southeastern San Diego, and conversations around food deserts has added to public awareness and urgency around this multifaceted policy issue. However, to grasp the reasons *why* SESD faces this problem and the related conditions above requires the

⁸⁸ Former First Lady, Michelle Obama, visited the IRC New Roots Community Farm on Thursday April 15, 2010 as part of her "Let's Move" campaign (Fudge 2010).

deeper lens of institutional racism. The legacy of institutional racism also informs SESD's frustration with city neglect, and therefore both issues will be tackled.

Institutional racism and neoliberalism. Institutional racism plays a key role with respect to accessing necessities like food, but also to accessing housing, education, banking services, libraries, hospital care, green spaces, and other urban infrastructures. Daily necessities for urban life are unevenly distributed by race as well as class. Called institutional racism, this refers to “specific policies/procedures of institutions which consistently result in unequal treatment for particular groups” (Chaney 2015: 313). With respect to necessities, lacking access to food is but one of the problems met by low-income and communities of color in SESD.

Despite the Civil Rights Movement, in 1970 San Diego was still a segregated city. Racial discrimination in housing, banking, and employment systematically impoverished people of color, and public services were overcrowded and underfunded. Traversed by several freeways, SESD was cut off from affluent suburbs to the north and were overlooked by the city government and outsiders. Despite San Diego's war on poverty in the 1960s, “bread and butter” issues of human survival were still a problem for low-income and people of color (Corso 1984: 337; also see Chapter 2). Institutional racism continued in the 1980s through growth management policies that still shape unequal treatment for communities of color today.

One of the enduring city policies that prevented prosperity for low-income and communities of color is the 1979 San Diego General Plan. Mired in community conflict over the city's lack of planning, environmental destruction, and unbridled growth, Mayor

Pete Wilson launched a managed “tier” growth initiative. The plan divided the city into several tiers, separating the older urbanized neighborhoods found close to downtown from the new and developing suburbs in the city fringes. The tiers farthest from the city core were lands held in reserve for future development or for preservation (Calavita 1992, 1997; Martinez-Cosio and Rabinowitz Bussell 2013). Because of the legacy of racial discrimination previously discussed, communities of color were concentrated in the older urbanized sections of the city, and affluent whites in the newly developed suburbs. In the plan, density and infill was encouraged for the urbanized tier, while major growth was to occur in the suburban fringes. Although growth accommodated newcomers, public services were unequally distributed.

The “tier” managed growth initiative rewarded white affluent suburbs at the expense of urbanized low-income and communities of color. In the urbanized tier, Mayor Wilson incentivized growth by *exempting* developer impact fees. Developers briskly took advantage of the incentives and overbuilding occurred. “Insensitively” designed multi-family buildings were constructed in single-family neighborhoods without adequate public services (Calavita 2002: 26-28).⁸⁹ Already burdened by a previously underfunded and declining public infrastructure, newcomers soon faced overcrowded schools, libraries, and few parks. Sewer breakdowns were common, as was freeway congestion. By the end of the 1980s the cost to upgrade public services was over one billion dollars,

⁸⁹ SESD Council member William Jones advocated for higher standards in SESD due to poorly planned neighborhoods, the existence of junkyards, and poor landscaping during the brisk wave of development (O’Neil 1984).

and by 2005 that debt increased to \$2.5 billion (Calavita, Caves, and Ferrier 2005).⁹⁰ In 2013, the City of San Diego Planning Department estimated \$800 + million in deferred capital and infrastructure improvements citywide, with the majority needed in the older urbanized neighborhoods. At present, the SESD community is still frustrated over unfulfilled promises of necessary public infrastructure (Martinez-Cosio and Rabinowitz Bussell 2013: 64).⁹¹

Affluent and newly developed suburbs did experience a lag time between housing development and public services, but did not feel the brunt of growth management. Residents in these areas paid their own fees for public services through Mello-Roos taxes. These are infrastructure development fees that are passed from developers to homeowners and include public services like parks, libraries, schools, streets, and so on (Calavita 2002; Martinez-Cosio and Rabinowitz Bussell 2013). In these less dense suburbs, public facilities exceeded city standards, and private sector services like shopping centers, banks, and employers followed. The city also supports these neighborhoods with general fund revenues for maintenance and upkeep. To this day, when the city tries to raise taxes for public necessities in urbanized areas, residents in

⁹⁰ Complicating the ability of the city to fund infrastructure improvements is the passage of Proposition 13. Passed in 1978, this proposition set the property tax value at the 1976 assessed level. This decreased the general funds, but nonetheless the city still underfunded infrastructure in urbanized communities.

⁹¹ Impact fees are used to fund public infrastructure but are still based on geography and new development. Communities that are built out like SESD are not collecting impact fees from new development, unlike some locales that have space for development (Center on Policy Initiatives 2013; SEDC 2011: 5-6).

newer suburbs often decline on the account of excessive taxation (Calavita 1997).⁹² City planning has thus fractured the residents along race and class lines.

The tiered growth management plan is not only an instance of institutional racism that reinforces segregation, but is also a neoliberal “roll-back” policy as well (Peck and Tickell 2007). The city rolled back government support for public services by refusing to pay for sorely needed infrastructure improvements in SESD. However, for those in the suburbs, they used their private funds for “public” services passed on by developers. Here we see access to public goods based on the ability to pay. Public goods become privatized, and those that can pay for Mello-Roos neighborhoods goods get more, while those that cannot rely on the substandard infrastructure and services.⁹³

Institutional racism and neoliberalism in the form of declining public investments has worsened living conditions in SESD and has added to decades of city government and private sector neglect. Combined with infill and degrading public infrastructure, SESD has also experienced a lack of major employers, banks, adequate hospitals, and supermarkets.⁹⁴ Without banking institutions, residents could not receive checking accounts, and loans in SESD were denied to churches, and people of color were

⁹² San Diegans in general are reluctant to raise taxes (see Erie et al. 2011 for an in-depth analysis of this issue).

⁹³ I put “public” in quotations because I no longer consider these goods public when services vary on ability to pay. That is more of a market, and is antithetical to the notion of the “public” where everyone receives quality public goods regardless of income.

⁹⁴ For the opening and closure of grocery stores in SESD see San Diego Union-Tribune (2004, 2008) and Rodgers (1992). For limited hospitals in SESD and plans for new investments in the 1980s see Fuentes (1985) and Fong (2001). For economic recessions, unemployment, and racial discrimination for SESD residents, see Rose (1991). For expansion of SESD factory work overseas, see Riggs (1993).

discouraged from applying for home financing.⁹⁵ Without adequate grocery stores, residents' choices were limited to corner stores and fast food chains. Recognizing the problem of disinvestment, the city did step in with the Southeast San Diego Economic Development Corporation (SEDC is a non-profit redevelopment agency) in the 1980s, but repeatedly could not anchor major employers, two of which went to affluent areas, including a sorely needed hospital.⁹⁶ While SEDC did push through notable projects such as the Gateway Center and revitalization of the Federal-Euclid corridor, higher paying employment went to the high tech and biotech industries located north near affluent suburbs and the University of California, San Diego.⁹⁷

Economic recessions also hit SESD hard in the 1980s and 1990s, along with the introduction of crack-cocaine across American cities. As unemployment significantly increased, drug problems, theft, and gang violence surfaced. Mayor Wilson deployed more funding for the police force in the “war on crime,” also subjecting SESD to heavy surveillance and police activity. Some African American families moved out of SESD to other areas like Hemet or Temecula in southwest Riverside County (Florida 2011).

However, many hardworking families and residents also stayed, refusing the narrow and

⁹⁵ See Burkhardt (1984) for lack of banking and checking account services for SESD, Bunch (1993) on Union Bank's refusal to lend to Bayview Baptist Church, Sacks (1991) for discouraging people of color to apply for home loans, and Traitel (1990) for Congress member Bates' recognition that more should have been done for SESD in the fight against institutional racism. See also K. Taylor (1991) for a report on *de facto* segregation in San Diego.

⁹⁶ For an overview of the struggles facing the SEDC, see Fuentes (1984a; 1984b). In addition to SEDC work, Council member William Jones put forth a revitalization project called “Project First Class” in the 1980s (O'Neil 1984). The Jacobs Family Foundation also does revitalization work (see Martinez-Cosio and Rabinowitz Bussell 2013). However, these projects are outside the scope of this project.

⁹⁷ See Fuentes (1984b) and Lawrence (1985) for SEDC activities.

negative stereotype issued by the media that SESD is a “crime ridden” and “sick” place.⁹⁸ There is still a strong presence of engaged citizens that want social change and put their energies into community projects.

Throughout the decades when SESD experienced declining living conditions, the city planned \$1 billion in high-profile and publicly funded megaprojects to privatize downtown, attract tourism, and offer entertainment for suburbanites (Erie et al. 2011). In the last several decades San Diego has twice revamped the convention center, built a new baseball stadium (Petco Park), and has supported the growth of the hotel, real estate, and restaurant industries. Notably, redevelopment gentrified the area by removing the red-light district as well as low-income housing. Upscale supermarkets and natural food markets now exist in the area. These spaces are now theme-park scripted for white affluent suburban consumers, and low-income, people of color, and homeless are discouraged by both public and private surveillance (Ervin 2008-2009; Mitchell and Staeheli 2006).⁹⁹ Thus, public space is privatized and requires money to take part in these elite spaces. These lopsided investments in large scale projects intensified economic inequality and exclusion in San Diego. According to the City of San Diego Planning Department,

San Diego’s biggest economic problem is the “hourglass economy” in San Diego as middle-income jobs are replaced with high-skill, salaried professional, technical, scientific, and managerial white-collar jobs at the top, and low-skill, low-wage retail and service sector jobs at the bottom.

⁹⁸ Interestingly, Civil rights leader and Council member George Stevens led a movement to transform the negative labeling of Southeastern San Diego by performing a mock funeral procession that became a major media event in 1992 (Gross and Powell 2006).

⁹⁹ For example, the exclusive outdoor mall in downtown called Horton Plaza, removed park benches and bathrooms, and replaced lawns with prickly plants and flowers to impede homeless individuals (Ervin 2008-2009; Mitchell and Staeheli 2006).

Although this same trend is evident at the state and national levels, San Diego's economic stratification is worsening faster. (2013: 4)

Thus, redevelopment has created and privileged a new class of entrepreneurial workers and consumers, while leaving behind peripheral neighborhoods that experience declining public services and lack of affordable grocery stores, unemployment, low-wage work, and prohibitive costs of living. The kinds of opportunities available to low-income and communities of color are markedly different than whiter affluent suburban communities.

In sum, the last several decades in San Diego can be characterized as neoliberal restructuring. In the planning sphere, the City of San Diego “rolled back” funding for public sector development in urbanized low-income and communities of color, but gave those necessities to white affluent suburbs through Mello-Roos taxes. This strategy effectively turned public goods into a market. Those who could afford to buy them lived in the suburbs or left neglected areas for communities with higher standards of public goods.

The City of San Diego then “rolled out” neoliberalism by unleashing the market through redevelopment projects (Peck and Tickell 2007). Downtown became a redevelopment zone for corporate interests in consumer industries (e.g. hotel, restaurant, entertainment). The construction of these large megaprojects privatized public space, creating enclaves of elite consumption that excluded low-income, people of color, and homeless people. In sum, those who invest in their capital by buying quality public goods are rewarded in this scheme as self-responsible. Those who cannot afford to pay must manage with underfunded second-class public goods, NGOs, and charity.

Institutional racism overlaps with neoliberalism. Rolling back public goods for communities of color is a neoliberal strategy to unleash markets and competition, but also one that effects people of color disproportionately. Still worse, neoliberal logic blames people of color for their individual lack of success (Davis 2012; Spence 2011). Thus, existing racial inequality discussed in Chapter 2 was further intensified by neoliberalism. However, the rolling out process also enlists the capacity of the local, thus opening a space for community activism. It is in this context that PNV undertakes their food justice project.

Food Justice

The earlier section corrects simplistic accounts of food deserts as caused by a lack of supermarkets and instead points to the role of the state and policy in creating conditions of food insecurity. It offers an institutional context for the struggles that animate contemporary food justice projects in SESD.

As part of PNV's strategy to combat city disinvestment, PNV engages with neoliberal strategies of localization. The roll out of alternative food markets as a solution to structural inequality is supported by San Diego County's efforts with Certified Farmers Markets (CFMs). According to the county's Agriculture, Weights and Measures department (AWM):

The County of San Diego strives to improve the wellbeing of its residents by supporting healthy choices and thriving communities. The County is also committed to supporting and promoting the sustainability of local agriculture... CFMs [Certified Farmers' Markets] promote local agriculture and support farmers by providing them a personable, low cost

way to market and sell their agricultural products, bringing them face-to-face with their customers. (San Diego County AWM 2017a)

As with neoliberal governmentality, the county government offers resources that ensure markets create a realm of ethical “choices” for entrepreneurial subjects. On the other hand, this is not a direct advocacy of supermarkets, either. This makes sense for PNV, whose goal is not to advocate for supermarkets but instead for community food security through urban agriculture.

PNV gains several advantages by taking part in neoliberal governmentality. First, by engaging in this model, PNV uses neoliberalism strategically to generate support for their overarching community work. Their enrollment in the AFM brings in consumers who invest outside of corporate retail channels. This aids the cause of community food security without reliance on a corporate chain supermarket system that has historically refused to locate in SESD, even with redevelopment dollars and special incentives. The second advantage is that creating markets is a strategy supported by the San Diego County of Agriculture, the San Diego City Council, as well as the former SEDC. In the last several years the city has reinforced the use of community gardens with an approved ordinance in 2011 (City of San Diego 2017). PNV’s enrollment in city supported solutions has created an opening with city agencies. By creating a communications channel with city council and agencies, the opportunity to weigh in on policy matters that advocate for SESD is possible.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ See also Chapter 4.

The third advantage gained through PNV's enrollment in creating alternative food markets is the chance to reframe SESD as a space that "lacks" resources to one that has "assets." Rather than advertising disinvestment to outsiders, PNV reverses this logic by arguing their many empty lots is an asset for the community and for those living in SESD. As Diane Moss said:

We have empty lots that represent opportunities, and people who have chosen to be here, a long time, so we want to tap into those things, and those are the assets that we have in Southeastern San Diego.¹⁰¹

By shifting the discourse of lack to asset SESD is revalued as a community that has resources and can create development from within.

PNV's strategic use of neoliberalism repositions SESD's standing in San Diego and opens new doors for local political engagement. By engaging with markets and neoliberalism PNV can network local concerns to the city and higher, advocating for the kinds of policies they have sorely needed throughout the decades. On the other hand, neoliberalism does offload the work of development onto the community itself. This does not hold the city accountable for their promised investments. In other words, policy work must also be done to change the landscape of inequality in San Diego, which means reinvestment in the public again.

PNV engages with roll out neoliberalism to combat the legacy of institutional racism and neoliberal roll back. PNV is using the tools of market rationality to build

¹⁰¹ Diane Moss, May 23, 2012 at PNV public meeting at PNV headquarters in San Diego. A survey of vacant lots in SESD revealed 591 undeveloped/vacant lots, and 76 lots were identified as practical for use as community gardens (Bevins and Johnson 2012).

investment in the wake of institutional racism and neoliberal policy cuts. Nonetheless, PNV cannot solve it all. Public funds for schools, health care, and infrastructure still suggests a need for the state. Thus, PNV is not giving up on the state but uses their roll out status as a vehicle to leverage city support for the public goods the SESD community needs.

Law Enforcement, Policing, and Punishment

As neoliberal governmentality has gained traction and opportunities have shrunk in a state of insecurity, in the last 35 years communities of color have felt the impact of the punishment arm of the state. As neoliberalism has withdrawn the state from social welfare, it has sought to manage poverty through punishment (Davis 2012). This takes the form of using corrections and law enforcement to target the poor and people of color, attacks on immigrants, stigmatization, as well as incarceration. As California has eroded public aid through the Federal 1996 Welfare to Work Program, it has simultaneously passed 1,000 laws expanding the use of prison sentences (Wacquant 2010: 202). One of the consequences of neoliberalism for communities of color is that policing targets them disproportionately. Low-income communities of color are more heavily policed than white affluent communities (Wacquant 2009).¹⁰² Even the space of community gardening

¹⁰² The San Diego Police Department has been under fire in the last five years over strained relations with communities of color in San Diego. The San Diego PD “admitted they stopped following their own policies to guard against racial profiling, sustained complaints from minority communities of being unfairly targeted by police, high-profile cases of police misconduct, a Justice Department review and the officer-involved shootings deaths of at least two unarmed minority men” (K. Davis 2017).

is not exempt from policing. And yet it is a concern faced by PNV in trying to build pathways out of poverty through urban gardening programs.

The presence of violence in the community has also engendered aggressive policing in the neighborhood, creating added obstacles unique to the garden site. Law enforcement has unfairly targeted black youths as criminals in the neighborhood. This occurred in an instance on the garden site to two black youths who were taking part in the garden project as part of the restorative justice program. Youths in these programs are particularly vulnerable in the criminal justice system because their status of probation requires a waiver of their fourth amendment rights to search and seizure. In this occurrence, the two youths stepped outside the garden on the sidewalk to have a cigarette. Three police cars stopped and pulled over, with officers getting out of their cars to interrogate them in public space. Diane Moss described the treatment of these two youths as “horrible.”

It was just a horrible thing – they [police officers] were all in your face asking questions “how long have you been out?” and searched them. They [police officers] did everything except handcuff them, and it could have been worse if there were no witnesses. So that is just a part of it because of the location, of where we are.¹⁰³

During the questioning Moss sought to protect the youths by writing the officers’ names down and taking notes on the interaction. The aggressive police tactics were unjustified, as these youths were in the restorative justice program and working at the garden is part of their requirements for probation. However, this situation particularly troubled Moss, as

¹⁰³ Diane Moss, July 28, 2012, at public workday at PNV garden in San Diego.

the youths will have to report this interaction with law enforcement to their probation officer, despite the fact they were following the terms of their probation. Drawing from Moss' twenty-three years of involvement with high-risk youth, probation officers are not likely to view an interaction with the police as positive, but instead as a sign of wrongdoing, thus jeopardizing the conditions of their probation.

Rather than viewing the obstacles with law enforcement as entirely negative, Moss thought of this experience as an opportunity to use the garden to help change the negative treatment of youth of color in the juvenile restorative justice program. Moss discussed the potential for attending meetings with probation officers, and educating law enforcement about the use of the garden as a tool to promote and encourage good behavior.

It was not on my agenda when we started. But as we move along, and if we are working with various kinds of folks then [law enforcement] need to know this is the [garden] address. We want to do this in other neighborhoods, so let us get ready for this journey law enforcement!¹⁰⁴

Thus, the garden not only becomes a way to cultivate a local food economy, but also part of the strategy for reforming relations between law enforcement, black youth, and the community. Unlike community gardens found in privileged neighborhoods, SESD contends with the effects of the punishment arm of the state. However, like D-Town in Detroit, PNV leverages their success to create dialogue with city institutions to advocate for the needs of black youth in their programs.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

In sum, PNV has experienced both the hand and fist of the state. The worsening of institutional racism by neoliberal roll backs is certainly a fist. However, by strategically engaging with market rationality, PNV has generated support for their project among the city and county institutions, including clergy and residents. The alternative food movement offers a way into changing SESD by governing through markets, opening up participation for low-income people as full consumers. The garden and market space open dialogue about issues of disinvestment, food, and politics (see Chapter 4). Some of this support is through public land rents, and county grant money, symbolically offering a hand. In contrast, the punishment arm of neoliberalism has not let up, and instead has interfered with garden activities at least on one occasion. While engaging in legitimate community work, law enforcement interrupted the community garden space while disturbing two young black participants. This presents an opportunity for PNV to use their reputation as a community organization to create a dialogue about the practice of law enforcement in the area. In the next part of this chapter, the case of SDRS is explored with respect to the intersection of the state and neoliberalism.

AT THE BORDERZONE: SECURING NATURE AND CITIZENSHIP

While both SDRS and PNV are alternative food projects, they both have different relationships to the state and participation in neoliberal governmentality. Aside from voluntary labeling and certification, the experience of SDRS departs from neighborhood disinvestment and food deserts. Policing is also an issue that works differently on their

farm. Nonetheless, as an alternative food project SDRS offers a unique vantage point with respect to critiquing a society of abundance.

State and Certification/Labeling

Critiques of neoliberalism argue that alternative food projects do not challenge the corporate food regime through direct state mandates of agribusiness (Guthman 2007).

Labeling is an alternate route for ethical choices, but nonetheless leaves the conventional food system intact. However, labeling also opens a new terrain for contestation in neoliberal contexts. SDRS is one such example.

Like PNV, SDRS also enrolls in the alternative food movement by adopting the use of voluntary certification and labeling. SDRS uses multiple marketing channels for their produce including their on-site farm stand, farmers markets, local retailers, and restaurants, as well as community supported agriculture (CSA). As with PNV, these varied marketing channels need certification with both the state and county of San Diego. In a neoliberal fashion, the city and county support these efforts to create markets and choices for consumers. SDRS uses “local,” and “sustainable” in their marketing strategies.¹⁰⁵ However, while SDRS engages in these voluntary practices, their refusal to adopt organic certification is a form of resistance.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Currently, according to the County of San Diego AWM, there are no definitions for “local” or “sustainable.” Therefore, these are not regulated. Practically, the County uses California State as their local definition. For instance, if a CFM applicant were selling produce from Argentina as local, this would be disallowed (Anonymous AWM, June 28, 2017). Regardless of regulation, these claims are still part of voluntary ethical labeling practices used by the alternative food movement.

¹⁰⁶ An SDRS farmer also pointed out that organic certification is costly for their project, as a non-profit.

SDRS rebuffs the corporatization of organic growing and does so with their unconventional practice of refusing to adopt organic labeling certification. Like SDRS farmers, many small farmers criticize organic certification as lax on sustainability, and argue national labeling has allowed the corporate food industry to take over, both in terms of organic practices and philosophy.¹⁰⁷ Several farmers at the Small Farm Conference in 2012 drew my attention to industrial practices within organic food production, as well as prohibitive costs for certification and increasing land rents. In their view, organic food regulations created low standards that while better than conventional agriculture, nonetheless lost the respect and love for nature central to the agro-ecological ideals embedded in organic farming (see also Guthman 2000). At a practical level, Mel Lions, the Wild Willow Property Farm Manager, asserts, “To those of us who care about environmental, plant, soil and human health, organics is a scam – a predatory marketing program taking advantage of people’s desire to do the right thing.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, some farmers choose to assert going “beyond organic” to claim and re-create value for agro-ecological ideals (Howard and Allen 2006). The emergence of the terms “polycultures” (a diversified farm) and “regenerative farming” in opposition to “monocultures” (growing one crop) are such ways to distinguish growing practices and create new values.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ According to Altieri in Guthman (2000), sustainable agricultural systems are characterized by the following four practices, “ (1) use of cover crops, mulches, and no-till practices as effective soil and water-conserving measures; (2) promotion of soil biotic activity through the regular addition of organic matter such as manure and compost; (3) use of crop rotations, crop/livestock mixed systems, agro-forestry, and legume-based intercropping for nutrient recycling; and (4) encouragement of biological pest control agents through biodiversity manipulations and introduction and/or conservation of natural enemies” (258).

¹⁰⁸ Mel Lions email communication, June 28, 2017.

¹⁰⁹ California Small Farm Conference, March 4 – March 6, 2012 in Valencia, California.
<http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/events/12conference/>

At farm tours and in discussions with SDRS farmers, conversations about growing practices highlighted differences between sustainable farming practices (i.e. beyond organic) and industrial organic farming practices. For instance, our tour guide quizzed the group to see if we had knowledge about industrial organic or permaculture practices:

You will notice that we do not just have one thing planted in this whole field. That is what? (waiting for an answer) You might see – even on some organic farms – one crop per row. What we do is called “polycultures” ...meaning we are growing many crops within a given row or space in our field. (Johnson 2012) ¹¹⁰

By using polycultures, their farming techniques paired crops with beneficial insects, avoiding the need for pesticides. Adopting chickens, goats, and ducks allowed animals to weed and eat pests, and till the soil to preserve the microbes that are layered into it. SDRS also used manure from their animals as well as donations from nearby inspected farms to make nutrients for the soil. Exceeding organic regulations, SDRS also practices water conservation and develops their own seed bank.¹¹¹ Practicing beyond organic to refocus agro-ecological values captures a standard higher than now practiced by most organic farmers (Guthman 2000). Rather than a down-tick in voluntary regulations, SDRS is claiming stricter self-inspired regulations, and thus more integrity for the agro-ecological process.

¹¹⁰ Misha Johnson, April 28, 2012 at SDRS farm tour in San Diego.

¹¹¹ Recently, Mel Lions from SDRS asserted going beyond sustainability: “With sustainable farming, you are simply trying to maintain, to sustain, what you are doing...But through industrial farming, we’ve done a lot of damage to soils and the environment. Regenerative farming takes that damaged land and soil and makes them better” (Mel Lions in Hormick 2017). Thus, SDRS is creating new markets where none previously existed (Guthman 2007).

With respect to neoliberalism, SDRS is engaging in voluntary labeling. This does allow SDRS to capture ethical values through the sale of their produce and farm tours, and therefore taps into markets and ethical values to govern by consumption. However, these techniques may also inspire political engagement by encouraging visitors to be part of the farm process (i.e. essentially any aspect of growing food) and inspiring trust. For SDRS, trust does not come from the label, but instead an active engagement with the farmer (at the very least), and ideally the labor process of growing food. It is through social and natural relationships that SDRS builds relations of trust, rather than relying on the fantastical marketing techniques of ethical products. Therefore, SDRS stays local:

If we have people who come to visit our farm...then they know how we grow the food and they [will] trust us. And I think selling food to people based on trust is the original way, and it is the best way to do it. We are really trying to sell our produce within our community. We are not trying to sell it to LA, or only to communities that would not be able to come to our property. So, my goal would not be to have certification, but to have the people's certification. (Johnson 2012)¹¹²

For SDRS, their practice of voluntary labeling comes with social interaction, and therefore does not support disengaged consumers. Instead, SDRS prefers to abstain from organic labeling schemes and instead gain public support through their farm tours and events. Their project serves local restaurants as well as Ocean Beach People's Organic Foods Market. Although produce is not labeled "certified organic" it is known within the community and therefore does not need the third-party verification schemes. In this way, labeling is taken into the dimension of practice, and may open antagonism towards the

¹¹² Misha Johnson Interview. May 14, 2012, at SDRS site in San Diego.

corporate food model that may also carry onto the political stage. In sum, SDRS engages neoliberalism in a strategic way, hoping to inspire change at the level of practice by bringing consumers into direct relationships with their farmers and the labor process.

The State, Food Access, and Community Abandonment

Despite the value of food for survival of the physical and social body, it is common knowledge that the value of land subdivided with housing in California has an exchange value worth more than farmland for growing food locally. (San Diego County of Agriculture 2012) ¹¹³

Neoliberal development in San Diego has not only rolled back public goods, creating a landscape of inequality marked by segregation based on race and class, but it has also unleashed real estate markets for private suburban development throughout the city. For SDRS, it has resulted in skewed land values that prioritize suburbanization over survival. For SDRS the City of San Diego has failed to regulate development and prioritize a local food economy. Whereas PNV's history with the city is institutional racism that results in food deserts/swamps, SDRS's history with the city is one of criticizing suburbanization and abundance, and the environmental and social costs of cheap food. Like many alternative farmers, SDRS argues the state has failed to regulate industrial agriculture, hence justifying alternatives. This goes hand in hand with their critique that unbridled suburbanization undercuts the city's self-reliance by undermining the capacity of a local and sustainable food supply for everyone.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Anonymous, San Diego County of Agriculture, October 2012.

¹¹⁴ See Blick (2014) for threats to farming from urbanization in San Diego and current efforts to keep land out of development.

Since the latter half of the twentieth century, San Diego has paved over acres of local farmlands for malls, freeways, and suburban homes, pushing the remaining farms to the outskirts of the city (see Chapter 2).¹¹⁵ Since the 1930s total farm acreage has significantly declined as population has increased (see Table 5.1). For example, in 1950 there were 1 million acres of farmlands and half a million people. However, by 2012 farmlands declined to a third while population increased to 3.1 million. As land has been sold to development, the number of farms have increased, but are reduced in size to less than ten acres. Currently, San Diego County has more small farms than any other county in the United States at 5,732 farms (San Diego County Farm Bureau 2017). However, most crops are non-edible ornamentals and nursery stock, and are not for local food consumption. This gradual transition from edible to non-edible crops is shown in Table 5.2.

As the city regentrified downtown for rolling out the market, San Diego also lost their produce hub. Prior to the 1980s, San Diego had a vibrant collection of warehouses (now the Gaslamp District) dedicated to the buying and selling of produce throughout the county.¹¹⁶ Called “produce row” by newspapers and locals, this USDA regulated produce center shifted to Los Angeles.¹¹⁷ By losing the produce hub, San Diego produce requiring USDA inspections travel first to Los Angeles, before entering back into the San Diego region. This is also the case with local meats, where livestock must travel 100 miles north to a USDA approved slaughterhouse (T. Johnson 2015). Ironically, while fine dining

¹¹⁵ Also see Papageorge (1971) and Hogan (2002) for development of Mission Valley.

¹¹⁶ See Magee (1961) for earlier history on produce row.

¹¹⁷ Mel Lions, May 5, 2012, Interview at SDRS in San Diego.

restaurants and hotels were emerging during the redevelopment of downtown in the 1980s onward, local food distribution declined. In the last decade, as the alternative food movement has developed in San Diego, the number of farmers markets, farm-to-table restaurants, and “locally grown” produce has increased.¹¹⁸ SDRS is a significant player in creating this new landscape. In sum, neoliberalism has not only undermined low-income and people of color, but also the environment. However, devolution has opened the space for alternatives, of which SDRS is a part.

Law Enforcement, Policing, and Punishment

Under a neoliberal regime, borders play a significant role in defining inclusion and exclusion, and rewards and punishment. Borders are used to distinguish the public from the private, citizens from non-citizens, whites from non-whites, and the wealthy from the poor. Because neoliberalism is about securing and expanding markets, borders for capital and the elite are softened. On the other hand, borders are hardened for the poor and people of color, both internal (as citizens) and external (as non-citizens) to the nation-state (Massey 1994; Nevins 2016). Internally, people policed are vulnerable groups such as the poor, people of color, and indigenous. Externally, people policed are those unauthorized by state agencies and refugees. For PNV, law enforcement asserted their authority over two black youths during participation for community garden work. Because of their age and blackness, their bodies were subject to surveillance and

¹¹⁸ Eric Larson Interview, April 17, 2012, Executive Director of the San Diego County Farm Bureau, Escondido, California.

policing. However, in the case of SDRS policing is not targeted towards affluent white citizens or school children on group tours. The punishment arm is docile for them. Instead, neoliberalism works by affirming citizenship through this alternative food project.

SRDS is in the Tijuana River Valley (TRV), one mile from the U.S. – Mexico border. This territorial boundary is one of the busiest national borders in the Western hemisphere. Borders enforce the physical tangibility of the state as well as who counts as part of the nation. For Sparke (2006) “borders are consequential condensation points where wider changes in state-making and the nature of citizenship are worked out on the ground” (in Nevins 2016: 432). In this way citizenship activities at SDRS are taking place at the level of practice. The area is heavily surveilled by law enforcement (the U.S. Border Patrol), who seek to keep commodities and elites flowing while keeping unauthorized non-whites out.¹¹⁹ This surveillance takes place while the demand for unauthorized labor continues, especially within the industrial food sector. Thus, the border presents a glaring contradiction for those who study the global corporate food system. The Border Patrol looks for people crossing the border without authorization while the farming industry, through labor contractors, seeks undocumented people out to work as cheap labor.¹²⁰ The border is flexible for capital but harsh for non-citizens. This narrative is a familiar and fundamental part of the critique of global corporations in

¹¹⁹ Nevins reports that U.S. Border Patrol Agents deployed along the U.S. – Mexico divide have increased from 4,287 in 1994 to 21,000 in 2014 (2016:433).

¹²⁰ The North American Free Trade Agreement passed in 1994 resulted in the decline of small farms in Mexico, and encouraged a mass exodus of people to the cities to find work. Many have no choice but to cross the border, even without paperwork (Nevins 2016).

general, but also of corporate food systems (Carolan 2011; Holmes 2013; Miraftab 2016).

At SDRS these boundaries are made visible through discourse at the farm site.

Bordering Conversations

Neoliberal governmentality governs by redefining and re-regulating boundaries through law enforcement. However, it is not only bounding physical territory through which inclusion and exclusion is defined. It is also through discourse. Farm tours present opportunities for SDRS to engage and enroll the public into the alternative food movement. They do so by drawing on a critique of neoliberalism that argues de-regulation of industry has spoiled the environment on both sides of the border. However, the social consequences of a destructive food system that relies on vulnerable non-citizens is left undiscussed.

The primary dialogue about border-crossing is that of pollution, indirectly concealing the boundaries for non-citizens. During farm tours, this boundary is made relevant by pointing to the significant example of severe flooding in 2010. In that year, San Diego experienced unusual strong rains and flooding in the valleys. The ocean backed up into the Tijuana River Valley, forming a knee-high pool of water. For SDRS the border was porous, allowing both sides to share pollution. As our guide discussed,

The Tijuana River is a very interesting river. It spends three-quarters of its length in Mexico, and it is only the last quarter that it is here in the United States. So...you could say that the pollution that comes out of Tijuana is a cross-border issue. And...we are very aware of it. We have not had any issues with the flooding that we had in 2010. We tested the soil and the water, and did not come up with any issues - probably because anything that was in there was very diluted by the heavy amounts of rain that we

have had. But that is a concern of ours, and we relate to organizations that are working on environmental issues on both sides of the border.

For SDRS the immediate concern is border pollution, which is the effect of neoliberalism – lax environmental regulations for capitalist production because of NAFTA. However, absent is that recruited migrants for industrial farms also risk their lives and die crossing the border to do agricultural work. Neoliberal critique of environmental pollution obscures the ways in which citizenship boundaries define participation in the labor system for both industrial organic and conventional farms (see Holmes 2013).

Questions from the audience were similarly about the natural environment and not about people. During question periods, the audience asked about the size of a popular nearby certified organic farm, the kinds of native plants in the valley, farming techniques, and animals on the farm. The limits of discourse became apparent on an evening during a monthly celebratory potluck that hosted a polyculture food justice activist from the Midwest. The activist brought up the border, referring to the sharing of people and culture:

One of the interesting things to me about being out here on Wild Willow Farm is that you can see the Mexican Border over there. With San Diego being so close to the Mexican border, there is a lot of interesting things to come from that. There are a lot of people who come from Mexico, to San Diego, and that has really affected the culture here. What do you think are some of the issues that come-about, because of the mixture of people that we have here in San Diego?

One of the audience members responded with, “Well there are problems. There are a lot of people. This is a very traveled area.” After a moment of silence, and prompting the audience again, another audience member suggested talking to someone who does work

in building a local food network in Guadalupe, Mexico. Afterwards, the conversation turned back to the environment and to genetically modified seeds. In these examples, the border become salient as boundaries between citizens and non-citizens are recognized. The limited discussion did “other” non-citizens by referring to them as “problems.” Attendees were also silent with respect to cultural sharing, instead referring to the environment. The point is not to judge people but to recognize that the awareness of citizenship is heightened at the borderzone, and frames conversations. However, making the connection between citizenship and the corporate food regime could be a potential opportunity for SDRS that is now overlooked.

While at the farm, physical intrusion of the Border Patrol took place. One evening amidst a fire pit celebration a patrol SUV came through the main unpaved dirt path of the farm. The farm is rural, and made gravel noises with the large tires and visible air debris from the dirt. This happened amidst the visible light around the campfire and kitchen area decorated by Christmas tree lights, the fire pit, and the moon. The large police vehicle approached the crowd by shining their deafening lights onto people before circling the farm. The gathering was lively and the festivities went on uninterrupted, without vocal concerns among partygoers.¹²¹ As citizens, those at the farm were not targets of surveillance or policing. Nonetheless, by policing the farm for non-citizens the Border Patrol solidifies national boundaries and citizenship belonging for participants.

In sum, neoliberal governmentality works through boundary making. Doing so distinguishes the worthy from the unworthy, which is stratified based on race, class, and

¹²¹ During my fieldwork in the daytime, I have also seen the Border Patrol police the farm.

citizenship. Neoliberal governmentality works through this project as citizenship for participants is affirmed in dialogue as well as the physical demarcation of territory by the Border Patrol. While critical of environmental pollution is salient, staying hidden is the corporate food systems' reliance on vulnerable non-citizens, who produce the food for restaurants and supermarkets. Thus, while SDRS is resisting neoliberalism by rejecting the organic label, by remaining silent on farm labor, SDRS inadvertently contributes to neoliberalism.

CONCLUSION

The intersection of neoliberalism, alternative food movements, and the state are concerns among both academics and activists in the food community. With the rise in neoliberalism, cut-backs for social welfare have created food insecurity for many and those suffering disproportionately are low-income and people of color. In the 1970s, the alternative food movement advocated for organic labeling as the state was crippled by neoliberalism. A market flourished for those who could afford to pay for these goods. Currently, a bifurcated food system exists with ethical foods on the one hand and conventional on the other. However, neoliberalism has also interacted with institutional racism to worsen living conditions for those who want and could benefit from a local food system.

The debate among scholars concerns the role of the state in neoliberal conditions and whether alternative food projects reproduce the very conditions they purport to work against. For many scholars who are frustrated by increasing inequalities, alternative food movements simply allow the state to get away with human and environmental

destruction. It is not alternatives that should proliferate, but activism to command the state to control and regulate industrial agriculture and end hunger. On the other hand, those equally frustrated by increasing inequalities also assert that institutional racism calls for another view on state action. Before neoliberalism, federal and state policy undermined the capacity of communities of color to thrive, including farming for food and purchasing power to buy food. These conditions have only worsened under neoliberalism. Thus, we pause to consider how to strategically engage neoliberalism and these altered conditions of the state, especially for those who face battles with law enforcement. By looking at the key ways in which neoliberalism, the state, and alternative food movements come together, this chapter analyzed two different alternative food projects with respect to certification/labeling, food access and community abandonment, and law enforcement.

Both PNV and SDRS engage in the neoliberal practice of certification and labeling. By enrolling through state and county departments, selling is legitimized and produce is labeled with ethical values. In effect, voluntary labeling creates markets outside of conventional agriculture with state legitimacy. However, PNV is not fulfilling the dominant private sector approach to bring in supermarkets. For PNV, labeling enrolls the project in a new network that allows their organization to link their concerns with that of city government. In this way, PNV uses labeling to strategically enroll consumers and create political agency. For SDRS, labeling itself is problematic with respect to “organic.” While SDRS does market as “local” and “sustainable,” for those that visit their farm site this is a space of resistance. Organic labeling abuses trust with consumers by

claiming certified organic without the agro-ecological practices the organic label asserts. Thus, for those that come to the farm, this knowledge creates criticism of industrial agriculture, industrial organic, and market rationality. Either way, according to the first set of critics, both projects are engaging in ethical markets alongside conventional agriculture and taking on regulation one consumer at a time. At the same time, according to the second set of critics, these values may translate into political changes for PNV and for SDRS increased political campaigns to regulate industrial agriculture.

With respect to food access and community abandonment, these two projects differ in remarkable ways but still practice growing food as a form of resistance and source for social change. For PNV, food insecurity comes from city neglect whose legacy is institutional racism and a neoliberal tiered growth policy. On that front, through urban agriculture PNV can sidestep supermarkets, create employment, and fill the fresh food gap. While PNV is stepping in for what states provide, PNV does bring dignity to their project, neighborhood, and community of color. For SDRS, neoliberal growth policies undermine local food by prioritizing downtown development as an entertainment zone for affluent whites and tourists. Most farmland is used for global markets, and land preservation efforts loom in the background of a still sprawling city. For SDRS their farm resists neoliberal development through education such as farm tours and regenerative farming classes, which teach environmental practices, as well as how to grow food sustainably. While both projects are taking over for the state, PNV and SDRS are not producing one-dimensional self-interested consumers.

While neoliberalism unleashes markets and freedoms for those who can participate, this new social order creates widening inequalities and punishments for those who cannot take part. The underside of neoliberalism is heightened policing and surveillance by law enforcement who target people of color and non-citizens as scapegoats for state failures and state fears. In the case of PNV, two black youth were targeted and harshly policed on site at the garden, reminding PNV and the youth of their place. Fortunately, the reputation of PNV is strong, and can open dialogue with local law enforcement. However, this interaction did change the activities of PNV. With respect to SDRS, the borderzone makes citizenship and belonging salient. It is a “condensation point” where the “nature of citizenship” is worked out on the ground (Sparke in Nevins 2006: 432). On the ground, the Border Patrol physically drove through the farm area, reminding participants of their belonging in the U.S. nation. Conversations about the border also discursively worked out boundaries on the ground. Participants were reluctant to discuss the sharing of culture and engaged in othering non-citizens from Mexico. However, environmental pollution was discussed several times. SRDS has an opportunity to use this space as a platform for farm worker equality and changes within the food system. Unfortunately, non-citizens are silenced.

One of the concerns about the alternative food movement is that of exclusion, especially with respect to knowledge and expertise. What kinds of organizational knowledge are produced at these sites? How does this knowledge shape project goals for greater justice in the food system?

TABLES

Table 5.1 Decline in Farmland Relative to Population Growth, 1930 – 2012

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Number of Farms</i>	<i>Total Farm Acreage</i>
1930	209,659	3,902	833,336
1950	556,808	6,696	999,417
1978	1,775,000	5,085	626,336
2012	3,177,000	6,687	303,983

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, San Diego County Department of Agriculture, Weights, and Measures Annual Crop Reports.

Table 5.2 Top Five Farm Products by Value (\$10 million or more), 1948 - 2012*

<i>Year</i>	<i>1949</i>	<i>1979</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2012</i>
<i>Commodities</i>	Eggs	Nursery Products	Indoor Flowering and Foliage Plants	Ornamental Trees and Shrubs
	Milk and Cream	Eggs	Ornamental Trees and Shrubs	Indoor Flowering and Foliage Plants
	Tomatoes	Tomatoes	Avocados	Bedding Plants, Color
	Celery	Avocados	Bedding Plants	Avocados
	Beef Cattle	Milk	Cut Flowers/Flower Products	Tomatoes

Source: San Diego County Department of Agriculture, Weights, and Measures Annual Crop Reports.

*Note: In 1949, the threshold value is \$1 million, not \$10 million as with later years.

CHAPTER 6: NEOLIBERALISM, KNOWLEDGE, AND ALTERNATIVE FOOD MOVEMENTS

While it is true that many people simply cannot afford to pay more for food, either in money or time or both, many more of us can. Just in the last decade or two we have somehow found the time in the day to spend several hours on the internet and the money in the budget not only to pay for broadband service, but to cover a second phone bill and a new monthly bill for television, formerly free. For most Americans, spending more for better food is less a matter of ability than priority. (Pollan 2008: 187)

For the alternative food movement knowing where food comes from is a tool for empowerment. The alternative food movement and scholarship about it diligently examines how the industrial food system works. From the problem of ecology at the site of production, to fast food, to corporate food subsidies – knowledge about these processes has empowered a new generation of enlightened eaters (Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Lang 2012). The benefits of the alternative food movement have created critical analyses of the processes of growing, distributing, and consuming food. This has undeniably influenced the way many people think (e.g. the rise of the locavore). Pollan’s argument that good eating is about personal responsibility reinforces the notion that it is most Americans that matter in altering the food system, and that we are to individually to blame if we do not shift our priorities (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck 2011). Thus, the emphasis is we *should* all act on this path of “enlightened” eating. However, who decides enlightenment, and who is excluded? It is at this intersection of self-responsibility, neoliberalism, and alternative food movements this chapter aims to clarify.

The proper way to eat defines status hierarchies (Bourdieu 1984). The kinds of foods, table manners, and even taste is embodied in what Bourdieu refers to as “habitus.” Implied by Pollan is the assumption of a proper way to eat. What does this mean for a politics of food when those that go hungry cannot “choose” the proper diet, or simply do not agree with alternative foodways? For all the gains made by the alternative food movement, emergent critiques reveal that “alternatives...create places and people that cannot be served by these alternatives, such that some places are essentially ignored” (Lafferty 2012: 230). Even more still, public discourse about “good food” presumes a certain way of thinking about marginalized groups. In a condemning public discourse, people of color and low-income individuals are judged as unhealthy, overweight, lacking education, self-discipline, and “not knowing how to eat” (Guthman and Dupuis 2006). In a classic sense of Bourdieu, alternative food practices mark status, and combined with neoliberalism a racially charged stigmatization. More sensitive explanations are less-individualizing and emphasize socio-economic constraints such as the price of food, lack of food retailers nearby, and hectic work schedules (Alkon, Block, Moore, Gillis, DiNuccio, and Chavez 2013). Contributing to a new wave of literature on alternative food practices as an anti-racist practice, I ask how alternative food projects reinforce or resist notions of expert knowledge proclaimed by white alternative food expertise? Do these notions challenge or reinforce existing public debates about food politics?

First, I introduce the debate about neoliberalism and knowledge production in the alternative food movement scholarship. Critiques have been leveled against the alternative food movement including attention to social justice issues, as well as racism

within the movement. Second, I introduce alternative food projects that correct whiteness within the alternative food movement by including narratives and food ways of people of color. Third, I examine how PNV and SDRS engage with alternative food expertise. Fourth, I conclude with a discussion of whether these projects contribute to a politics of anti-racism in the alternative food movement.

NEOLIBERALISM, ALTERNATIVE FOOD MOVEMENTS, AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Not only are scholars divided about the role of markets and the state, but they are also divided with respect to the role of neoliberalism and knowledge production.

Alternative food scholars have questioned the market as movement approach as reproducing neoliberalism (Guthman 2008a). Ideally, once consumers become aware of what is happening in the industrial food system, consumers will then choose alternatives. If enough consumers act in concert, then the industrial food system will have to either reform their practices or go out of business. By relying on consumers as agents to “choose” healthy foods, the assumption is that consumers are powerful agents with the capacity to force the industrial food system to change, while opening spaces for alternative food practices to thrive (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck 2011; Pollan 2008). For those critical of the market as movement approach, consuming for social change underestimates that many people consume for “improved personal and ecological health,” not social justice goals (Alkon 2014: 27; Guthman 2008a; Szasz 2007).

Knowledge production comes into play in the creation of an “enlightened consumer” who shops for “good” food and “healthy” or “ethical” products. Those

resources used to decide “good food” are health magazines, works by Pollan, food experts in newspapers and on the Food Network Channel. The industrial food system has created the need for discovering what is in the food supply, however, the criticism is that the alternative food movement has given rise to a universal expertise about what *ought* to be eaten, which reproduces exclusion as well as colonialist tendencies by outsiders in low-income and communities of color (Guthman 2008b). On the other hand, scholars assert that while alternatives can have these tendencies, new spaces of opportunity can emerge as well. In other words, there’s room in alternatives. There are non-mainstream projects in marginalized communities that break the status boundary to valorize their histories, create new knowledges, and form new relations with alternative food expertise (Hayes-Conroy 2014, White 2010, 2011a, 2011b). Building on Alkon and McCullen (2011) as well as the new wave of opportunities in alternative food movements, this chapter asks whether PNV and SDRS can contribute to an anti-racist politics of food.

CRITIQUES OF THE ALTERNATIVE FOOD MOVEMENT

In the last decade scholars have begun to criticize the alternative food movement for its failure to discuss social justice issues. Scholars have noted that farmers markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) tend to locate or distribute in areas of relative wealth and privilege with few exceptions (Guthman, Morris, and Allen 2006). Organic farmers tend to cater to high-end restaurants that sell niche products to the wealthy (Guthman 2003). Lastly, unless heavily subsidized by private foundations or the public sector, farm to school programs develop in white and wealthy school districts

(Allen and Guthman 2006). These trends cast a critical eye on alternative food movements and suggest that alternative food projects consider their exclusionary nature.

More recent critiques of the alternative food movement involve questioning knowledge production within the movement, especially the universality of what constitutes “good” and “healthy” food. Scholars such as Guthman (2008b, 2008c) and (Slocum 2007) argue the alternative food movement holds whitened discourses and practices. The result is that it excludes participation by people of color as well as the movement’s ability to discuss issues of inequality. In the next section, I take up each of these critiques in more depth.

Alternative Food Movements, Race, and Class Privilege

Like the environmental movement in its early years, the current alternative food movement largely consists of middle-class, well-educated, whites (Guthman 2008b; Slocum 2006, 2007). This concerns those in the movement who seek to broaden the industrial critique beyond the confines of white privilege to name the systems of race and class inequality inherent to both the organic and conventional food systems (Alkon and Agyeman 2011). These scholars are concerned those most vulnerable to food insecurity – low-income groups and people of color – benefit the least from the alternative food movement (Anguelovski 2015). Lack of participation by vulnerable groups is said to arise from less income to buy goods at farmers markets (Alkon 2012), farmers markets do not reach inner-city neighborhoods, and/or existing farmers markets create a “chill” for people of color (Guthman 2008c).

Another set of reasons concerns racism within the movement itself. These scholars have named the movement's underlying ideals and practices as those emanating from a "liberal habitus of whiteness" that allows the movement to claim and sanction certain farming practices, buying practices, and food knowledge as universal (Alkon and McCullen 2011: 938; Anguelovski 2015; Slocum 2006, 2007). Alkon and McCullen find whiteness working at both the Davis and North Berkeley Farmers Market through two romanticized narratives: that of the struggling, small, white, family farmer and secondly that of the Europeanized agrarian countryside. The first narrative ignores California's colonial past and the ways in which Native Americans were displaced by white homesteaders, slavery, underpaid Asian immigrants recruited into California's first factory farms, as well as the migrant farm labor that work on both family and corporate farms (945). Secondly, discourses that romanticize the European countryside portray alternative agriculture as a "white practice while casting food choice as a moral, rather than economic, decision [that] normalizes affluence" (950). As Slocum (2007) argues, these omissions code the alternative food movement as white.

In addition to narratives that omit histories of people of color and indigenous peoples, certain philosophies, foods, and knowledge are keyed as white (Anguelovski 2015; Slocum 2007). Slocum argues white participants at the Minneapolis Farmers Markets fetishize "fresh, local, sustainable, '5 (fruits and vegetables a day, non-processed, whole grain, small-scale or organic" products (526). Alternative food knowledge is learned at home, and on National Public Radio and reading co-op bulletins

(526). While she argues that none of these ideals are inherently white,¹²² this knowledge and practice has become associated with whiteness, and thus allows for alternative knowledge and practices to be universalized in the movement.

A recent example of how an alternative food movement is blinded by whiteness is the case of Hi-Lo foods in Jamaica Plain. Once a food secure Latino community in Boston, they lost their supermarket due to alternative food activism, making them food insecure (Anguelovski 2015). Hi-Lo foods, a supermarket that was unique to the region, carried dairies, creams, cheese, dozens of coffee beans and rice varieties, Caribbean fruits of all sorts, Peruvian spices, and bread from Puerto Rico. It was the only place in the region with affordable, culturally appropriate foods from 23 different countries that supported the community. The store helped Latino customers re-create and strengthen cultural practices around food and feel more at home in the Boston neighborhood. However, gentrifying whites accused Jamaica Plain as being a “food desert” and those who were part of the alternative foods movement argued that Whole Foods offers healthy options not available in their neighborhood. Some alternative food participants argued Whole Foods offered quinoa and Yerba Mate; these were traditional items in many Latino culinary cultures that were available at Hi-Lo. Yet, the depiction by those who advocated for Whole Foods was that Hi-Lo was a “dirty supermarket,” “dark,” had “smelly food” and in a demeaning tone said, “shoppers come from the Third World” (191-192). Thus, not only is the Whole Foods aesthetic, and kinds of food and eating

¹²² This is not to claim essentialism; people of color are drawn to alternative food practice as whites may be turned off by it (Guthman 2008b).

normalized and universalized by the alternative food movement, but it also has the power to appropriate the “other” to claim it for themselves. This discourse comes full circle when low-income and people of color do not behave according to the alternative food prescription. Instead, people of color are blamed as the problem (Guthman 2003; Guthman and DuPuis 2006).

This universalization of foodways confronts Guthman’s students seeking to do good by taking part in alternative food projects, and is the subject of her 2008b article “Bringing Good Food to Others.” In her study, students work in alternative food projects (teaching kids how to eat in farm to school programs, distributing fresh food in low income areas, working with “at-risk” adults and youth in gardening programs) as part of their coursework (p. 437). Resonating with Pollan’s sentiment at the beginning, many students said that “if people only knew” where their food comes from it would solve the problem of unhealthy eating by paying the full cost of food or going to farmers markets (439). Students in these projects were dismayed that subjects did not like vegetarian or organic foods, and that subjects took less produce home than they could, or that the students of color in the youth and gardening programs felt they were being used as laborers opposed to gardeners (440). This gap results in a dilemma for Guthman, “I remain struck by the disjunction between what alternative food activists do and what food desert recipients seem to want” (443). Guthman likens these projects instead to progressive era reformers that worked to “reform” the poor by “training” them in white and middle-class ethics (Rose 1999). Guthman’s work points to the ways that food and status work to undermine the logic of empowerment in marginalized communities.

This section outlined the ways in which neoliberalism and race intersects with the alternative food movement. Scholars have pointed to evidence of colorblindness within the movement. By ignoring race and class structures of inequality, the alternative food movement has normalized certain practices and knowledge as universal, while even appropriating others. Amounting to what Guthman (2008b) pointed to a form of colonialism, other scholars have seen this trend and have argued for a different kind of alternative food practice.

CHALLENGING PRIVILEGE IN THE ALTERNATIVE FOOD MOVEMENT

The above-mentioned scholars would certainly argue for more inclusivity, as well as reflexivity in knowledge production around food. For some alternative food movements, alternative food knowledge is appropriated and white privilege is not recognized, as in the case by Slocum outlined above (2007). However, a new wave of alternative food projects accepts the industrial food critique, while also redefining that critique to include narratives by people of color, and indigenous groups. This challenges the said “whiteness” of certain foods and practices (see Minkoff-Zern 2014; Norgaard, Reed, Van Horn 2011). In addition, the scholars cited below illustrate studies of food projects that aim to protect their efforts from white appropriation.

The D-Town farmers (White 2010, 2011a, 2011b), takes colonialism and alternative white food expertise critically. As described in earlier chapters D-Town farmers claim food sovereignty, or control over the production and consumption of the food supply. Part of this project is to inform about healthy eating. However, because they realize that whites have connections and privilege to resources, D-Town farmers do not

refuse help, but instead create food knowledge and control its dissemination. As White (2010, 2011a, 2011b) describes, D-Town farmers view food standards in schools as inadequate. They argue the food pyramid is not enough, and what most people learn about healthy food is from news reports, academic studies, Web sites, fitness clubs, and health establishments, avenues that are not available to them. Thus, they have a commitment to educate people on “importance of food choices, the dangers of unhealthy food, and benefits of healthy food and exercise” (202). Coming from black voices in their community discharges the sense of colonization and paternalist discourses by whites. In this space, black people can be vegetarians, know about the dangers of pesticides and sugars, eat raw foods, and refer to their cultural heritage, without the judgement that comes with white privilege. This example shows how alternative food practices can be claimed and practiced by non-whites, and that for alternative food projects to be successful, colonialist tendencies must be countered.

In sum, scholars of alternative food movements recognize the universality of knowledge production about alternative food practices and discourses that create erasures and reproduce inequalities. However, food sovereignty projects like D-Town farmers guard against this tendency in what some may perceive as “defensive localism,” (Hinrichs 2003). However, I argue this is called for given the pervasive claim by privileged whites to the define the movement itself. My study contributes to this knowledge about the complex interplay between neoliberalism and food knowledge through PNV and SDRS. PNV straddles the white privilege line successfully by not alienating the dominant movement, but practices “good food” on their own terms. SDRS

is less reflexive about white privilege and hence is contributes more to the narrative of a whitened alternative food platform.

SOUTHEASTERN SAN DIEGO: CRITICAL FOOD KNOWLEGE

Our campaign provides opportunities for community members to reclaim a local food and agriculture history that includes growing, growing, sharing, selling, distributing, and eating healthy food from the backyards and undeveloped lots of Southeastern San Diego... We are attempting to change the political and physical landscape one garden, one project at a time. We strongly believe that food equity and food sovereignty in Southeastern San Diego is attainable. (Diane Moss, PNV CEO 2012).¹²³

As an alternative food project, PNV appropriates the industrial critique of knowing where one's food comes from. While the production side is analyzed, PNV pays special attention to consumption. This includes retailing as well as what constitutes "healthy" food. As Diane Moss expresses above, creating a local food system is about reclaiming space and agricultural traditions, both African American and Latino. In this section, I will focus on their critique of industrial practices, as well as how they appropriate and alter the universalist knowledge claims that characterize the dominant alternative food movement.

CRITIQUES OF THE INDUSTRIAL FOOD SYSTEM

PNV appropriates industrial food system critique from the alternative food movement. One such example is the critique of corporate food retail that does not protect human health by selling unhealthy foods at the grocery store. When discussing food

¹²³ Moss, Diane. May 9, 2012. "People's Produce Project." (email communication to public listserv).

options available at the only chain store in the neighborhood, Food for Less, PNV participant Paul G. remarked:

Never mind the fact that the tomato came from halfway around the world, sprayed with who knows what, and how many times over? And then, colored, waxed, polished, sprayed with ripening gas, and the six months later is now on your shelf.¹²⁴

These critiques about Food for Less came up in conversations with Diane and several participants as well, who were wary of pesticides, industrial chemicals in processed foods, GMOs, farm subsidies, the use of poorly paid farm or slave labor, and the freshness of the food. In addition, the energy to bring the food to the Southeastern store is also an environmental issue they pointed to. In this way, the alternative food movement discourse resonates with PNV.

Uneven access to retailers that sell healthier foods is also analyzed. Paul G. points to the inequality in food retailers between privileged North County and marginalized Southeastern San Diego.

The thing is, you look at it [Southeastern San Diego's food landscape] and you have got bargain-basement grocery stores, your ninety-nine cent stores, and a crap-load of junk food. Realistically it is the illusion of a choice. You do not have a broad scale, but you get up in North County [above the 8 freeway], you start having stores like Barons Market, Henry's, Jimbo's, and Bristol Farms, farmers markets, community gardens, moms-and-pops, all these little boutique-y things, and all the rest of the chains as well. Because, well, you know, the money has put it there. Here, people struggle.¹²⁵

Some participants in PNV called attention to this unequal retail geography, suggesting that choices were different because retailers locate in areas they know they will profit

¹²⁴ Paul Gresock. Interview. May 5, 2012. San Diego.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

from. As described in chapters two and three, like other cities in the U.S., Southeastern San Diego has been “redlined” by supermarkets based on race and class (Eisenhauer 2001). While the broader alternative food movement recognizes that redlining and income barriers are an issue, the broader movement has underestimated these obstacles, preferring education as a site for reform (Alkon et al 2013; see Anguelovski 2015).

In contrast to Pollan’s critique urging middle-income Americans to prioritize their food choices, PNV participants are aware of the burden of low-income and multiple jobs as barriers to creating home-cooked meals:

I have been working for fourteen hours just to be able to afford this ninety-nine-cent head of lettuce; I got to get the hell out of here and go home before I fall over and fall asleep on the freeway. You know? And that is just it. People are worked to death, because they are trying to keep up, because nothing pays well—people are worn-out, under-paid, and do not have the ability to do the due diligence, because they are too stressed, too burnt out, and they just want to grab something and go. And, so, it is hard to have any kind of resentment for the people who go for that convenience thing.¹²⁶

The above quote calls attention to the ways that low-income people struggle to both earn a living and eat well. For those underemployed and underpaid, the price of healthy food is an obstacle (Alkon and Mares 2012). On the other hand, one must question where resentment from the mainstream comes from? The “right way” of eating has emerged in neoliberal public discourse as a status, and stigmatization follows. In this discourse, low-income people are blamed for not eating properly, suggesting they “don’t care” about what they are eating (Alkon et al. 2013). Quite the contrary, research shows plenty of

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

care is given towards eating (2013). However, this empathetic critique also points to the impracticality of morality based claims about the right way to eat when economic factors are significant barriers for dietary patterns (Slocum 2007). In this way, Pollan's wording is a double-standard: perhaps everyone would like to eat well, but only some can.

Teaching Food Knowledge

Teaching knowledge about food is an important task for PNV. It is also one they take seriously as they too, believe that students of color are not given the information they need to make healthier food choices. However what marks this difference is that education is coming from the community of black educators themselves, and not outsiders of the community (Guthman 2008b; 2008c).¹²⁷ As depicted below, PNV leaders are also very keenly aware of how blaming the victim works in food politics. One of the leaders of the project works with youths who have been in the criminal justice system who have chosen urban agriculture as a project they would like to get involved with.

We have been working with anywhere from three to seventeen students on a weekly basis — doing some in-class things about the environment — getting mad about the Fast Food Nation, and this kind of thing. Making them read labels. The next day, we go out and dig irrigation ditches and make compost...And I think that is our role; that is really trying to make it multi-ethnic, inter-disciplinarian, academic.¹²⁸

Here, knowledge and information is taught by PNV, who advocate for a critical race and class analysis of food justice, as well as the incorporation of multi-culturalism. What they

¹²⁷ As noted by one of the PNV leaders, they are weary about researchers who study their work but do not give back to the community.

¹²⁸ Robert Tambuzi, PNV public meeting May 23, 2012 at PNV office in SESD.

emphasize is everyone coming to work together to share knowledge. The garden site became a public educational site where gardeners display their artichokes, corn, mustard greens, kale, peas, and tomatoes. Families often stop by, and children learn what kinds of vegetables are being grown. Plots were not only used by individuals, but also by group homes and counseling centers. These groups also brought people to the site to learn and make use of the garden. I also participated in building the garden. However, PNV is clear in controlling the process:

We too do not want people coming into our neighborhood and telling us what to do. But we will work with folks, on the agenda of changing the food landscape in southeastern San Diego.¹²⁹

Like D-Town farmers, control over this process is important to PNV as they do not want outsiders redefining or watering down the project's explicit aim to advocate on behalf of African American and Latino residents.

In another example of the ways in which PNV is correcting the mainstream view of alternative food movements by including narratives from the margins is through their course "redesigning farming" that is taught at the local San Diego Community College District in their neighborhood. As defined in the course catalog:

Explore the idea of growing and distributing fresh food in urban communities. This course will examine the barriers between the agricultural past and urban present for people of color and will look at the contributions of resistance movements which have given rise to cooperative farming and unionized labor in marginalized populations. Additionally, we will explore the role of technology in growing food safely in urban environments. This course will explore the need to re-

¹²⁹ Diane Moss, May 4, 2012, at public California Pan Ethnic Health Network Conference, San Diego.

brand farming / urban agriculture as a new opportunity to contribute to healthy living spaces in urban neighborhoods.¹³⁰

Importantly, what this course description highlights is the narrative of people of color and resistance movements that has been absent within the wider alternative food movement in the previous decades. That this discourse is taught by insiders within the community from the margins, challenges the current alternative food movement discourse as “for whites only.” In this way, while PNV does make use of alternative food movement discourse that is critical of the industrial food system, when it comes to the narrative of inequality PNV is explicitly intervening in the construction of that narrative. Thus, this renders PNV more inclusive as a food justice project.

Critical of Elite Food Procurement

Participants in PNV were also aware of the elitism within alternative food institutions, and are critical of the purity that is cast. Several farm-to-table restaurants emerged during my fieldwork. These are restaurants that source locally grown, often organic produce, and advertise the farm on their menus. Additionally, farm-to-table has been explored with meat as well where whole animal carcasses are brought in the restaurant for butchering, usually in the basement, and all aspects of the animal are used. While I visited two of them in San Diego, the platters were small and overpriced, although the food tasted delicious. These restaurants locate in wealthy areas (Little Italy in downtown), and in urban centers that cater to expensive clientele. While many in the

¹³⁰ “Redesigning Farming.” 2012. San Diego Continuing Education Course Catalog. Retrieved July 11, 2017 (https://sdccd.augusoft.net/index.cfm?method=course.courseinformation&int_course_id=662&int_category_id=2&int_sub_category_id=74&int_catalog_id=0).

movement were excited about the prospect of having local sourcing, opposed to the corporate sourcing of Sodexo, many were disappointed that the cost of food was so high. This cast an air of elitism about these potential projects, as they were exclusive.

Paul G. argued:

And right now, the concept is a bit – I think it is still too novel. So, again, there is a bit of an elitist, kind of, “I eat Farm to Table.” It is like the, “I don’t eat anything that casts a shadow.”¹³¹

In our conversation Paul G. was excited about local sourcing, but dismayed by the potential elitism. Leaders in PNV were also aware of how diet and morality intersect, and work in ways to exclude people and claim moral superiority. As Paul G. says,

And I am sure that you have already heard it from John Tanz. The more restrictive diet choices seem to have this air of elitism because they have chosen to eat this super restrictive [diet], because of moral, health, ethical, reasons you know. It is like you are just an abomination and a horrible monster if you could eat something that can look back at you, or something like that.¹³²

In this way, PNV participants are aware of how certain alternative food practices are viewed as elitist and cast a moral “shadow” for others. As Guthman and DuPuis (2006) illustrate, neoliberalism works through the mode of self-discipline, and those who appear to have refined self-discipline (read: skinny bodies) are assumed to practice purity in food habits.

Inclusion of African American Knowledge and Traditions

¹³¹ Paul Gresock. Interview. May 5, 2012. San Diego.

¹³² Ibid.

In conversations with PNV leaders and in discussions at the community garden and farmers market, it was remarked that African Americans have a different experience to food by way of slavery, and culinary foods and practices that are different from the alternative universal. This different pathway has marked their movement from the South to the North to look for factory opportunities as a way out of agriculture. While some stayed in the South blacks nonetheless faced harsh conditions of credit denial, sharecropping practices that exploited their labor, and led to white takeover of lands (Green, J. Eleanor Green, and Anna M. Kleiner 2011).

This pathway out of slavery is remarked about by one of my respondents, John. His family took the trajectory from the South to Cairo, IL to Chicago, IL then finally to San Diego, California. He described the experience of his family as wanting to escape the slave labor conditions in the agricultural South by jettisoning agricultural ways of living and starting afresh by taking on factory work. He described it as such,

African Americans have negative associations with the land, like slavery and oppression, and “they ran like hell to get away from it when they could.” Offering his biography, John said he was raised in Cairo Illinois, and his family moved to Chicago to work in the meat processing plants.¹³³

Negative associations with the land stemming from slavery and oppression are also what Diane Moss refers to. I asked Diane about what she thought about the idea of eating healthy as a “white” practice. Diane responded to this as a case of people not recognizing their history. Those critical of the hegemonic white narrative in the food movement argue, whiteness is hidden and whites act as if they lack race, culture, or ethnicity

¹³³ John Tanz. Interview. May 10, 2012 at PNV public market.

(Guthman 2008b; Slocum 2006). For Diane, getting back into farming is getting back into a practice in a new time when dignity by African Americans in agriculture can be obtained:

So, if in fact African Americans for a long time gained their living from agriculture kind of things and stepped away from that because of the racial oppression if you will, he [Will Allen] says, I still had it in my bones to do farming, but I did not want to do it in a way that was discriminatory or unfair, there was no equity in it. When he came back to it in 1993, he says, I still want to grow things and find a better way, and a way that people can make money, and I also want to find a way that people can eat healthy like we used to.¹³⁴

Importantly, equity is the way in which farming is approached in a food justice project, opposed to the negative associations of slavery and oppression. Using Will Allen to politely answer my question, Diane also hopes to return to farming like her parents did: to nurture bodies, and the land, as well as sustain the family budget. Eating in this way is viewed as “healthy.”

And if I even reflect on my own upbringing, we did not have a lot of money but we never were hungry, and we ate healthy because we did not eat at fast food restaurants. That cost money. Dad would grow things in the yard, we ate a lot of beans, every week various kinds, smaller portions of meat because meat costs, so I do not know where it would be white, just to go back into our history, because if I just did not have a lot of cash, you ate what you grew.¹³⁵

As Moss said, access to land was important to subsidize the family budget and it was also healthier in that non-processed foods were eaten. In addition to growing foods her family grew, she is also reclaiming African American heritage foods. As she described, she is growing black-eyed peas, a food originally from Africa. Black eyed peas made their way

¹³⁴ Diane Moss, Interview. May 10, 2012 at PNV public market.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

to the US via slavery, and have been incorporated into Southern traditional cooking (Kein 2000). By reclaiming African American heritage foods, PNV expands the hegemonic discourse of alternative food beyond the confines of white privilege.

In sum, this section reveals the ways that PNV corrects and adds to the alternative food movement discourse. Like mainstream participants, the industrial food system poses problems at the site of production and consumption. However, by examining the structures of inequality that shape access to land, retail, and labor, PNV can challenge the privilege of whiteness that is said to dominate the alternative food system. Importantly, sovereignty over the process of food knowledge and nutrition allows a culturally and racially sensitive approach. Such approaches have been absent in the mainstream alternative food movement, and knowledge claims about what *ought* to be eaten have been used pejoratively by whites to justify discrimination, as in the case of public discourse outlined in the beginning of the chapter.

AT THE BORDER: CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

This farm, I don't feel like I have possession of the land, it is stewarding the land and husbanding the land. We've done it in a poor way, here in San Diego...And no matter what happens I have always wanted to leave the land better off than when I received it. And that's what I think we're working on here, and that's what I think is happening in San Diego. And right now, this educational farm here is important because there isn't another place like this in San Diego where you can bring kids down; it's an experience where kids can come and work the land, and where people can connect with their farmer and be farmers. (Misha Johnson, SDRS farmer 2012)¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Misha Johnson, Interview. May 14, 2012. San Diego.

Misha Johnson captures the sense of responsibility that SDRS takes seriously with respect to sustainability: leaving the planet better off than when we received it. An ethic of care pervades this sense of responsibility that will be dissected throughout this section.

One of the advantages to the alternative food critique is the recognition of structural causes of environmental degradation caused by the industrial food system. The alternative food movement uses sustainable agricultural knowledge to make the claims that industrial food production harm both human health and endanger the earth's ecology. Armed with both master gardeners and sustainable food practitioners, SDRS benefits from these resources and contributes to the knowledge production about sustainability. First, I begin with an analysis of the ways that SDRS contributes to sustainable food knowledge identified with the alternative food movement. Afterwards, I identify the ways in which SDRS contributes to the white imaginary expressed by critics of the hegemonic alternative food movement.

Criticizing Industrial Agriculture, Permaculture Philosophy

Like PNV, SDRS is also critical of the industrial food system, both in terms of production and consumption. However, SDRS leans more towards the production side, as their roots are engaged with the practice of farming itself.

SDRS is engaged in creating knowledge about farming that is “sustainable.” But what exactly does that mean from their perspective? One of the participants of SDRS,

Paul Maschka,¹³⁷ encapsulates the engine behind their alternative food project. When prompted about how he became part of the local food project, he discussed his alienation at an early age from community colleges. In the 1980s and 1990s both the community college system and the extension system did not prioritize growing food or organics. San Diego is invested in growing ornamentals (non-edible plants), and agricultural knowledge is geared towards quick fixes.¹³⁸

I call it the “silver bullet society.” We want quick results, we want to fix fast, with a simple thing, and of course the [agribusiness] industry they are really going to take advantage of that. So, we have everything you need right here, the big hardware stores the little hardware stores, the nurseries. You have about any kind of chemical to any kind of problem.¹³⁹

In contrast to the silver-bullet approach, Paul M. develops sustainable agriculture based on no chemicals, thus engendering experimentation. Other practices that challenge the agribusiness approach to industrial agriculture are that of sustainable agricultural practice. SDRS resists the industrial practice of monocropping, where one item (usually soy, corn, and wheat) is produced in rows in succession for miles with the same genetic diversity, and spatial organization for heavy machine extraction (Alkon and Agyeman 2011).

Instead of practicing industrial agriculture, SDRS practices permaculture. In interviews and at farmer tours and events SDRS highlighted the permaculture philosophy

¹³⁷ Paul Maschka is an expert in his field, and has written curriculum for San Diego City Colleges, and is well known among the practitioners of sustainable agriculture.

¹³⁸ In an interview with the farm bureau (April 17, 2012), it was discussed that San Diego’s landscape is not amenable to mechanization because of the lack of uniformity in land. The Central Valley in California has become home to industrial production in California, in part because the landscape is flat and amenable for machinery. San Diego has geared its agricultural sector towards ornamentals, like flowers, and landscaping, and only recently has advertised its small organic farmers.

¹³⁹ Paul Maschka, Interview. May 16, 2012. San Diego.

that guides food production. Below two SDRS participants characterize the philosophy of permaculture that animates their sustainable practices:

Misha: The idea that we embrace here is permaculture, which understands learning your environment and doing your agriculture in harmony with that.¹⁴⁰

Bob: Permaculture philosophically, it means: care for the earth, care for each other, and fair share. One cares for the people, cares for the earth, and gives a fair share for everyone.¹⁴¹

In contrast to the industrial agricultural philosophy of producing large quantities of food as cheaply as possible while externalizing the environmental and human costs of said production (Bell and Carolan 2012), permaculture emphasizes “harmony” and “care” that recaptures Misha Johnson’s ethic of sustainability in the beginning of the section. This ethics of care is a philosophy that is also about redistribution in that a fair share is provided for everyone. Thus, the practice of permaculture is that of farming in a very different way than the industrial mode of production. As Misha describes at the farm tour,

For us, we are doing polyculture, meaning, we are growing more than one [crop]; it might be two; it could be many more within a given row, or a given space in our field. So, that extends to our vegetable beds. It might also extend to our fruit trees, where we do what is called guilds, where we plant other herbs, or beneficial plants beneath them.¹⁴²

By resisting monocropping, SDRS is supporting an alternative mode of production as well as knowledge base. The work of “beneficial plants” is part of the no chemical fixes earlier described by Paul Maschka. Instead, by viewing all nature as purposeful and

¹⁴⁰ Misha Johnson, Interview. May 15, 2012. San Diego.

¹⁴¹ Bob Greenameyer, Interview. June 7, 2012. San Diego. Greenameyer is staff at SDRS and is the President and co-director of Victory Gardens San Diego. (<http://www.victorygardenssandiego.com/>)

¹⁴² Misha Johnson, April 28, 2012 at SDRS farm tour in San Diego.

useful farming practice becomes a way of pairing different crops with each other, as

Misha depicts during a farm tour:

And if you see the fava beans – we’ve under-sown them with clovers, which are the little green plants here. Clovers are not weeds; they are purposeful. Just like fava beans, clovers are legumes where they have a symbiotic relationship with what is called, rhizobium bacteria. And the bacteria take nitrogen from the air – as you guys may know, eighty percent of our air is nitrogen – and, it is very difficult usually for plants to get that quantity of nitrogen that they need to grow properly. So, having a beneficial relationship with the clovers, where they are adding nitrogen into the soils for the plants, is good. And it is what we call a cover crop, where they are adding organic matter and nutrients to the soils to help improve them. Like I said, we need to improve these soils because they are not so good right now.¹⁴³

The above quote captures two ways that work against the dominant industrial food system. The first is that of identification of “weeds.” In industrial agriculture, grasses or plants that emerge in the monocrop that may compete with the dominant crop of corn or soy are seen as useless and unproductive as they may overtake the monocrop, reducing the productivity of the individual plant and overall harvest. However, for SDRS part of redefining knowledge is to re-assert the value of “weeds” thus challenging the dominant ethic that justifies Roundup and weed-killers prominent in agriculture and also suburban lawns and gardens (Shiva 2015). The second is that of pairing together plants that can thrive by co-production, or working together whereby the soil is overall improved. Going back to leaving the land better than it was when received, SDRS is countering both

¹⁴³ Misha Johnson, April 28, 2012 at SDRS farm tour in San Diego.

industrial production practices that leave the earth depleted over time for future generations, thus building on the alternative food movement knowledge.

Creating New Knowledge and Recovering Past Knowledges

For SDRS, their organization seeks to cultivate new knowledges on sustainable farming, as well as re-appropriating ones they find that “work.” What is unique about SDRS is that their sustainable knowledge practices are linked intimately with “place” in a material and cultural sense (Lefebvre 1991). According to Misha, for San Diego to be sustainable, it will need new kinds of thinking in a broader context:

Long term, it needs a complete rethinking of what San Diego is, as a place. Traditionally in this area, Native Americans did not practice agriculture. They were horticulturalists. They fished, ate acorns, lots of wild herbs and seeds and game from around here. But they did not do row crops, they did not do corn and beans, and things that we think of as Native Southwest crops. That was more down in Mexico, or over in New Mexico, or Arizona, and those regions today. But that doesn't mean that we can't continue to do agriculture but we need to find a way that works, and to find crops that are appropriate for the different seasons that are around here.

Here Misha recalls knowledge of the past, and recognizes that this knowledge can be brought into sustainable farming knowledge in San Diego. SDRS' mission is to cultivate knowledge via experimentation that works for San Diego's unique position. SDRS casts an alternative knowledge as one that unlike industrial agriculture that is made or for *any* place, and instead needs engaging San Diego's ecology. In this way, SDRS not only challenges industrial production and the knowledge upon which it rests, but also works to

build new techniques and knowledge that is unique to San Diego. As described by Misha during one of the farming tours at SDRS:

Part of our experience down here is just learning what works. We do a lot of experimentation. Ideally, we just want to let everything be open, and free-flowing, but we need to be aware that we do have other animals that we are negotiating with on our land; working with the wild lands they are just adjacent to us, and trying to do so in the friendliest manner possible – we don't use any poison or anything like that on our property.¹⁴⁴

This experimentation is different than that of a laboratory setting used by scientists that produce genetic engineering in a closed space such as that of a university or corporate lab. In addition, the experimentation does not produce agriculture that needs or needs chemicals, and they actively negotiate with animals that are part of the ecosystem there.

Part of their experimentation is to recover technologies from the past that have been used or can be adapted to San Diego. Part of their justification for farming in a river valley is because, as Mel Lions argues, “It is the most ancient of permaculture models. You farm where the rivers are, how could you farm in Egypt? You live off the Nile.” Another practice SDRS seeks to use is that of “dry land farming.”

Well that is also why we wanted to be in a river valley. Because there is an old farming technique called “dry land farming,” where you plant at the right time of year in the wet season, and because we're in the river valley, there is a high-water table. If you do this right, plant at the right time, the plants find the water table, and the roots grow deeper and deeper into the water table.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Misha Johnson, April 28, 2012 at SDRS farm tour in San Diego.

¹⁴⁵ Mel Lions, Interview. May 9, 2012. San Diego.

SDRS encountered this technique that in San Diego was widely used in Mission Valley.

Mel describes how they stumbled upon the “dry farming” technique:

We stumbled on it by accident. We used the leftovers from the making wreathes on a couple of small fields for mulch, and we did it just the right time. The wheat germinated out of the wheat heads, and it was enough that we had a small field of wheat. So, we let the wheat come up and we did not water it. The rain grew it, and it got tall, we harvested it, and it dried out. We still have it today. We are growing it on as a seed bank, so we started doing barley, and oats, and amaranth, and sorghum – all dry farmed.¹⁴⁶

SDRS participants are excited to uncover older practices that were successful in San Diego before suburbanization, like the “dry farming” technique, especially in the context of reducing water usage. Interestingly the “dry farming” technique was also practiced by the Spanish conquistadores in Mission Valley, and the settlers one hundred years ago who grew lima beans, barley, and wheat (Lions 2012). Thus, SDRS participants are frustrated by the transformation of the river Mission Valley. It was “sealed” or paved over in the late 1960s, and developed into a consumption center with malls, hotels, and a sports arena (Hogan 2003). Thus, SDRS is re-appropriating this technique on their farm site in hopes to generate more sustainable farming practices, adding to the alternative food movement. They also see these techniques as meaningful resistance to the neoliberal development that has undermined farming in San Diego.

Use of Human and Animal Labor Sustainably

Part of their critique of industrial agriculture is the way in which monocrops make use of machinery to do the work of seeding, fertilizing, and harvesting. In addition,

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

industrial agriculture (and organic as well) is known for backbreaking labor, or stoop labor, that is exploited on both conventional and organic farms (Holmes 2013). For SDRS, in keeping with the philosophy of humans working in harmony with nature, they also make use of labor in strategic ways.

So, we are not only trying to give a model of community that is sustainable but also farming, as naturally as possible trying to adapt to our environment. Trying to use human labor as much as possible; not in terms of using human labor as backbreaking work, but in terms of our minds, and using the skills that we have with our bodies too. And like the chickens and goats that you see out there, they have cleared the ground for us out there, and we move them around every couple of months. They are mowing and they are tilling, everything that we would need gas machinery to do on other farms, but they are doing it for themselves and they are also getting valuable nutrition, that you cannot get from whatever animal feed you buy in the feed store. And they are of course happier too I think. You just let them do what they are doing and you realize they are creating a niche in your ecosystem on your farm.¹⁴⁷

Thus, for SDRS they critique the industrial food system by negating the practice of machinery as much as possible, and exploitative animal and human labor. In keeping with the ethic of creating beneficial plants, animals and humans create a beneficial relationship by working with each other to co-produce the farm. Here they are contributing to the alternative food movement through their sustainable farming techniques.

How Do We Know “good food”?

Key to the alternative movement is not only defining an alternative to industrial food production to farm sustainably, but also creating openings for knowledge about

¹⁴⁷ Misha Johnson, Interview. May 14, 2012.

healthy food. The implicit assumption in the alternative food movement is that food is “good” or “delicious” or “healthy” if it is grown sustainably. SDRS contributes to this sensibility:

All our livestock – not the chicks, because they are not mature enough to go around and be safe – but everybody is free-ranging; everybody is out playing-around during the day. We want to encourage them to live as naturally, and healthfully, and happily as possible. So, we do have some eggs over here, too. We love to eat these eggs – they are just, you know the orange yokes. Really hard shells because they get all the nutrients they need, and uh, it is really; it is good stuff.¹⁴⁸

This captures the sentiment that food produced in a sustainable fashion tastes better, as many foodies would agree. In addition to the process that makes food taste better is also the appeal to variety and uniqueness of each vegetable they produce. For instance, tour guides explain the kinds of food in production, referring to the many varieties, and specifically by name:

Guide: Over here we have some, nice heirloom red romaine lettuces here.

Guide: Down the middle of the row we have planted several varieties of kale, such as lacinato, which is also known as Dinosaur kale. We have red Russian kale, and endive.

Guide: Then over here, in this row, we have radishes, and dill, arugula. And underneath this cloth here we have little carrots...fava beans. We have rows of potatoes. We have a couple of varieties of garlic, and elephant garlic. And, there is some herbs planted in there.¹⁴⁹

As depicted above, the farm tours serve to enlighten visitors about the many kinds of vegetables and varieties that are grown, referring to specialized names. This

¹⁴⁸ Misha Johnson, April 28, 2012 at SDRS farm tour in San Diego.

¹⁴⁹ Anonymous Guides, Wild Willow Farm Tour, April 28, 2012.

practice broadens the knowledge of vegetables to support the idea of biodiversity. That there is more than the generic “garlic,” “lettuce,” or “kale” counters the industrial logic of repeatable, similar, standardized categories. In this way, SDRS shows the many varieties of produce that are possible on a farm, and contributes to the alternative food movement discourse as to naming healthy foods.

Bringing the Social in Sustainable

You have about any kind of chemical to any kind of problem. It has like a pharmacy to cure every ailment that our yard has, so it is not too far away from being like a drug store – but is not going to “cure” – but cover up every symptom in our body and symptoms in our yard, because really the problems that we have in our yards really are just symptoms of an underlying problem, and the underlying problem is just dead soil (Paul Maschka).¹⁵⁰

For participants of SDRS, the soil becomes a metaphor for the body and feeds the connection between environment and society. For Paul M., damaging the soil is akin to damaging the natural body. What obstructs sustainable farming is the quick fix mentalities of what environmental sociologists call the “treadmill of production.” As depicted by Bell and Carolan (2012), to continually grow the economy of consumption, production must continually expand with ever more ecological inputs. As farmers adopt these inputs, such as that of glyphosate (brand: Roundup), production increases but at the cost of decreased nutrition and more resistant bugs (to name a few). To fix these issues, farmers adopt newer technologies that are “quick” in that they allow production to continue and expand. However, on the consumption side humans become sickened by

¹⁵⁰ Paul Maschka, Interview. May 16, 2012. San Diego.

these quick fixes (e.g. diabetes, malnutrition). To deal with the fixes originating in production, the pharmaceutical industry creates their own fix – the “pharmacy” – that plays a role in keeping the feedback loop going. In this way, claiming knowledge to the natural, or ecological, brings the critique of nature and society full circle. The problem of consumption is availability of healthy foods.

Whiteness in SDRS

In this section, I analyze the ways in which SDRS also reproduces whiteness. While they contribute to the alternative food movement discourse by transmitting sustainable knowledge in farm tours and potlucks, as well as by using sustainable practices as the farm, they have nonetheless fallen short of social justice. During farm tours and interviews the history of Native Americans was invoked as a way to revere their stewardship of the land in a harmonious way. However, while appropriating this cultural knowledge and historical past, they did not focus on the ways in which Native Americans were incorporated into the Spanish Missions, killed by conquistadores, and deprived of their land. This is consistent with Slocum’s (2006) analysis of omitting the ways in which harms made it possible for SDRS to have the land in the first place. While not a complete erasure, it is a selective history that nonetheless romanticizes the experience of Native Americans that once inhabited a vast region of California (see Anderson 2005).

In another questionable instance, to mark the first crop grown on the farm, SDRS planted heritage corn. When asked why this variety, Mel responded with, “In this part of

the world in American heritage, corn is life. And this corn is from Chiapas, central Mexico. It is symbolic.” However, while corn may be seen as “life” to evoke ancient Mayan heritage, it selectively omits the narrative of migrants in California (currently many from Mexico) and also from Oaxaca (Minkoff-Zern 2014). This absence is also noted in the conversation about using human and animal labor sustainably. It could well be a spot to include the plight of migrant labor. To not do so depoliticizes the ways in which our contemporary food is picked and processed. This omission can therefore constructively be seen as a missed opportunity to connect the exploitation of people of color to a corporate led food system. However, by not doing so, it can lead to a colorblind interpretation of alternative food knowledge and practices.

In this light, how we know “good food” is noticeably absent of its social and cultural constructions. If one were to walk into SDRS not knowing structural racism and inequality embedded in the food system, one may walk away from SDRS thinking that sustainability is simply about farming ecologically, or buying variety from a grocery store, direct farming, or specialty store. Because Whole Foods and supermarkets have co-opted organics and natural (using identifiers from sustainable agriculture itself), the exclusion of a critical account of food and capitalism potentially recreates injustice by promoting a whitened version of alternative food. Anguelovski’s (2015) account of the seamless alliance between promoters of the alternative food movement and white Whole Foods gentrifiers raises such concerns. What counts as “good food” cannot be separated out from the larger discourse at play in the public debate about who deserves to eat, and who is to blame for unhealthy diets.

CONCLUSION

As alternative food projects, what can PNV and SDRS say to each other? At the heart of both projects is the transformation of land, society, and culture. However, each has a different entry point. For PNV, the entry point is systemic racism and class inequality. For SDRS it is environmental destruction found in harmful farming practices and a complacent suburban culture. What brings them together is reforming urbanization. Both try to create more development via urban gardens and markets and knowledgeable consumers, but their priorities are different.

At the outset of this chapter I asked the question to what extent can these movements lead to an anti-racist politics within the alternative food movement? What led me to this question is the current debate among critics about why the alternative food movement has failed to discuss social justice concerns. This chapter animates this debate by focusing on a marginalized community in Southeastern San Diego and a privileged one at the border. Both are working to inspire progressive social change, and this critique is not an attempt to shut down the movement. However, much can be learned from these two projects with respect to an anti-racist agenda.

Scholars have named whiteness as a problem within the broader movement. PNV attempts not to ignore whiteness and the critiques levied against people of color, but to incorporate it strategically by maintaining control over knowledge and who can educate. In this way, PNV's strategy of non-alienation and redefinition on their own terms can contribute to broadening the narrative of institutional racism and legacy practiced in the corporate controlled food system. However, PNV does not do the work of locating

struggles for farmworkers. That omission can also be alienating, and limits the potential of broader organizing.

SDRS focuses on the environment to contribute to the knowledge of sustainable agriculture, protecting their practices from those who would seek to loosen the philosophical meaning of what counts as natural and sustainable. Given the fluidity with which corporations can use voluntary labeling to co-opt these meanings makes sense as to why SDRS aims to preserve their boundaries (Goodman, David, E. Melanie DuPuis, and Michael K. Goodman, 2012). However, SDRS does so at the risk of contributing to a whitening of alternative food practices, and thus limiting their capacity to align with their allies in Southeastern. Keeping the knowledge privileged does not seed the message for broader social justice concerns.

Neither is perfect in terms of what is omitted from the record of righting agricultural wrongs. However, it can be said that by demonstrating their solutions, they are also omitting the important ways in which migrant labor plays a key role in farming on contemporary and organic farms, thus contributing to a white alternative imaginary.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

But where is my food? [Picture of soul food sign] I live in a community where I can get a semi-automatic weapon quicker than I can get a tomato... The public health issue of violence is connected to the public health issue of diet related diseases. In my community, you can die by the gun or die by the lack of proper food. (LaDonna Redmond, TedxManhattan 2013)¹⁵¹

For the last decade, LaDonna Redmond has inspired food justice movements. As an African American woman living in Chicago with a child that has allergies to peanuts, shellfish, and dairy, her life was presented with obstacles as to how to protect her child. Her neighborhood did not have a healthy food store with options for her son. And she did not want a Wal-Mart either. Like others in her community, she wanted fresh food and embarked on urban agriculture projects. Instead of the two-tiered food system we have today, LaDonna advocates for a single food system that serves everyone. Food that is of nutritional value, cultural value, and economic value is necessary for living a meaningful life. In sociological terms, to eat is to be part of society. To be denied access to food is a symbolic representation of worth; it signals the value that society, states, corporations, and communities place on the meaning of life. To engage in a community of eating is about sustaining one's body, family, and one's dignity.

The purpose of this work was to examine the new forms of activism emerging from the alternative food movement that were discussing broader issues around hunger, poverty, race, and environmental destruction. The alternative food movement is very

¹⁵¹ LaDonna Redmond. 2013. "Food + Justice = Democracy: LaDonna Redmond at TedxManhattan." Retrieved July 11, 2017 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydZfSuz-Hu8>).

broad – ranging from buying fair trade commodities, going to farmers markets, to giving away produce from one’s garden. This shows the traction that alternative food practices have as *alternatives* to supermarkets and the corporate food industry. While this is not new (e.g. Victory Gardens in WWII), systems and social relations have changed, making food salient in innovative ways. However, in contemporary times, there is a stake (not a pun) in food. As LaDonna Redmond noted, the gun kills quickly, but poor food is a slow death.

How did we get to a place where the gun and tomato are on the same playing field? This dissertation discusses this question, whose explanations are broadly institutional racism, the corporatization of food retail, and neoliberalism. Alternative food movements are working within the current mode of neoliberalism strategically to alter hunger, poverty, their neighborhoods, and environmental destruction. Through my discussion I will discuss my findings considering current scholarly debates with respect to the intersection of neoliberalism and alternative food movements.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first part of the dissertation is primarily historical to pinpoint social and institutional structures that shape our current conjuncture of neoliberalism that alternative food movements find themselves in. Social phenomena like food deserts do not emerge outside of the social or of historical forces, therefore to deepen current policy literature on food deserts I delve into the question of what social and institutional forces give rise to spaces that are affluent and food secure on the one hand, but low-income and food

insecure on the other. Using an understudied area that is well known for its affluence, Southern California, I embarked on a study on food insecurity in San Diego, and connected to PNV and SDRS. While doing my fieldwork, it became clear to me that Southeastern San Diego is a space of exclusion, one that has been neglected by the City of San Diego. I therefore started to research how Southeastern San Diego as a community of color became a space marked by low-incomes, disinvestment in public goods and schools, and food insecurity. Neighborhoods north of Southeastern San Diego or downtown are not marked by these same social conditions.

Chapter two investigates the racial history of San Diego using Bonilla-Silva's "racialized social systems" theory (1996). I found that from the very beginning of San Diego's history a distinct racial hierarchy was formed and this shaped access to resources. A person of color was paid poor wages, worked the most difficult and dangerous jobs, faced discrimination, squalor living conditions, and could be blamed for being poor. Such was the case for African Americans, Latinos, Filipinos, and the Japanese. From the late 1880s until the Civil Rights Movement, white wealth developed as the city advanced racialized social policies that created white affluent suburbs and wealth accumulation. Racial zoning by the city and racial covenants by private citizens shaped where people of color could live early on. Later it was the Home Owners Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration that created more affluent white suburban communities at the expense of people of color. In the Post War Era, conditions of neglect continued by redesigning the city for blight abatement and redevelopment. Thus, Barrio Logan and Southeastern San Diego were subjected to freeway development,

as the exodus of supermarkets left the area for the suburbs. Thus, San Diego's racialized social system created the segregated area of Southeastern San Diego, and through neoliberalism has continued to roll back public goods. Chapter two reveals the ways in which race is integral to the understanding of food inequality, as well as resource inequality in the United States.

Another key player in the making of food deserts is the retail food industry itself. While supermarkets are envisioned as a policy fix to communities without them, the history of supermarket development tells a unique story that explains why certain communities have many while some may only have one, or none. For this answer, we have to dive into the complexities of managerial capitalism and the ways in which corporations of scale intensified their capital, knowledge, and management to use for their profit ends. Thus, this chapter charts the rise of the corporate supermarket in the ashes of mom and pop neighborhood stores, and the inability of independents to compete with capital to modernize their stores. Rather than a modernization narrative, we see the rise of the corporate supermarket chain as the outcome of struggles over capital and labor, the meaning of American entrepreneurship, and the Federal subsidization of suburbia as a key to its success. By the time Americans invested in suburban development, vehicle access, public investments in roads, larger homes, and convenience foods trapped mainstream consumers into lifestyles in lockstep with supermarkets. However, because of the interlocking patterns between food consumption and suburbia, corporate supermarket retail could define their trade areas that suit their profit needs, thus

closing stores in low-income neighborhoods at will without profit loss. In this respect supermarkets claim to serve the public but are not regulated to guarantee access.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

With this backdrop in institutional racism and corporate food retail we begin to witness the effects of neoliberalism on communities across the U.S. beginning in the 1980s. As scholarship on neoliberalism argues, the state is “rolled back” by cutting social services, privatizing formerly public goods, and de-regulating markets, including agriculture (Peck and Tickell 2007). The program of neoliberalism scapegoated “black welfare queens” to push through cut backs whites would refuse, while creating a culture of black despire (Spence 2011). Inequality rapidly emerged as income supports were dropped, people were deinstitutionalized (made homeless), and wages stayed stagnant. Hunger skyrocketed (Poppendieck 1998). Filling in these gaps is the next historical aspect of Peck and Tickell’s theory of neoliberalism (2007): the roll-out.

This is where scholarship on neoliberalism and alternative food movements intersect. Scholars are divided about alternative food movements. First, they emerge during an era of neoliberalism when the state supports rolling out markets. Markets as solutions to redistribution is the heart and soul of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism relies on redefining the public to a form of individual consumerism, where goods bought in the marketplace stand in for votes and assert consumers as regulators. If consumers buy organic spinach and conventional spinach goes out of business, then consumers oversee regulation. Thus, the state refuses its command and control function to regulate all

agriculture sustainably to prioritize markets instead. Another aspect that scholars are concerned about is the very internalization of state responsibility, such as overseeing your own capital and cultivating that capital as if there were no public or anything outside of capital investments. Thus, people turning inward, self-responsible, isolationist, and self-interested concerns critical scholars who see reaching out and engaging in social movements as key to thwarting neoliberalism. And finally, the last critique of neoliberalism and alternative food movement is the potential to reinvent racism. Because the alternative food movement is primarily white and affluent, the expertise that defined the alternative food movement is whitened. Thus, the concern is that alternative food movements will reproduce blaming the victim for not enjoying kale, without seeing how food production itself is racialized and dependent on indigenous cultures. That said, will these alternative food movements simply reproduce the conditions needed for neoliberalism to continue? With these critiques in mind, these are my findings.

FINDINGS

Project New Village

Project New Village engages with neoliberalism. As part of the neoliberal roll out, PNV is an African American led organization that seeks to change Southeastern San Diego for those that live there. With respect to creating alternative markets, PNV enrolls in the alternative food movement and encourages voluntary labeling. PNV also acts as a community center if you will, to aid with paperwork for potential farmers in the neighborhood, and link people to necessary health services. PNV also has goals for a

local food system that transforms Southeastern San Diego from a space of abandoned lots to working gardens that supply farmers and the community with healthy food. PNV supports education, thus doing the work for those in their community who are veterans or mentally ill. PNV also works with juveniles who have faced poverty, gangs, and hardships in family and in school. Their plans are not simply producing food, but also creating community in their spaces. That means having tribute days, potlucks, and readers groups to bring people together around issues they face such as city disinvestment, or even a book club. Given their attention to multicultural issues, and growing in a community, it is hard to imagine PNV as a handmaid of neoliberalism. They have experienced the effects of neoliberalism, and use their status as creating markets to intervene in that process, but they do produce community driven, caring people that are intervening in the problems produced by neoliberalism such as law enforcement. In this sense, PNV is a progressive food justice movement that uses neoliberalism strategically and is a political force.

San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project

San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project engages with neoliberalism as well, although on different terms. With respect to the farming aspect, this organization is a frontrunner in moving sustainable agriculture forward through regenerative farming. SDRS opens their farm up as a lab for this practice, allowing people “open source” coding for farming techniques. By supporting education not available through extension programs, they are going around existing knowledge production systems in agriculture.

With respect to food, they are unique in resisting organic certification. Their relationship with voluntary labeling is not positive. In fact, they view organic labeling as a swindle that misplaces the good intentions of well-meaning consumers (Mel Lions 2017).¹⁵² Thus, they refuse to certify. In addition, in resistance to the capitalist commodification of food, SDRS also prefers people come to their farm and take part in labor. In this way, SDRS is not solidly part of creating self-interested brand oriented consumers. By luring potential neoliberal consumers to their farm, they may be converting them.

On the other hand, SDRS does assert the characteristics of a “whitened” alternative food movement. Lack of discussion about migrant labor and appropriation of indigenous culture is problematic without recognition. On farm tours, these points that would make SDRS more critical of the food system were obscured by concerns over environmental purity.

COMPARISON

The history of SDRS is very different than PNV and thus they use neoliberalism differently. SDRS has taken advantage of the alternative food movement and the spirit of Michael Pollan that circulated in 2006. They have accumulated support and capital through public donations from white affluent organizations, placing them on a solid footing supporting sustainable farming in San Diego. This coincides with more concern

¹⁵² Mel Lions email communication, June 28, 2017.

for the environment and the ways in which San Diego has allowed sprawl to continue. PNV has the history of institutional racism and neoliberal roll backs, which makes their experience with neoliberalism strategic in a unique way. Because of the legacy of institutional racism, state support is necessary for their mission. In a neoliberal context, they must use diplomacy to be heard and translate social action into social justice. However, PNV is doing this already by enlisting the City Council to events, involving the Department of Agriculture, Weights, and Measures, networking with city colleges, and hosting the annual Cesar Chávez celebration.

CRITIQUE

While both organizations do community work, there are also critiques. First, both PNV and SDRS obscure migrant laborers, which is problematic in San Diego. That many migrant laborers cross the border to work in the fields – both organic and conventional— is an omission that could be positively harnessed for social justice purposes. Second, SDRS is a popular organization, however is exclusive in the sense one must travel there. While Mel argued it is an “open source” code for regenerative farming, it nonetheless means that one must have access to the site.¹⁵³ Nonetheless, these can be overcome by altering programming, which these organizations are open to and do very quickly.

LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

¹⁵³ Mel Lions email communication, June 28, 2017.

There are several limitations in my research that I would like to draw attention to. It would be helpful to have access to consumers that not only went to farmers markets but also supermarkets or other retailers. This would be instructive in terms of how a consumer society negotiates between a lifestyle of alternatives and conventional forms of participation. Taking the research further into a focus group could also be helpful to gauge the way that consumers shopping patterns are interlinked with infrastructures of convenience.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Because the divide between scholarship around neoliberalism and alternative food movement is productive, future research could consider the ways in which the local work here can translate into state command and control regulation and in what ways this could happen. In addition, there are movements that identify with institutional racism and want to be understanding about the issue. If they are the harbingers of change, we must seek to find ways in which food sovereignty and food justice links up. As the global food system is made such through its linkages, a broad social movement will be necessary to fight transnational systems.

Lastly, an understanding of the ways in which gender impacts alternative food movements would also be instructive. As care work is gendered more research could be done with respect to the role that women play. Is it primarily women advocating for changing consumption patterns? Is it mostly women who are taking part in urban

farming, or community gardening? What does this say about neoliberalism and the prospect for social change?

Finally, more research into progressive alternative food movements is needed to understand how linkages can be made from the local level of institutional racism to the global level of trade deals. This could take alternative food movements in a direction that challenges the neoliberal food regime that creates plenty for some and exclusions for many.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, LaDonna's point about how the tomato and the gun were on the same footing is the challenge of alternative food movements today. Deprivation is not simply an American phenomenon, but it is happening around the globe in communities that harvest palm oil, on fishing boats, and in war torn areas like Syria. To echo LaDonna, there is one food system. It is not food per se, but it is the social relations around food and the ways that states, international trade deals, and domestic policies intersect. Neoliberalism opens local action, and the hope is that it gives us momentum to take us global.

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APPENDIX

IRB APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA - CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research
Institutional Review Board
528 East Green Street
Suite 203
Champaign, IL 61820



March 16, 2011

Zsuzsa Gille
Sociology
56 Computing Applications Bldg
605 E Springfield Ave
M/C 454

RE: *Sustainability in the Global Food Chain*
IRB Protocol Number: 11370

Dear Zsuzsa:

This letter authorizes the use of human subjects in your project entitled *Sustainability in the Global Food Chain*. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved, by expedited review, the protocol as described in your IRB-1 application. The expiration date for IRB Protocol Number 11370, is 03/13/2012. The risk designation applied to your project is *no more than minimal risk*. Certification of approval is available upon request.

Copies of the enclosed date-stamped consent forms must be used in obtaining informed consent. If there is a need to revise or alter the consent form(s), please submit the revised form(s) for IRB review, approval, and date-stamping prior to use.

Under applicable regulations, no changes to procedures involving human subjects may be made without prior IRB review and approval. The regulations also require that you promptly notify the IRB of any problems involving human subjects, including unanticipated side effects, adverse reactions, and any injuries or complications that arise during the project.

If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me or the IRB Office, or visit our Web site at <http://www.irb.illinois.edu>.

Sincerely,

Sue Keehn, Director, Institutional Review Board

Enclosures

c: Rebecca Gresh