

THE GREEN GLITCH: PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INCLUSIVITY AT MEMPHIS FARMERS MARKETS

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Downtown Farmers Market



Cooper Young Farmers Market

WHY FARMERS MARKETS?

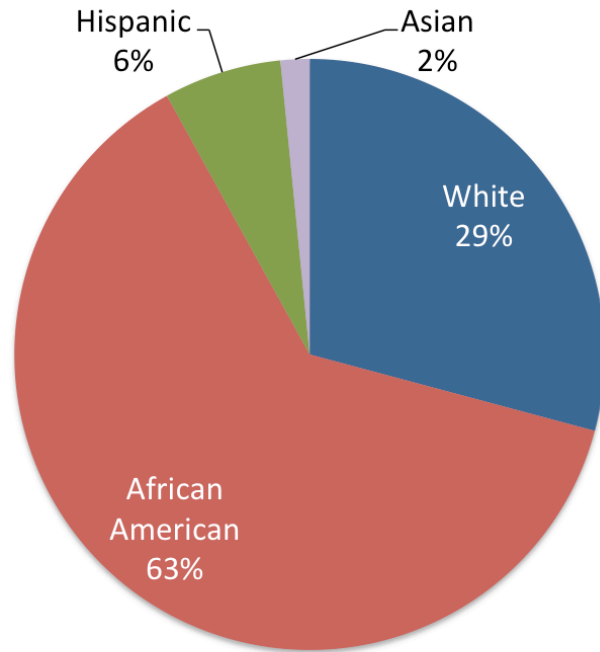
- **Provided Material Culture**
 - Allows localized food products and to be consistently visible in a public space
- **Builds Organizations/Enterprises**
 - Encourages and empowers producer enterprise diversification
- **Develops Knowledge and Skills**
 - Incubates small business, particularly food-based
- **Supports Social Relations/Networks**
 - Bolsters spaces where economic and social interactions are intertwined



Overton Park Farmers Market

MEMPHIS AND MARKET DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

2010 Memphis Population
Census Data



Overton Park Farmers Market

MEMPHIS FARMERS MARKETS



- Evergreen Community
- Downtown
- Cooper Young
- Botanical Gardens

Ethnographic Semi-Structured Interviews

(V = Vendors, P = Patrons)

30 Evergreen: 8 V – 22 P

45 Downtown: 21 V – 24 P

41 Cooper Young: 16 V – 25 P

42 Botanical Gardens: 16 V – 26 P

THE ECONOMICS AND MATERIAL CULTURE OF FARMERS MARKETS IN MEMPHIS

Vendor interest in monetary gain



Cooper Young Farmers Market

“Yeah it’s [current role of farmers markets in Memphis] economically inefficient; it’s just.. it can easily be a waste of a farmers time. If there... if you’re not making sure that there’s enough... consumer demand showing up. If a farmer were to, for example, pay someone to be at the market all day, do the math on that and it’s like 150 dollars a day.. so you have to make at least 150 dollars for it to make sense, to break even for it to not be a loss. So you gotta do.. you know you gotta do much more than that to be worth your time.” (Vendor – Cooper Young)

THE ECONOMICS AND MATERIAL CULTURE OF FARMERS MARKETS IN MEMPHIS CONTINUED

“I’m not so sure that people that cannot afford to shop at farmers markets ought to be shopping here. Typically the food is more expensive than it would be in different venues. So I’m fairly conservative – the whole idea that people... somebody subsidizing somebody and anybody else’s food is inefficient to me. **I don’t want to buy food for anybody else; I don’t want anybody else buying food for me.** If I were very hungry, which I have been in my life, I wouldn’t be buying artisan cheese, I’d be buying beans and rice.” (Patron – Downtown)



Downtown Farmers Market

BUILDING OF ENTERPRISE AND SNAP/EBT

Negative narratives tied to the implementation of the
food subsidy program

“Yes! We had a... I don’t know if you’ve talked to anybody, the state changed the rules a couple years back and we had a big hoohaw here cause a zillion people showed up that we didn’t know were going to show up and **in Memphis there is a lot of race-baiting and there were a lot of African Americans. Not because they’re African Americans but because that’s the poor community in Memphis, TN.** But it looked really bad because we had all these people segregated essentially to make way so they wouldn’t fall out on the ground. And it was a bad scene, but we’ve definitely integrated that better. Truly, so that people aren’t pointed out as having vouchers, which is really appreciated. But I think it’s been very successful. And I sometimes take SNAP though I can’t take a lot of that stuff because it’s just for vegetables and things, but yeah it’s a big part of it. **I wish we had more because it’s pretty NPR... You know, white crowd. And downtown we do get some diversity, but it’s not... It’s a little cliché.** And I’m right there in it.” (Vendor – Downtown)

BUILDING OF ENTERPRISE AND SNAP/EBT CONTINUED

“It doesn’t affect us because... we were at the Church Health one, and we saw people—60 people—in a line to buy vegetables, but, again, none of them bought anything from us. So that... we don’t... those markets, **we don’t benefit from at all.** In Whitehaven, same thing. **There were huge amounts of people, but they don’t have any money because, I mean, that’s why they’re using the SNAP,** so, for us, I won’t say we avoid those markets cause we’re at both of them, but it’s not a benefit at all.” (Vendor –Evergreen Community)

“I would be completely theorizing on this... but Downtown is . . . their prices, depending on what vendor you go to, tend to be more expensive than this one. And I think.. I’m not sure.. but **I think if they actually advertised that they accepted EBT, it would scare away some of their umm.. more snobbish customers that have more money.** It’s like Whole Foods; they accept EBT but you won’t find a sign that says that anywhere on their building.” (Patron – Cooper Young)

Vendor and Patron concerns for economic benefits



Evergreen Community Farmers Market

BUILDING OF ENTERPRISE AND SNAP/EBT CONTINUED

“I don’t think they [people who qualify for SNAP/EBT] would choose to start at the farmers market because the transportation infrastructure here in Memphis is lacking [...] and part of it is economics, right? **You’re not going to set up in a place where people aren’t going to 1) appreciate the positive effects of the produce and 2) have the money to spend on what the farmer is going to charge for the produce at a farmers market.** You have no economies of scale. So you’re lacking the economic benefit to the folks who you’re trying to serve. So they’re going to be better served by CashSaver or something like that where their money goes farther and the value is going to be one of the things they’re probably shopping for. Also, there’s probably a lack of knowledge and desire to appreciate some of the fresh food options that are out there. **I don’t think it [farmers markets] makes a huge difference for the poor [...]** You look around and you see, you know, 98% white folks down here who look as though they are pretty well off [...] Yeah, this is not serving the most needy areas of Memphis.” (Patron – Downtown)

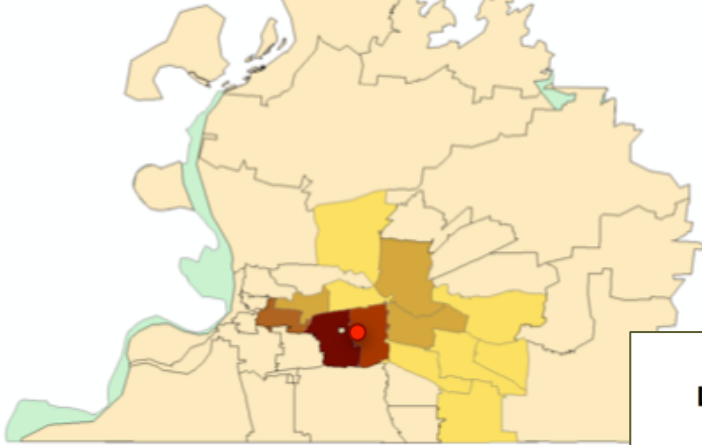
Location
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capitalist interest



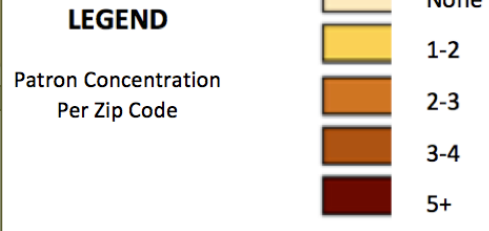
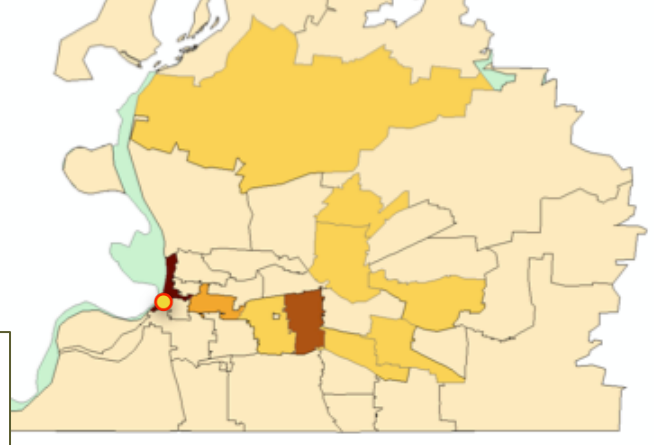
Botanical Gardens Farmers Market

PATRON CONCENTRATION PER ZIP CODE FOR EACH MARKET

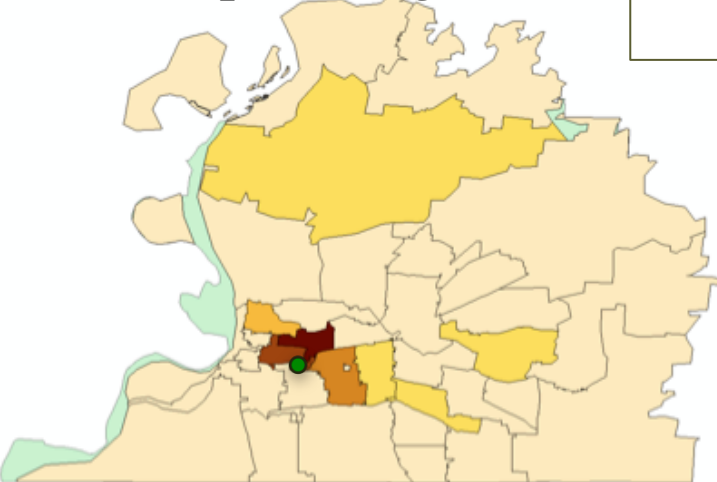
Botanical Gardens Patrons



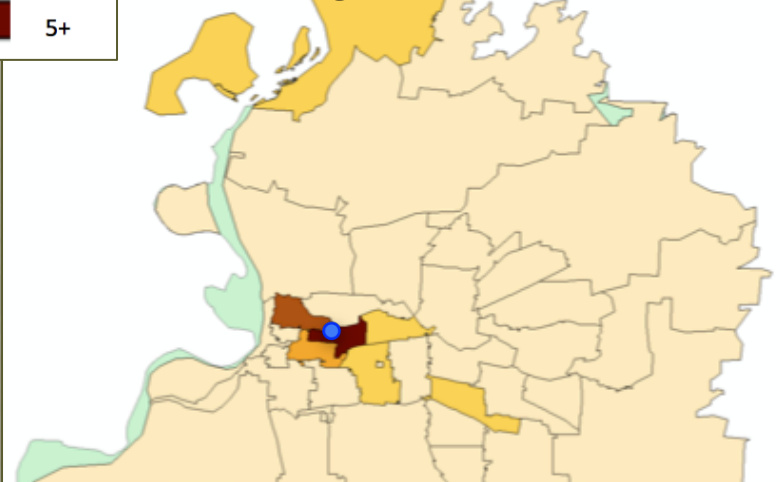
Downtown Patrons



Cooper Young Patrons



Evergreen Patrons



NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMICS

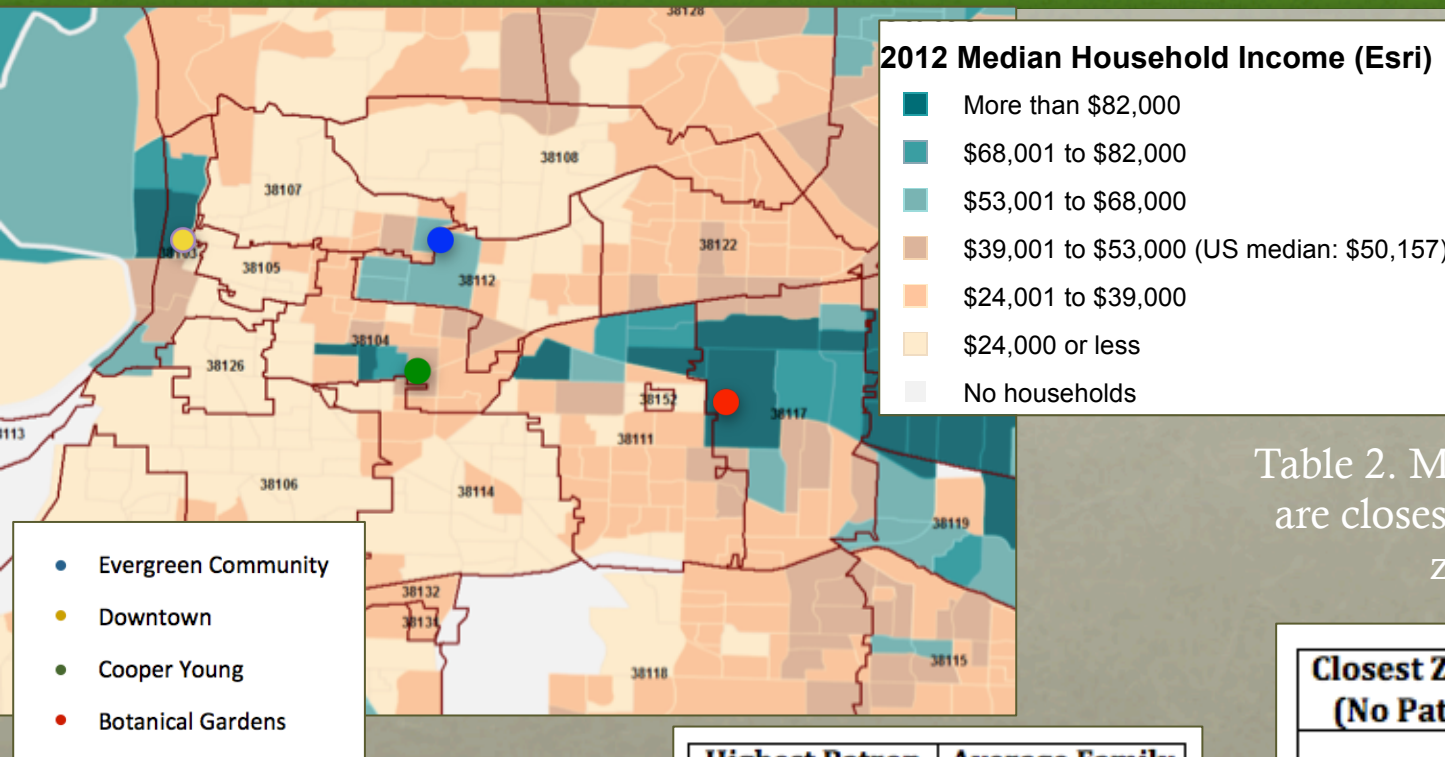


Table 1. Memphis zip codes with the highest number of patrons attending farmers markets.

Highest Patron Density	Average Family Income
38117	\$80,336
38134	\$66,832
38104	\$55,975
38112	\$49,218

Table 2. Memphis zip codes that are closest to the markets with zero patrons.

Closest Zipcode (No Patrons)	Average Family Income
38126	\$10,688
38108	\$18,113
38114	\$14,178
38105	\$15,524

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS BUILDING OF FARMERS MARKETS

People attend the market for social and economic reasons rather than health reasons.

“I think the people who are very aware of their health are going to the farmers market. Probably more than a low income person who is counting dollars. I think they’re still going to McDonald’s.” (Vendor – Evergreen Community)

“I mean, I’m satisfied [with grocery stores in the area] because there’s only so much that they can provide. But because **I have a particular interest in natural foods there’s not always everything that I want there.**” (Patron – Botanical Gardens)

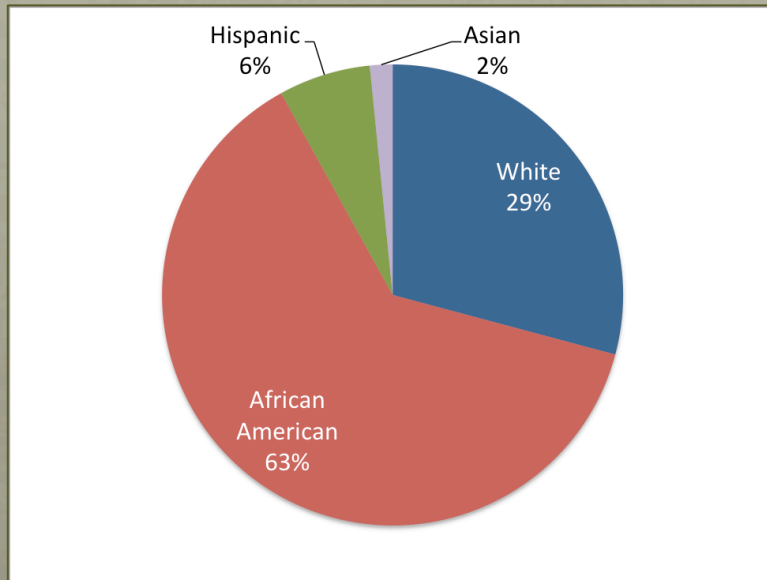


Botanical Gardens Farmers Market

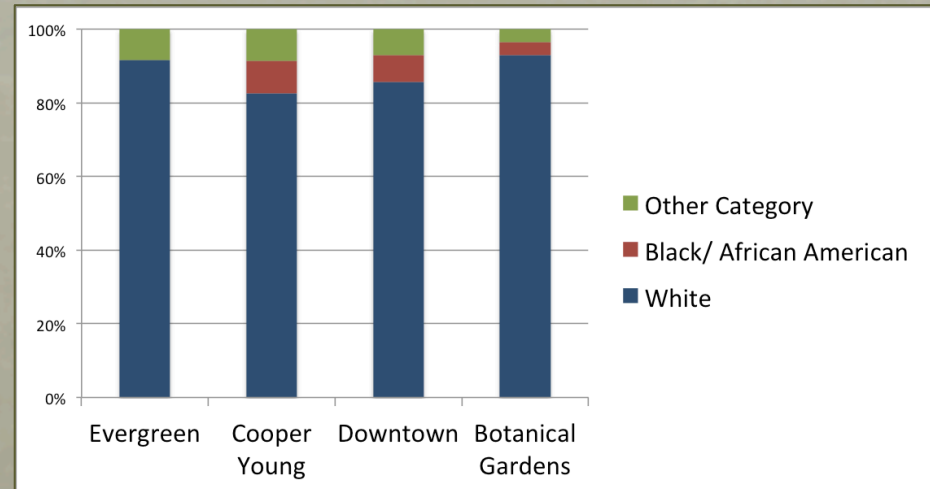
SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

Memphis and Market Demographic Data

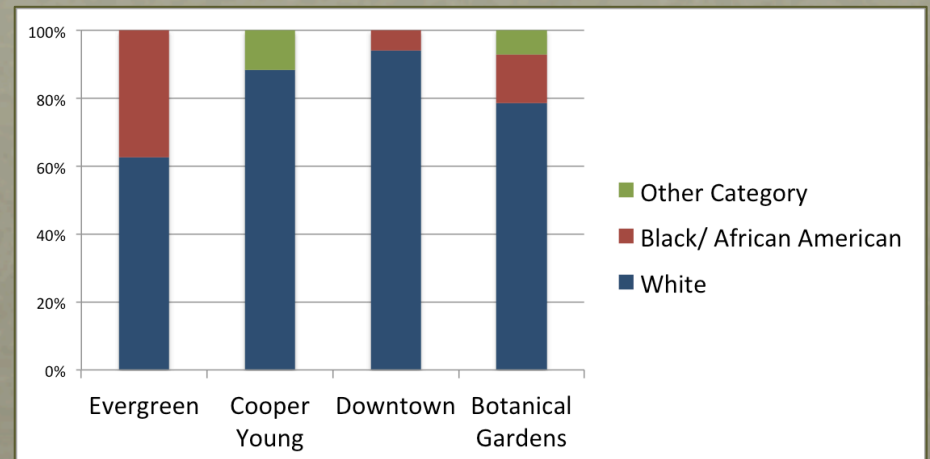
2010 Memphis Population Census Data



Patron Race



Vendor Race



SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS CONTINUED

Patrons are predominately white middle-class

“I feel like it doesn’t alleviate food pressures, just because of the type... **the population that comes to markets is more like a hipster-type environment** and not because its lower costs are just available.” (Patron – Cooper Young)



Downtown Farmers Market



Overton Park Community Farmers Market

“I think they are **catering to the upper-middle class** and I wish it could get out more into the community that is not able to get here. To those markets.” (Patron – Botanical Gardens)

WHAT NOW?

In the fall of 2015 the Overton Park Community Farmers Market was awarded a \$100,000 USDA Farmers Market Promotion Grant

This grant will...

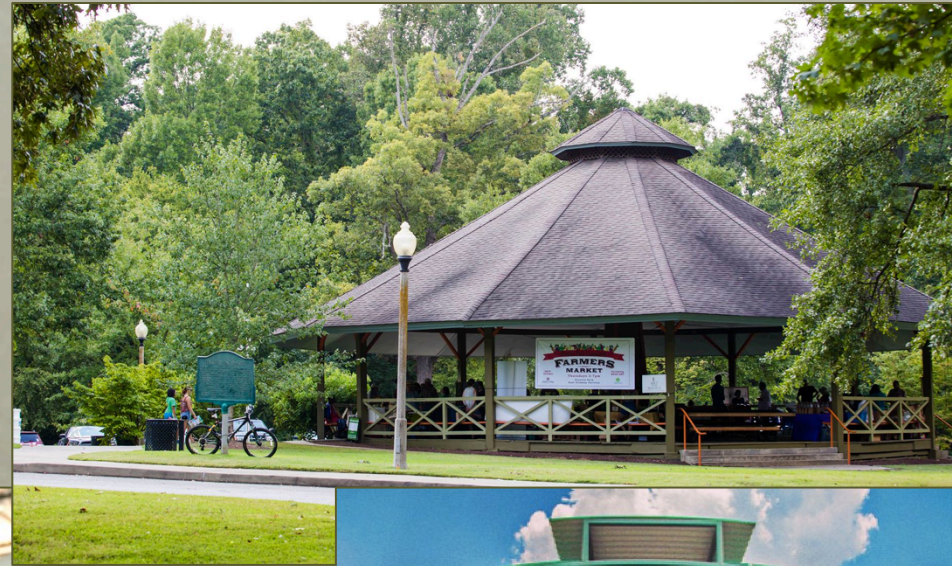
1. Increase in production and the self-reliance of our community in providing our own food needs
 - \$1000 stipends for low income community farmers
2. Expand the distribution of locally grown agricultural products
 - Additional selling location of local products
3. Improve the access of the food needs of low-income and other residents
 - \$10 SNAP/EBT Fresh Produce Kits
4. Increase awareness of locally grown agricultural products.
 - Grassroots marketing "boots to the ground" campaign employing community residents



CONCLUSIONS



Overton Park
Community
Farmers Market



Botanical Gardens
Farmers Market



Cooper Young Farmers Market

Downtown
Farmers
Market



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the participating vendors and patrons of this study as well as the Mid-South Farmers Market Coalition.

