ABSTRACT

GROWING SOCIAL CAPITAL: INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FARMERS’ MARKETS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS IN ANN ARBOR, MI

By Paul D. Holeva

Since the 1950’s each generation of American citizen has engaged in less social interaction than the generation before, leading to a decline in social capital that has been, and continues to be, a contributing factor in the decline of the American urban environment. In an effort to combat these declines this research utilized primary survey, informal interview, and participant observation methods to explore the potential development of urban public farmers’ markets as planned spaces designed to encourage the development of social capital at the local level. While this research identified several constraints that currently prevent the market from reaching its full potential as a tool for localized social capital development, the data also suggests that the market based community serves a major role in the development of social capital at the larger district scale, and questions whether geographers should revise how they approach their understanding of social capital development.
GROWING SOCIAL CAPITAL: INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FARMERS’ MARKETS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS IN ANN ARBOR, MI

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As I sit on the edge of the Ann Arbor Public Farmers’ Market it’s hard to believe that social interaction and civic engagement are on the decline. It seems that with every stand I walked past today I met someone new, purchased something new, or learned something new on topics ranging from produce to politics. Earlier today I even watched an organic coffee roaster help a patron buy a car from “Jerry from Alaska,” a third party car sales man who held no prior association with the farmers’ markets until that day. Despite the claims of researchers such as Robert Putnam, it seems to me that community networks are still expanding and actively contributing to the development of social capital, just perhaps not in the same ways that the community organizations of the 50’s and 60’s had. Perhaps it is no longer the formal service group or social sports league that serves as the fertile ground for social network development, but rather it is through the freedom of interaction within the public spaces that these networks continue to expand to meet the needs of the community.

While I take some comfort in the idea that things may not be as bad as once reported, I am forced to reconsider my thoughts when I catch glimpse of a sign on the edge of the market that reads “No Dogs” and “No Bikes.” I also notice now that the political posters that had been stapled to the telephone poles on the edge of the market space a week before had been removed, and I am reminded that it is official market policy to prohibit political activism within the market space as it may interfere with producer sales. Clearly this public space, and therefore the public, is not without regulation. I can’t help but laugh to myself when I look over to the opposite end of the market and see the democratic “Obama Club” table set up next to some local civic leaders, both Democratic and Republican, who are all running for election or reelection this fall. This is funny to me because I realize that they have found a more receptive location on the private grounds of the neighboring Kerrytown Market and Shops then they did within the “public space” of the Ann Arbor Public Market, even though the conversations being had within their space are inherently public as they will impact the lives of everyone I see here, and many more that I don’t.

As I turn to leave for the day I believe that the space of the farmers’ market may still hold the potential to help reverse declines in social capital, however, it is also clear that it may not do so in a manner that is consistent with the current literature on social capital development...
The Decline of Social Capital and the Threat to American Cities

In the early 1990’s sociologist Robert Putnam published a series of articles arguing that, since the 1950’s, each generation of American citizens had engaged in increasingly less social interaction than the generation before. He based this argument on the registration statistics of formal community organizations across the country, including everything from volunteer service organizations to organized sports leagues (Putnam, 2000). Putnam then compared these organizational enrollment percentages to measurements of economic and civic success (such as voter participation rates) to argue that a decline in organizational and civic participation has been, and continues to be, a direct contributor to the decline of American cities. His argument was founded on the belief that social interaction is an important factor for the success of American cities because it leads to the development of “Social Capital,” or the collection and shared distribution of resources between members of social networks developed around the ideas of trust and reciprocity (Putnam, 1996).

In addition to sharing resources, these networks also help to create and maintain social identities which give network members a direct investment in their overall community. Without these social networks of trust and reciprocity, however, community identities are lost and people become uninvested in action that occurs outside the home or within small-scale networks of friends and relatives. As Jane Jacobs suggested in her landmark work “The Death and Life of Great American Cities” (1961), neighborhoods generally lose the ability to help each other when a shared sense of trust is lost between community members, consequently removing “eyes from the street” and creating dangerous public spaces. When people can no longer feel safe outside the home, neighborhoods crumble and investment is deterred, inspiring those with the means to flee the cities for the suburbs to do so. It is because of this process that Putnam and others have identified declining levels of social capital as a direct factor in the decline of urban populations that has been occurring in American cities since the 1950’s (Putnam; 1996, 2000; Mohan and Mohan, 2002; Hipp and Perrin, 2006).

While Putnam’s theory has received significant criticism over the past decade, especially by the geographic community (Forrest and Kearney, 2001; Mohan and Mohan, 2002; Martin, 2003; Staeheli and Clarke, 2003; Middleton, Murie and Groves, 2005; Hipp and Perrin, 2006; Kleinhans, Priemus, and Engersen, 2007) the central ideas that social interaction and public involvement are essential for successful community development, and that social interaction and
civic participation have been on the decline since the 1950’s, have stood firm. Theoretical arguments for the importance of civic participation and social involvement have also been central themes within much of the geographic literature on global development (Forrest and Kearney, 2001; Mohan and Mohan, 2002; Staeheli and Clarke, 2003; Hipp and Perrin, 2006), however the absence of case-study analysis within the geographic literature suggests that there have been minimal efforts taken to study existing institutions that, if developed appropriately, may help reverse the decline of social capital within the American urban environment.

It was therefore the purpose of this research to utilize a geographic perspective to help fill this gap by identifying some of the key requirements for the successful development of social capital, as well as some potential constraints that may hinder its development. Building off Putnam’s focus on the importance of diversity in social capital development, I have chosen to focus specifically on the ability of functional public space to encourage diverse social interaction. In addition to Putnam’s argument that diverse membership allows social networks access to a variety of unique forms of capital and a greater ability to provide for its members, additional research has shown that diversity is a key component to a successful democracy (Mitchell, 1995; Staeheli and Clarke, 2003), combating urban segregation across a variety of scales (Mohan and Mohan, 2002; Hipp and Perrin, 2006), public safety (Jacobs, 1961; Mitchell, 1995; Kayden, 2000), and has some potential impact on economic stimulation (Forrest and Kearney, 2001; Mohan and Mohan, 2002; Hipp and Perrin, 2006; Kleinhans, Priemus, and Engersen, 2007). Additional work by economist James Surowiecki (2004) argues that the collective knowledge of a large group of diverse people may actually provide a greater insight into problem solving than the collective intelligence of a small group of highly educated specialists. It is because of this widely accepted importance across multiple disciplines that I believe the analysis of social capital development is most appropriately done through a focus on the development of diverse social networks.

Once the key requirements were identified, I then utilized these criteria to explore the planned functional space of the farmers’ market to establish its potential for use as a tool for social capital development. To do this I established a series of questions to assess the social capital development potential of interactions occurring within the market space. I then analyzed the Ann Arbor Public Farmers’ Market, a historic farmers’ located within the Kerrytown District of Ann Arbor, Michigan, as a case study example of the potential role farmers’ markets may play
in the planned development of social capital. My research suggests that, in addition to the existing literature, there is another multi-part process to social capital development that is not explicitly identified within the existing literature, and that approaching social capital development through this understanding acknowledges the importance of both new and previously established social relationships, rather than considering them as conflicting forces.

Furthermore, this multi-part process reinforces the geographic critique that social capital is best understood as a series of networks that interact at and/or across a variety of scales. Although my case study analysis suggests that, under the existing literature, the market provides only a limited opportunity for diverse social interaction (therefore limiting its social capital development potential under the existing theoretical model), certain members of the market community are able to draw upon the collective specialized resources of the market community and selectively apply them towards larger scale collaborative projects. Therefore, despite the perceived social capital development limitations at the most local level, I conclude that different types of activities at different scales may actually provide more social benefits for the host society than the traditional approach to social capital development which has strived for diverse, self-sufficient networks at each scale. Unfortunately, since my research focused primarily on social interactions at the most local level additional research is necessary to better understand the importance of scalar difference in the social capital development process.

In the following sections I begin my investigation of the literature on social capital, followed by a review of potential social capital constraints identified through the geographic literature on public space and social interaction. From there I establish the social capital development assessment criteria that I utilize for the field-based, empirical portion of this study, before expanding on the survey, interview, and participant observation methodologies that I will use to complete my assessment. Finally, I will review the results of my empirical investigation before concluding my research with a critique on the current theoretical framework regarding social capital development.
Ch. 1: The Key Elements of “Social Capital Development”

While there are many definitions of social capital, it can be generally defined as the instantiated set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permits them to cooperate with one another, encouraging the collection and distribution of communal resources and the development of community support structures (Fukuyama, 2001). Elements of trust and reciprocity also play a key role in the definition of social capital since members of the group need to be able to trust that other members will behave honestly and reliably to uphold the groups shared norms and values. Moreover, members of the group must be able to count on the support of the group to back a member’s actions and to provide action for other members of the group in times of need. Trust, then, acts like a lubricant that makes the network run more efficiently (Putnam, 2000; Fukuyama, 2001).

While the term “social capital” was first introduced by Lyda Judson Hanifan (1916) to describe the politics of rural community school centers, it has also been used by Jane Jacobs (1961) to describe the relationship between dense social networks and public safety in American cities, by Glenn Loury and Ivan Light (1972) to describe race relations and problems with inner-city economic development, and most recently by Robert Putnam (1996, 2000) to describe the importance of civic involvement for successful community development (Fukuyama, 2001). Collectively though, the idea of social capital is best understood as an alternative to the traditional economic understanding of community development which focused primarily on the measurement of physical capital development and failed to account for qualitative measures that have a direct impact on the traditional economic development factors.

Although Putnam (1996, 2000) is only one of several researchers who have addressed the idea of social capital, he is perhaps the most widely published on the topic and therefore his theoretical framework will serve as the foundation of my social capital literature review. In addition to introducing the basic elements of trust and reciprocity mentioned above, Putnam focused specifically on the importance of social interaction for the successful development of social capital. Social interaction, he believed, was the fundamental element through which personal connections, and therefore social capital networks, are established or transformed. Without active social interaction networks of reciprocity and trust could never be established.

Not all social interactions are necessarily beneficial to the development of social capital though. Since the extent of social capital available in a network is directly related to the elements
that each member of the network is willing to share with the whole, the ability of a network to provide for its members is directly related to the diversity of network members and their respective capital (Putnam, 2000; Surowiecki, 2004). It is with this idea that Putnam identified two distinct categories of social interaction that directly impact the diversity of the group. The first method, *bridging*, refers to the establishment of new connections between previously unconnected entities (either individuals or small scale networks as a whole) and is believed to be the foundational action for social capital network expansion (Putnam, 2000; Hipp and Perrin, 2006). The second method, *bonding*, refers to the strengthening of previously established network connections through repeated interaction over time, leading to increasingly greater levels of trust and reciprocity that allow for increasingly greater transfers of capital between network members.

While bonded connections can potentially benefit social capital by promoting greater levels of support between network actors, they also hold the potential to become homogeneous and centrally focused over time, excluding new members who may transgress the social norms of the network and limiting the diversity of capital available to network members (Putnam, 2000; Mohan and Mohan, 2002; Milton, Murie and Groves, 2005). While restricting the diversity of available capital is itself an important limitation to bonded networks, the absence of transgression within a group is also a concern because it eliminates the informal checks and balances that requires a group to constantly reassess its standards, norms, values, and behavior. Without checks and balances group standards can centralize around a shared belief that may conflict with the larger society in which that group is a part, i.e. The Ku Klux Klan and/or anti-American terrorist organizations (Fukuyama, 2001). Therefore, although the strength and frequency of newly bridged network connections may be weaker than bonded connections, many social capital researchers have argued that bridging networks provide a greater benefit to society by increasing the amount and diversity of social capital to diverse groups that not only provide for their members but can also coordinate and share resources with other groups within the larger society (Jacobs, 1961; Putnam, 2000; Fukuyama, 2001; Young, 2003; Hipp and Perrin, 2006).
Robert Putnam on Social Capital and Civic Health

It was through this framework of social networking, trust, and community agency that Putnam argued that high levels of social capital were important for healthy communities and that a steady decline in social capital since the 1950’s has been a contributing factor in the decline of the American urban environment. As evidence of his claim, Putnam cited a correlation between declines in American civic involvement (volunteer hours, club participation, et cetera) and increases in violence, declines in economic prosperity, and the weakening democratic state that has become characteristic of American cities over the second half of the 20th century. In addition to Putnam’s work, additional research has also correlated high levels of social capital with increased economic opportunities through collaboration and the sharing of resources (Beugelsdijk and Van Schiak, 2005; Bull and Jones, 2006), overall safer communities (Hipp and Perrin, 2006), healthier, active lifestyles (Hipp and Perrin, 2006), and increased community involvement leading to greater success of development projects and higher levels of democracy than found within areas of weak social capital (Bull and Jones, 2006).

As a result of these findings, Putnam argued that social capital networks are essential for civic health because they serve as a direct support structure for localized community members and allow for the accumulation of specialized capital that would have been otherwise unattainable by each member of the network individually. Putnam also argued that social capital networks help to create community identities that provide members with a sense of belonging and ownership in their community, and encourages the active membership and capital investments necessary to maintain healthy communities. While other research has shown that it is possible to form successful communities or groups in the absence of social capital by utilizing a variety of formal coordination methods (contracts, hierarchies, legal systems, et cetera), the informal norms of social capital greatly reduce “transaction costs,” or the costs of monitoring, contracting, adjudicating, and enforcing legal agreements (Fukuyama, 2001). It is through these reductions in transaction costs that social capital has proved to hold economic as well as social and public safety benefits (Beugelsdijk and Van Schiak, 2005; Bull and Jones, 2006).

For Putnam then, the decline of American cities has, at least in part, directly resulted from a decline in social interaction, leading to a loss of social capital and the creation of an individualistic “society.” Putnam argued that the increasing individualization of society was responsible for the decline of American cities because it reduces community interest in the public
realm, hindering community policing efforts and contributing to increases in violence and crime within public spaces. Furthermore, increases in violence and crime perpetuate feelings of fear within the community, negatively impacting residents’ quality of life and further discouraging local economic investment by developers who feel that their investments may be compromised by local conditions (Jacobs, 1961; Kunstler, 1998; Putnam, 2000). As a result outmigration from cities to suburbs increases, which in turn reduces urban populations and further hinders the potential development of social capital by limiting the number of community actors who may still contribute to the development of social capital networks.

In an effort to identify the primary cause of social capital decline, Putnam argued that the advancement of personal, media-based technologies were responsible for decreasing the human need for social interaction. While it is generally accepted that the increase in personal recreation stemming from technological advancement has played a part in the decline of social capital, additional geographic research now suggests that urban (and now suburban) sprawl expansion, increasing automotive dependency, increases in daily travel times, and the growth of full time career opportunities within the United States have also contributed to this decline (Kunstler, 1998; Putnam, 2000; Staeheli and Clarke, 2003). While the specific causes of social capital decline are still up for debate, there exists substantial evidence to suggest that the decline in social interaction has had, and continues to provide, a negative impact on American cities, and that efforts should be undertaken to help reverse this trend.

**The Geographic Critique**

While the proposed benefits of increased social capital have been generally accepted by the wider academic community, there have been several critiques to Putnam’s theoretical framework, especially by the geographic community. One of the most frequent critiques is against Putnam’s belief that social capital networks are overarching and can theoretically benefit all members of a society through a potentially infinite string of social network connections (Mohan and Mohan, 2002). In addition to issues of network distance decay, this belief also assumes that all members of a community have equal access to the networks capital despite varying degrees of network participation and the transient politics of social networks. This idea of an all encompassing, all inclusive network has been accused of being novel, idealistic, and failing to account for the personal motivations, political dynamics, and structural restraints that
are an inherent part of the community process (Forrest and Kearney, 2001; Mohan and Mohan, 2002; Hipp and Perrin, 2006).

Geographers have also argued that social interaction occurs on and across a variety of scales, and that Putnam’s framework fails to account for the impact that scale and hierarchy can have on social interaction at different scales (Mohan and Mohan, 2002). The issues of hierarchy and scale also identify the inherent impact of power within social interactions, as well as the importance of the environment through which the interaction occurs, which can shift the power dynamic in favor of one party or another (Mitchell, 1995; Cresswell, 1996, Lefebvre, 1996). Finally, geographers have argued that not all social interactions are mutually beneficial to both parties, and that Putnam’s theory again fails to address the power dynamics of interaction and the impact of the space in which these interactions occur (Middleton, Murie and Groves, 2005).

In order to address these concerns, geographic studies of social capital have approached the idea of the social capital network as a collection of smaller networks that interact across a variety of scales, from localized or “neighborhood” networks to large scale societal networks (Forrest and Kearney, 2001; Martin, 2003; Hipp and Perrin, 2006; and Kleinhans, Priemus, and Engersen, 2007). By addressing trust and reciprocity across a number of different scales researchers are then able to address the strength of network interactions across a multi-tiered hierarchical system similar to the financial class structure found within Western societies, and incorporate the power dynamics that are inherent in cross-scale interactions. This framework also allows researchers to identify the degree to which highly localized network development impacts large scale community networks, incorporating important spatial factors such as distance decay that were missing from Putnam’s original research.

In addition to his theoretical framework, geographers have also criticized Putnam for his assumption that all people have an equal opportunity to participate in social capital development functions. For example, additional geographic research has argued that urban and suburban sprawl may serve as a physical constraint to civic interaction and community involvement, further hindering social capital development (Sennett, 1970; Staeheli and Clarke, 2003). As American development becomes increasingly less dense, it has become necessary to spend increasingly longer periods of time in travel in order to maintain employment and acquire daily living necessities. This has resulted in less time available for active participation in community organizations and neighborhood events. Further research also suggest that, because of the
increasing time constraint, the minimal remaining time that people do have available for community/civic participation is typically spent near the home, spatially limiting participation options to those immediately present within the neighborhood (Hipp and Perrin, 2006). Since many Americans live in suburban neighborhoods that have become increasingly homogenous due to zoning practices that stratify society based on income, ethnicity, and cultural practices (Sennett, 1970; Cresswell, 1996), this presents a further constraint to social capital development by limiting the diversity of potential social connections. As a result American social network development has become an increasingly localized activity, indirectly promoting the bonding of networks rather than the expansion of social capital through the bridging of networks.

Finally, several articles in a recent publication of the journal Political Geography have attacked the fundamental concept of community and its relationship with civic involvement. While Putnam’s understanding of community was inherently inclusive, where members wished to expand their network in order to mutually benefit all members, recent studies have suggested that the idea of “community” might be better understood as an exclusionary force, protecting its members from change by promoting homogenization and hindering the accessibility of potential new members (Clarke, 2008, Hayes-Conroy, 2008; Staeheli, 2008a; Staeheli, 2008b). In these articles the concept of community is considered a negative factor that works against the expansion of social networks, however, I believe these articles may be better understood as a representation of the negative potential of network bonding since these articles fail to include cases where heavily bonded networks contribute to larger scale social capital networks, albeit in a specialized manner. This series does, however, reiterate the importance of encouraging diverse interactions within social networks in order to maximize social capital development.

**Social Capital and Public Space Theories**

While not directly associated with the literature on social capital, the geographic literature on public space addresses many of the issues raised against Putnam’s work, including the issues of access, the composition of “the public,” the importance of power relations within social interaction, and the impact of the physical environment on social relations. Since all social interaction must inevitably occur within some space, and since the diversity of potential interactions has a direct impact on the extent of social capital that may be developed, it makes sense that these issues should be considered when investigating the social capital development potential of planned functional spaces.
In its ideal form, public space is space to which all individuals of a society have the right of access, regardless of race, sex, creed, income, et cetera, to practice any and all rights given by constitutional law, and to be seen doing so by other members of the society (Mitchell, 1995; Young, 2003). Theoretically these spaces allow for the formation of a highly diverse public and therefore should provide the ideal environment though which diverse social networks could form. However, the “public” who utilize these spaces are rarely as diverse as the public ideal suggests they should be, and this is because of formal and informal regulations that impact access to and actions within the space. Therefore, to distinguish between these two groups, from here forward I shall utilize the term “user-public” to identify those members of the true public who are allowed access and use of public spaces, despite restrictive regulations.

Given complete freedom of speech, congregation, and representation by constitutional law, public spaces have traditionally been places of confrontation as power struggles tend to ignite between conflicting interest groups within these spaces (Mitchell, 1995; Cresswell, 1996; Lefebvre, 1996; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2007). Because of the contested nature of public spaces (and the increased informal economic activity that often occurs within these spaces) many governmental authorities within the U.S. have received pressure to regulate their public spaces, identifying appropriate actions and restricting access to different groups in order to protect the investments of local property owners (Mitchell, 1995; Kohn, 2004). As regulation has increased public spaces have become less and less “public,” no longer serving the ideal of an all inclusive environment but rather an exclusive environment regulated by the standards set forth (either formally or informally) by the controlling power. Moreover, these regulations can result in an increasingly homogenous user-public (Mitchell, 1995; Cresswell, 1996; Young, 2003; Ruppert, 2006) which can limit the social capital development potential of these spaces.

Moreover, some public officials have started to argue that public property is really just property owned by the government, and therefore the government should be entitled to the same property rights as private land owners (Mitchell, 1995; Kohn, 2004). As a result some governmental leaders have enacted restrictions against political protest on governmentally owned public property, like the 1998 United States Postal Service regulation that prohibited protestors from gathering signatures in front of post office buildings (Kohn, 2004). While many have argued that this kind of regulation is a violation of our First Amendment rights, the courts have ruled otherwise. For example, on May 21st, 2001 the Hotel Workers Union was denied a permit
to stage a protest on the Lincoln Center Plaza in New York City by Judge Kevin Duffy, who stated that “the plaza was not automatically a public forum because of its park designation and physical characteristics as a public congregation area” (Kohn, 2004). Although not all judges agree with Judge Duffy’s decision in this case, it has supported an increase in the governmental regulation of traditional public spaces over the past decade.

In addition to formal governmental regulation public spaces are also subject to informal regulation by dominant social groups who define and regulate the socially acceptable characteristics or behaviors of the space (Mitchell, 1995; Kohn, 2004). Rather than direct formal policing, informal regulations are typically enforced through social pressures exerted by the majority. An example pertaining to farmers’ markets is the informal segregation of producers based on food productions practices, which have been utilized as a stamp of cultural or ethnic identity formation by different racial groups within public farmers’ markets (Slocum, 2006). Depending on strength of the regulation, informal divisions like this can have a significant impact on how the user-public operates within the space. If market vendors are spatially divided by ethnic-based production practices, then market patrons may also segregate themselves by only purchasing products from certain vendor groups. This would significantly impact social interaction within the market since members of each cultural production group would only need to operate within a small portion of the market space, and therefore only interact with other members of the same cultural production group. Although the division of vendors did not result of formal market regulation, these informal power struggles can also have a significant impact on the degree to which this space allows for diverse social capital formation.

Increases in the privatization of public spaces have also decreased access to traditional public spaces. In a narrow sense, privatization refers to the sale of government owned property to private organizations, such as when Salt Lake City sold an entire downtown city block to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in 1998 (Kohn, 2004). Direct sales like this are fairly uncommon though. Rather, the majority of privatized public spaces have resulted from a decrease in public use that occurred as private commercial entities, such as shopping malls, began replacing traditional public spaces such as city plazas or town squares (Kohn, 2004; Allen, 2006; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2006). These private alternatives, which are often designed as commodified versions of the traditional public spaces that they replaced, provide a heavily regulated (or “sanitized”) version of the public experience that encourages private market
activities (such as shopping) without the threat of uncomfortable situations, such as observing homeless persons or dealing with political activists (Allen, 2006; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2006). The mall managers achieve this sanitized experience through a combination of formal regulation, market advertising, and physical design characteristics that help produce the user-public that is most desired by the business owners located within the mall. Although several First Amendment lawsuits have been brought against mall owners for these regulation practices, the federal courts have generally ruled that the mall is still a privately owned business and is entitled to the right of user regulation, despite its invitation for public use (Kohn, 2004).

As the public has increasingly preferred these private environments over the traditional public experience, the public sphere has begun to deteriorate, providing the public more incentive to choose the private shopping mall and perpetuating the cycle of public space decline (Staeheli and Mitchell, 2006). In addition to undermining opportunities to exercise free speech (and therefore limiting opportunities for social interaction), the increasing privatization of public space is also a problem for social capital development because it reinforces existing patterns of segregation, eliminating confrontation and supporting the homogenization of social interaction (Kohn, 2004). While the removal of confrontation may support the retail-consumption process, segregating different social groups limits the voice of minority opinions as well as the opportunity for the diverse interactions that are essential for social capital development.

Finally, in addition to the formal and informal regulations, physical design has also been shown to directly impact the user-public’s ability to utilize public space (Whyte, 1980; Allen, 2006). As John Allen (2006) explains, the physical design of the public space can have a direct impact on the public’s ability to utilize the space for actions other than travel between surrounding destinations. Similar research was also conducted by sociologist William H Whyte, who studied the functionality and social benefits of privately-owned public spaces within the city of New York (Whyte, 1980; Kayden, 2000). As both researchers established through their work, such design restrictions are often commonplace for privately-owned or heavily regulated “public” spaces and can have a significant impact on the ability of the public to utilize these spaces. Therefore, it is important to understand the impact of physical design when investigating the social capital development potential of functional public spaces.
The Importance of Functional Public Spaces
In addition to issues of regulation, the public space literature presents a problematic
disagreement with the social capital literature on the impact of diversity. While the literature on
social capital calls for a diverse public under the assumption that people with differences will be
willing to work together over a unified goal (Putnam, 2000; Mohan and Mohan, 2002), the
literature on public space suggests that differences tend to consume public interaction leading to
confrontation between different interest groups (Mitchell, 1995; Kohn, 2004). In turn, this
confrontation inspires a need for regulation that can potentially limit the development of social
capital. On at least a theoretical level then, it appears that social capital cannot be generated
without some degree of regulation which allows for groups of conflicting interest to operate
within the same space. Ideally the extent of the regulation would allow for each group to provide
a healthy challenge against another group’s positionality, while still mutually respecting the
other group’s right to occupy the same space and limiting the extent of the confrontation.

To help resolve this issue I have chosen to focus m
y investigation on the social capital
development potential of functional public spaces rather than traditional public spaces, such as
public parks or other open spaces. The value of focusing on functional spaces is that it is more
likely that members of the user-public will share a common characteristic that brought them into
the space, thus reducing the potential of extreme confrontation by providing a common ground
for interaction. Moreover, by focusing on functional public spaces it is likely that formal
regulation will be limited to only the governmental restrictions that are designed to prevent
behaviors that extensively interfere with the spaces function while still protecting, to some
extent, the constitutional rights of freedoms of speech, representation, and congregation. This
situation seems to provide the best possible theoretical balance between diversity and the
necessary regulation required for social capital development.

In Review
Although the literature has predominantly focused on areas of concern within the social capital
and public space literatures, these criticisms provide a solid foundation on which to assess the
social capital development potential of functional public spaces. From these critiques I have
developed three primary questions designed to investigate a functional public space’s ability to
encourage the formation of diverse user-public networks which contribute to the development of
social capital inside and outside the market space and network. The questions are:
1. To what extent does the space/environment encourage the production of a diverse, inclusive user-public? As we have seen through the literature an inclusive public is essential for developing new “bonding” network connections that provide the most diverse range of capital options possible to network members. Moreover, a diverse public can provide the appropriate checks and balances necessary to help prevent the network from developing standards and norms that may hinder its involvement with other societal entities. Primary concerns regarding this category include identification of the user demographic and issues of access (both physical and social constraints) that may be constraining the use of the space by certain minority groups.

2. To what extent do people actively engage each other within the space? It is not enough to simply encourage the formation of a diverse user-public within a space. If the users of the space are not interacting, or their interaction is segregated by informal regulation (like Rachel Slocum’s 2006 example of race divisions within farmers’ markets based on production methods), then social capital development is again restricted. The content of the interaction/exchange is also important. If social exchanges within the space or user-public are dominated by a limited number of topics, then the social capital development potential of the market is also limited these topics, hindering its diversity. Therefore, primary concerns regarding this category include the identification of physical or social constraints that may prevent social interaction within the space, as well as the identification of exchange content, and the measurement of exchange frequency.

3. To what extent do members of the user-public continue to engage outside the functional space? A primary benefit to high levels of social capital is the network’s ability to create connections that may be called upon at a later date, time, and location. If members of the network do not possess the ability to utilize their connections outside the initial space in which the connections were established, then these relationships have a limited benefit to larger scale issues since they cannot expand out the physical space in which they were created. This prevents multi-connection and/or cross-scale social capital exchanges, and retards the networks ability to expand outward and interact with potential new members or other small scale networks. Without the ability to reach out to new members or cooperatively work with other small scale networks, localized efforts are limited to local impacts. For social capital to be as effective as Putnam (2000) and other researchers have
claimed, network connections must continue to expand outside their space of creations and be able to effectively operate within a multi-tiered political hierarchy. Therefore, primary concerns regarding this category will focus on the ability and frequency of user-public interactions to “bond” outside the functional space, and the spatial extent to which these interactions occur.

Although it is quite unlikely that any one functional space will be able to produce the ideal outcome for all three of these questions, those spaces which best encourage the formation of diverse user networks may potentially be able to help reverse declines in social capital and potentially slow the decline of the American urban environment. With these criteria established the next step is to identify functional public spaces for exploration. While this research would be best suited by a comparative investigation of multiple environments, due to restrictions in time and resources I have chosen to investigate one primary space that I believe is best suited for social capital development and that is the urban public farmers’ market.
Ch. 2: Social Capital and the American Urban Public Farmers’ Market

Why the American Urban Public Farmers’ Market?
Although the number of American urban farmers’ markets grew steadily from the mid 1700’s until the 1940’s, the number of registered farmers’ markets within the U.S. experienced a sharp decline after the start of World War II due to developments in food packaging and the establishment of the grocery supermarket (Shakow, 1981; Brown, 2001). This decline continued steadily through the 50’s and 60’s until the U.S. Congress of Public Law passed the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976 (Brown, 2001). Since then the number of registered farmers’ markets within the United States has risen from 340 to over 4,280 by 2006 (USDA, 2008), experiencing its most rapid growth between 1995 and 2005 when the number of registered markets doubled, paralleling the growth of the local and organic food movements (Shakow, 1981; Robinson and Hartenfeld, 2007). This trend not only identifies a desire for more farmers’ markets, but also the willingness of cities to provide the necessary resources for the development of farmers’ markets.

Along with an increased demand for local and organic produce, research suggests that additional demand for farmers’ markets has come from an increased desire to re-personalize the consumer shopping experience and to get away from the large-scale, mechanized, and impersonal nature of “big-box” retail (USDA, 2008). Localized farmers’ markets are specifically designed to help reconnect urban consumers with rural producers, facilitating interactions between two socio-economic groups that are otherwise separated by regional, national, or international grocery distribution systems. In addition to promoting greater social interaction these markets also serve as the primary maintainer of agri-food networks, which facilitate capital exchange between urban and rural populations that provide both demographics with goods or services that are otherwise unattainable without these networks’ interactions (Jarosz, 2000). Moreover, unlike other networks of capital exchange these agri-food networks are characterized by interactions that are based on trust and cooperation rather than specified reciprocity (Jarosz, 2000; Robinson and Hartenfeld, 2007), making the farmers’ market an institution uniquely suited to promote the development of social capital between market actors.

Finally, the literature identifies the market as a historical space for social gatherings, ceremony, and political debate, as well as a space for social identity formation and cultural
representation (Morales and Balkin, 1995; Slocum, 2006). This is important because it shows that the market space holds the potential to serve secondary functions beyond retail commerce, including civic functions that can further promote diverse social interaction through a variety of socio-political events. In this regard, the market has been characterized as serving all of the functions of an urban plaza’s with the added attraction of providing a specific urban service to its user-public (Whyte, 1980).

While a review of the literature shows that the farmers’ market is typically supported as a positive institution, and that there is significant potential for the market to serve as tool for social capital development, the literature fails to account for any of the concerns and limitations identified through the literature on social capital and public space. Issues such as market demographics, the types of interactions that occur within the market space (bridging vs. bonding), the types of capital being transferred between network actors, and the political and social forces present within the market community all have a significant impact on the market’s ability to produce the benefits listed above. Therefore, this research will utilize the previously established criteria to empirically examine a case study example and evaluate how the market may potentially serve as a tool for social capital development.

**Case Study: The Ann Arbor Public Farmers’ Market**

For the purpose of this research I have chosen to study the Ann Arbor Public Market, which is located within the historic Kerrytown district of downtown Ann Arbor, Michigan and hosts the Ann Arbor Public Farmers’ Market (AAPFM) at least once a week throughout the year. I chose this location because it has been owned and operated by the city of Ann Arbor as a public market, theoretically open to all members of the community since 1921. I also believe that, with its longstanding history, this market is representational of the potential relationship that a stable market can develop with its host community over time. This long term relationship is also ideal for social capital assessment studies since a long market history increases the potential for the existence of both heavily bonded long-term social connections as well as the recently bridged network connections of new market actors.

Moreover, I chose the Ann Arbor Public Market because it provides a permanent built environment which remains open to the public for use even on non-market days (it is a permanent, full time public space rather than a temporary private-public space), giving the market space additional utility outside formal hours of operation. This particular market also has
a history of serving as a space for political discussion and representation, especially by members of the neighboring University of Michigan throughout the 1960’s and 70’s (Oliver, 2004).

Finally, my preliminary research identified the presence of a strong local support network revolving around the market, consisting of volunteers, market patrons, dedicated local business, and civic leaders who come together to initiate change within the city on behalf of the market community’s goals and agendas. Recently these changes included a controlled expansion of the market and the inclusion of solar energy panels as part of the city’s push to promote low-impact sustainable energy development. Additionally, these community leaders are also working to expand the market space’s function within the city by developing additional market events, such as the Artisan Market which occurs every Sunday, a monthly community resale market entitled “Trunk-a-palooza” which encourages reuse and recycling, various community programming events such as festivals, cooking workshops, et cetera, and community outreach programs that strive to increase market access to low income populations and neighboring university students.

While the Ann Arbor Public Farmers’ Market is only one of over 4,000+ farmers’ markets nationwide, it is the markets long standing tradition and the market community’s well defined efforts to increase civic involvement that make the AAPFM an ideal case study for understanding the relationship between farmers’ markets and the development of social capital.

Measuring Social Capital
To review, this research project is designed to assess the Public Urban Farmers’ Market as a potential space that can be designed and managed to increase the development of social capital. Therefore, through a review of the literature I have identified the three questions below to serve as the primary criteria for this assessment:

1. To what extent does the space/environment encourage the production of a diverse, inclusive user-public?
2. To what extent do people actively engage each other within the space?
3. To what extent do members of the user-public continue to engage outside the functional space?

To answer each question I utilized a mixed-method approach, incorporating a combination of surveys, interviews, participant observation, and public documents. This approach allowed me to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the market community through the utilization of both qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as the triangulation
that can result from the comparison of different methods to the same question (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). To ensure that each question was addressed as comprehensively as possible, the field work was conducted in three phases: Patron and Vendor Surveys, Patron and Vendor Interviews, and Community Leader Interviews and Formal Policy Assessments. Throughout all three of these phases a secondary methodology of participant observation was used to ensure that any events or experiences that were relevant, yet somehow escaped documentation through the survey or interview processes, were also included in the study. In the following sections I will discuss why each of these methods was chosen, as well as provide a detailed breakdown of each methodological phase.

**Phase 1: Patron and Vendor Surveys**

Since Putnam’s initial research, surveys have been the traditional methodology for social capital assessment (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Onyx and Bullen, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Forest and Kearney, 2001; Mohan and Mohan, 2002; Beugelsdijk and Van Schaik, 2005; Middleton, Murie and Groves, 2005; Hipp and Perrin, 2006; Kleinhans, Priemus and Engbersen, 2007). Traditionally these surveys utilized third party data to assess the issue of trust within communities, focusing only on one or two questions that ask participants to judge the trustworthiness of people within the community. Consequently, initial uses of survey data in social capital studies have been highly criticized for their lack of primary data collection and a failure to use detailed questions specifically focused on social capital analyzation (Mohan and Mohan, 2002; Hipp and Perrin, 2006). Despite these shortcomings though, survey methods have prevailed in social capital studies because they allow researchers to acquire large amounts of data in a short period of time, and over large spatial areas. This has been particularly useful for geographic studies of social capital designed to compare locational differences across large scale regions (Mohan and Mohan, 2002).

Although my research is primarily focused on the investigation of social capital at a local scale rather than a regional one, I chose participant surveys as my first primary method since they allowed for a baseline assessment of the market demographic to be collected in a quick and cost efficient manner. I designed the first part of the patron surveys to collect baseline demographic data about the market user-public through the use of questions modeled after the official U.S. census. Participants were asked to identify personal statistics including sex, age,
ethnicity, city residence, marital status, education levels, employment status, annual household income, and the number of children under the age of 18 that accompanied them to the market (this was important since children under 18 were not authorized to participate in the study and would have otherwise been missing from the market demographic). These statistics allowed me to identify any social groups that were missing from the market user-public, consequently limiting the social capital development potential of the market network. I then utilized the absent social group information to shape follow-up interview questions designed to identify constraints working against the diversification of the market public. Participants were also asked to identify their home location and their method of transportation to and from the market, which I utilized to identify the potential spatial extent of the social capital network originating within the market space as well as identify any potential physical constraints concerning transportation access or availability.

I designed the second part of the participant survey to identify the regularity of participation by market patrons. Participants were asked to identify their primary reasons for visiting the Kerrytown district, the average number of trips made to the market each month, and the average amount of money spent within the market as opposed to the average amount spent at neighboring Kerrytown district businesses. These statistics were important because they helped identify the ratio of frequent patrons to infrequent or new patrons (or the ratio of network bonding potential to the potential bridging of new network connections), as well as the role of the market and its importance to the overall success of the Kerrytown district.

Finally, while the primary function of the participant survey was the collection of demographic and market data, I designed the third part of the survey to conduct a basic investigation of social interaction within the market space and to identify the strength of trust and reciprocity between market actors. To do this I asked participants to identify how often they meet new people within the market space, how often they meet previous acquaintances, how often they interact with each of these groups outside of the market, and how often they volunteer their personal time/resources to help other market users. Participants were asked to rate the frequency of each of these categories on a five point scale ranging from “never” to “frequently.” I designed the first two questions to provide a very basic insight into the types of interactions that occur within the market space, while the final question addressed both trust and reciprocity between market actors through active volunteering. The concept of active volunteerism, first used within
social capital studies by Hipp and Perrin (2006), is believed to be a better assessment than traditional social capital assessment questions (that were designed to address only the issue of trust) because the concept of volunteerism inherently incorporates both the issue of trust and the notion of reciprocity in a single action.

I issued an initial 99 patron surveys over a two day period with a return rate of 91% (4 surveys were not returned, 3 were discarded for obvious discrepancies in survey answers, and 1 survey was destroyed in protest to my presence within the market). Since my preliminary research discovered that roughly half as many people visit the market during the Wednesday session as opposed to the Saturday session, I distributed 33 surveys during a Wednesday market and 66 surveys during the Saturday session immediately thereafter. To help conform to the market’s management policy prohibiting any action within the market that may potentially interfere with market commerce, I administered patron surveys from within a market stall utilizing only passively engaging advertisements (i.e. signs). In addition to conforming to market policy I also believe that less intense methods of engagement encourage a broader range of participants and therefore better survey results, and that my return rate of 91% supports this conclusion. While this methodological practice does raise a question concerning the accuracy of the sample, I accounted for any identifiable concerns through the triangulation of the survey data against participant observation notes, official 2000 U.S. Census data, and patron interviews.

Once the survey distribution process was complete, I analyzed the results using basic descriptive statistical methods. I analyzed the data independently by market day, allowing for daily comparisons between market days, as well as jointly to produce a composite image of the entire market demographic. These results will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

After the completion of the participant survey, I issued vendor surveys to each participating vendor within the market over a two day period (again, one Wednesday and one Saturday). Similar to the participant survey, I designed the first portion of the survey to identify an average demographic profile of the market vendors. I asked vendors to identify the size and location of their business/farm operation, the number of years they have been actively selling at the AAPFM, the frequency of days spent vending at the AAPFM, and the average amount of money that they spent within the farmers’ market (purchases from other vendors) versus the average amount spent at neighboring businesses within the Kerrytown district. As with the participant survey, I planned to utilize the location of vendor operations to identify the potential
spatial extent of social capital networks originating within the market space. Additionally, I planned to utilize vendor histories and the frequency of days vending within the AAPFM to assess the ratio of bridging to bonding potential and the bonded strength of family connections that stem back several generations within the market.

Identical to the patron survey, I designed the second half of the vendor survey to ask vendors to identify how often they meet new people within the market space, how often they meet previous acquaintances, how often they interact with each of these groups outside of the market, and to what extent they volunteer their personal time and/or resources to help other market users. Again, I asked vendors to rate the frequency of each of these categories on the same five point scale that I provided to the market patrons. The first two questions once again asked vendors to provide a very basic insight into the types of interactions that they participated in within the market space while the final question was designed to address both trust and reciprocity between market actors through active volunteering.

Unlike the passive recruitment utilized for the collection of patron surveys, market vendor survey packets were created and distributed to all market vendors to be completed and returned to the market office at a later date or time. The vendor survey packet included a welcome letter explaining my research, instructions on how to complete the survey, the survey itself, and a business card with all necessary contact information. Rather than requesting the vendor’s participation directly, this distribution format was chosen to ensure that my research had a minimal impact on the retail operations of market vendors. 78 vendor packets were distributed over a two day period (again, one Wednesday and one Saturday, to ensure that vendor differences between the two days could be accounted for), however only 18 were returned. After a two week period personal follow up efforts were conducted whenever direct conversation did not disrupt the retail process, however only one additional survey was returned after these follow-ups. Unfortunately, due to cost and time restraints no additional follow up efforts were made.

I analyzed the vendor survey data using basic descriptive statistics as well, however after completing the analysis it was clear that the data was not sufficient to accurately derive any characteristics about the market vendor demographic. Consequently, I have chosen to drop this data from my research and will analyze the role of the market vendor through only interview and participant observation data.
Phase 2: Market and Vendor Interviews

After I analyzed the initial survey data, I developed follow-up interview questions for both market patrons and market vendors. In total, 26 patrons agreed to participate in the interview process. The interviews were semi-structured and revolved around the five following open-ended questions:

1. For what reasons do you visit the Ann Arbor Farmers Market?
2. What are your likes and dislikes about the market experience?
3. How would you describe other people you meet within the market?
4. How often do you meet new people in the market?
5. What other establishments within Kerrytown do you frequent?

I designed interview question 1 to further identify the character of the market public by identifying the public’s primary motivations for participating within the farmers’ market environment. Question 2 encouraged market patrons to identify any limitations or constraints that were perceived within the market space, negatively impacting their shopping experience. This question, along with the results from question 1, also provided useful data to reinforce conclusions that the research had drawn from the initial survey results. Question 3 encouraged market patrons to describe the other members of the market public in their own words. I then categorized these responses as either positive or negative and then compared them against each other to subjectively identify feelings of trust between market patrons. Question 4 encouraged patrons to expand on the frequency at which they experienced network-bridging interactions versus network-bonding interactions, and then gave participants a chance to identify any perceived reasons for the difference between the two frequencies. Finally, I designed question 5 to triangulate the initial survey questions that attempted to identify the importance of the farmers’ market to the overall success of the Kerrytown District as a whole.

I also attempted vendor interviews, but due to the intensive nature of small scale agriculture and market vending it was extremely difficult to obtain enough access to market vendors to conduct a formal interview. Of the several requests I made, only one vendor was willing to sit down for a short formal interview where I asked the vendor to describe, in his own words, his feelings about the Ann Arbor Farmers’ Market and his relationships with both market patrons and other market vendors. In order to overcome these accessibility difficulties, I attempted to obtain additional information on trust and reciprocity between vendors, vendor-to-
vendor interactions, and vendor-patron interactions through informal conversations and participant observation.

**Phase 3: Community Leader Interviews and Formal Policy Assessments**

Once the investigation of the market public was completed, I conducted interviews with past and present Kerrytown District community leaders to identify any additional information on social interactions within the market, the role of the market within the historic Kerrytown District, or the impact of the market community on city of Ann Arbor as a whole. Although community leader participation was anonymous, due to accessibility and time constraints I was only able to complete 4 semi-structured interviews. These interviews lasted anywhere from a half hour to two and a half hours and revolved primarily around the interviewee’s description, personal history, and professional and personal opinions about social interaction within the market space. These interviews were largely controlled by the interviewee’s with interviewer interjection occurring only when I felt that further explanation was necessary for an accurate analysis, or that the conversation needed to be refocused back towards the question at hand. In general, the participant responses focused primarily on the interviewee’s personal experiences with the farmers’ market, the Kerrytown District, and the market community, and were utilized within this study to further triangulate results from patron and vendor surveys and interviews by providing ethnographic evidence for comparison.

Finally, since the market space and the Kerrytown district are both managed by the City of Ann Arbor, I obtained and analyzed official public documents pertaining to the city’s management of the farmers’ market and the Kerrytown District to identify any formal policies that might directly or indirectly impact the market or the market’s user-public’s ability to develop social capital networks. While I obtained many of these documents through the interviews with community leaders, I pulled the remaining documents directly from publicly accessible websites. These documents consisted of public newsletters, transcripts of market and city management meetings, official management philosophies and policies, Kerrytown civic organization constitutions, bylaws, and events, and local news coverage of events pertaining to the market’s management and/or its impact on the Kerrytown District or the city as a whole.
Ch 3: Case Study Assessment

Section 3.1: Market Demographics

Referring back to the three criteria for investigating the social capital development potential of the market, the first question I asked is to what extent the market encourages a diverse, inclusive user-public. To do this, I assessed the survey results identifying the user-public composition of the market, and then compared these results to baseline statistics collected from the official 2000 U.S. census data for the city of Ann Arbor. Assuming the geographic critiques of social capital are accurate and that most people choose to participate in events close to home, I focused this comparison on the census tracts immediately surrounding the Kerrytown district and neighboring downtown core. In addition to survey comparisons, I also utilized interview data and participant observation notes to triangulate my analysis, which provided a more in-depth analysis to identify any discrepancies presented solely by the survey data. In general these results showed that the market promotes a relatively homogenous user-public, and that the limited diversity and higher cost of market products may be the most significant obstacles to increasing the diversity of the market user-public. However, while under the existing theoretical framework this homogeneity may limit the market’s ability to encourage the development of social capital, there was also no evidence to suggest that the market’s limited demographic had any negative impact on social interaction between members of the market user-public.

In a general review, the initial survey results identified the market public as predominantly married (77%), white (93%), female (66%), highly educated (54.9% with a masters degree or above), and financial upper-class (56.6% making $70,000+ per person/annually, 32.5% making $100,000 per person/annually). These statistical trends were relatively consistent between market days, however others presented a little more variation. For example, as identified in figure 3.1, the age distribution varied slightly between the Wednesday and the Saturday surveys, however both surveys identified a primary demographic of early retiree’s/unemployed/self-employed individuals (51.7%) in their early 50’s and older (61.2%), although this group was significantly more noticeable in the Wednesday demographic. A primary difference between the two survey sets was the presence of younger family/couples within the Saturday demographic that were not present within the Wednesday demographic. Participant observation data suggests that this was most likely because of full-time weekday
employment, which is another group that increased significantly between the Wednesday and Saturday market demographic (up to 60% on Saturday from 12% on Wednesday).

Participant observation notes helped to explain some of these trends. My field notes suggest that the absence of younger, full-time employed persons from the Wednesday data was not so much their physical absence from the market but rather a direct constraint on the amount of time they had available, thus impacting the individual’s willingness to participate in the survey. I spoke briefly with several working professionals who expressed interest in my work but acknowledged a lack of time at that moment. Many even offered to return on their lunch breaks to complete the survey, however I have no evidence to support that any did. Regardless, despite the survey results I would say that there was a rather significant presence of working class professionals at the Wednesday market, especially before formal business hours where many picked up flowers for the office or fresh goods for the day’s lunch. This presence diminished significantly between 8am and 9am, leaving the retired/unemployed/self-employed patrons of the market to dominate the user-public demographic for the remainder of the market’s hours of operation.

I also had some concerns with the male/female distribution statistics since the Wednesday survey results identified significantly fewer men within the market than the Saturday survey (figure 3.2), and this statistic did not correlate well with my participant observations. Again, when supplemented by the participant observation notes this trend seems to be a lack of survey participation rather than a physical absence from the market. For example, there appeared to be an expectation within elderly couples that women were to represent both themselves and their husbands in the survey process, thus skewing the gender ratio of participants towards a predominantly female population. Since the statistics show that 73.3% of the Wednesday market public is over the age of 50, I believe this socio-cultural observation had a significant impact on the survey results. To compensate for the skewed participation, random gender distribution counts were conducted for comparison. These gender distribution counts concluded that the distribution represented by the Saturday data (60% women, 40% men) was a more accurate estimate for the Wednesday market than the initial Wednesday survey results (79% and 21% respectively) and should therefore be substituted for an accurate analysis of the market demographic.
Regarding ethnic distribution, the census data identified the three largest ethnic categories within the Kerrytown district as White (69.6%), Black (13.9%), and Asian (8.7%). Compared to this data (figure 3.3), it is clear that my surveys (which show the white population at 93%, followed by Other, 4%, and Hispanic, 2%) represent a disproportionately large white population within the market demographic. To verify the accuracy of this data, I again, performed random sample counts on following market days to obtain a general percentage of white patrons compared to non-white patrons within the market. While this methodology is heavily suspect by the researcher’s classification of “white” and “non-white” patrons, the results generally confirmed that the percentage of white patrons within the market demographic is well above the distribution of the Kerrytown district as a whole.

The participant observation discussions that I held with self identified minorities within the market revealed that a driving force behind the absence of ethnic minorities was the limited availability or absence of ethnic food products within the market, particularly during the market's winter and spring operation. Since the market is constrained to retailers who grow/produce their own goods, market products are limited by the growing constraints of the Northern Midwest region and subsequently produce “only the products of a meat and potato diet,” as one patron described. Moreover, there was some discussion about the affordability of market produce since minorities groups typically have lower incomes than the white majority. While this may be a factor I do not wish to reinforce the stereotype of lower paid minorities without explicit data linking to two categories within my study and cannot conclude one way or another without additional research.

My concerns with the education statistics were two fold. My first concern focused on the low representation of high school students within the survey data despite the presence of the neighboring Community High School, an alternative education high school with an open campus policy that allowed students to venture into the market in-between classes and during lunch breaks to purchase goods from the market or the adjacent Kerrytown Market and Shops (a neighboring private shopping center). While this demographic is not present within the market year-round, I recorded a distinct presence of high school students during the Wednesday market when school was in session. While the absence of these students from the survey statistics was the direct result of an IRB restriction prohibiting me from utilizing research participants under
**Personal Income - Market Survey Total**

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<tr>
<td>$100,000+</td>
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</table>

**Table 3.1**

**Marital Status - Market Survey Total**

- **Married**: 77%
- **Single**: 13%
- **Partnered**: 2%
- **Divorced**: 8%

**Figure 3.5**

**Figure 3.6**
the age of 18, their presence is an important element of the market’s demographic profile that should be noted for an accurate assessment of the markets social capital development potential.

Besides the absence of Community High students, I also had a concern with the disproportionately large population of graduate degrees within the market sample compared to the Kerrytown census data (identified in figure 3.4; 31.9% Bachelors, 36.3% Masters, and 18.7% Doctoral within the market, compared to 28.1% Bachelors, 19.1% Masters, and 6.3% Doctoral within the Kerrytown district). Unfortunately there is no way to verify the accuracy of the education data provided through the surveys, and therefore I cannot clarify if there is a potential correlation between higher education and the organic/local consumption trends that appeared to be a cornerstone of the market patron culture. While the literature on farmers markets suggests this correlation may exist (Shakow, 1981; Robinson and Hartenfeld, 2007), the Ann Arbor Public Market’s geographical location near the University of Michigan may also play a significant role in the education distribution within the market public as well.

In addition to above average education levels the statistics also suggest that market patrons are also generally characterized by above average income levels, with 79.6% of survey participants earning more annually than the Kerrytown district median income level of $32,300 per resident (2000 Census). While the survey distribution may reflect some correlation between personal income and education levels, it may also suggest the presence of financial restrictions that deter lower income populations from reasonably participating in the market. To investigate the potential of a financial barrier that may hinder market participation I conducted price comparisons between the farmers’ market and other local food retailers, showing that the cost of farmers’ market products tend to be generally more expensive than the supermarket alternative (table 3.1). While it should also be noted that, while patron interviews identified farmer’s market products as “fresher,” more “environmentally friendly,” and “more ethically” produced than the supermarket alternative (thus giving the product a greater market value), this cost difference may provide an inherent financial hurdle to people with restricted incomes. This gives lower income populations a greater incentive to shop at supermarket alternatives rather than the farmers’ market, consequently limiting the diversity of the market user public.

The marital statistics between the patron surveys and the census data differed as well. While the survey data identified 76.9% of the market user-public as married, and a singles rate of only 13.2% (figure 3.6), the Kerrytown census data recorded a marriage rate of only 18.8% and
Figure 3.7
a singles rate of 65.3% within the district. While there were some instances where the husband and the wife both volunteered to fill out the survey, my participant observation notes showed that this occurred only 4 times, resulting in a potential skewing of only 4.3% and bringing the married percentage rate down to 72.6% of the market public. Unfortunately, as with the education data there are no direct means available to verify the accuracy of the survey data, nor any evidence to support or reject the possibility that married people are more likely to fill out surveys than single people, therefore I must accept the data as it stands. However, with 72.6% of the population listed as “married” and no participant observations that suggest a greater rate of participation by married persons than single parties, I am comfortable characterizing the market public as disproportionally married when compared to the host district.

Finally, patrons were asked to identify the number of children accompanying them to the market. As with the presence of high school students within the market space, the number of children accompanying each adult was important because children under the age of 18 could not be included in this research study and their presence can have a significant impact on the market demographic profile and the actions that occur within the market space. The survey results (identified in figure 3.7) show that the percentage of parents with children was nearly identical between the Wednesday and Saturday markets, with 17% of overall market patrons accompanied by children. The number of children present was also recorded within the survey for a statistical average of 1.6 children per adult with children. My participant observation notes, however, identify a significant flaw in this statistic as it is apparently a common practice for neighboring daycare and primary school teachers to bring their students to the market as a field learning experience, sometimes multiple times per semester. During the Wednesday survey sample one such teacher chose to take the survey and recorded all 20 students that were accompanying her to the market. While this does impact the statistical accuracy of average number of children per adult with children, it does not, however, impact the overall percentage of parents with children or the total number of children present within the market (which are more important for identifying the general demographic composition of the market public).

In addition to direct demographic information the patron survey asked questions pertaining to market access (specifically transportation methods), frequency of market trips per month, and the importance of the farmers’ market to their visit to the Kerrytown district.
Questions addressing access to the market were important for identifying potential constraints to market participation that may help identify why certain demographic populations were missing from the market user-public. The average number of trips per month was also important for identifying the average rate of return for each customer, which has a direct affect on the type of social capital that could be fostered within the market user-public. Since the Ann Arbor Public Farmers’ Market is centrally positioned within the Kerrytown district it is important to understand the role that the farmers’ market plays within the Kerrytown district as a whole. This was done initially by asking patrons if the market was their primary reason for visiting the Kerrytown district that day.

Regarding issues of transportation and access (figure 3.8), although the market is surrounded by methods for alternative transportation access the survey data suggests that roughly 78.0% of the market patrons access the market via personal automobile. While the next two popular transportation modes were walking and bicycling (9.9% and 6.6% respectively) there appears to be no correlation between the Wednesday and Saturday survey data suggesting a consistency of use. While the predominance of personal automobile transportation can sometimes identify the presence of an exclusionary force working against members of the public who do not possess personal automotive transportation, informal interviews with non-market patrons who utilize the neighboring bus stops suggest that between the numerous transit access points throughout the city and city programs which make public transit affordable to low income populations, that this trend is more of a demographic characteristic than an obstacle to market participation. However, since I was unable to interview a large sample of non-market patrons who were not currently using public transportation for travel, additional research is necessary before I can say whether or not there is a significant transportation barrier to market access.

Since there was some evidence to suggest that transportation alternatives may be a feasible alternative to personal automotive transportation for market access, the next question was to identify why market patrons were choosing to pay high prices for parking instead. My participant observation notes suggest that while many survey participants identified themselves as from the city of Ann Arbor, many of them did not live within the core of the city but rather within neighboring suburbs. These are typically areas of high income housing and limited public transportation access, thus making the personal automobile affordable and the preferred method of transportation between the market and personal residences. This observation may also explain
why there are significant differences between the market patron demographic and the
demographic described by the official 2000 U.S. census. However, this observation then begs the
question as to why full time residences within the Kerrytown district and neighboring downtown
districts are not utilizing the market as much as suburban outsiders. Unfortunately my research
does not contain any information directly addressing transportation choice motives, and therefore
additional research should be conducted to help answer this question in the future.

Concerning the average number of market trips per month (figure 3.9), the survey results
for both Wednesday and Saturday showed that overall 71.7% of market patrons attend the
market once a week or less, on average. Once again, participant observation notes identified full-
time weekday employment as the primary obstacle to Wednesday market participation, thus
constraining overall market participation to an average of less than once a week and promoting
an overall increase in Saturday market participation over Wednesday market participation.
Moreover, there appears to be a correlation between Wednesday patrons who attend less than
one time a week on average and the large percentage of retired patrons within the Wednesday
market demographic discussed earlier. Unfortunately my research did not identify a reason for
this correlation other than repetitive patron “tradition” (self identified by patrons through patron
surveys); however, this same behavioral characteristic can be identified in regular Saturday
market patrons as well.

Finally, participants were asked to identify whether or not the market was the primary
reason for their visit to the Kerrytown district to help identify the relative importance of the
market when compared to the variety of other attractions the Kerrytown District has to offer.
While there was a 5% variation between Wednesday and Saturday markets, 97% and 92% of
survey participants identified the market as their primary reason for visiting the Kerrytown
district that day. Participant observation notes suggest that the 5% difference between market
days can be accounted for by the increased presence of full time employees within the
Wednesday market demographic, who are most likely employees of other businesses within the
Kerrytown district.

Conclusions
When comparing the results of the market surveys with baseline U.S. census data it is clear that
there are significant gaps in the market demographic which suggest that the market does not
currently attract a diverse user-public. The two most significant factors limiting the market user
diversity appears to be a lack of ethnic food options and an increased product cost when compared to local supermarket retailers, consequently discouraging market use by both ethnic and financial minorities. Transportation access may also serve as a physical barrier to market participation, however additional research is necessary to confirm or reject this possibility. Although the market has recently made some effort to make the farmers’ market more affordable through the Project FRESH coupon program, the lack of product diversity still provides a strong disincentive for ethnic minorities to travel to the market for their fresh produce needs. Moreover, despite the market’s efforts and its relative ease of physical accessibility, it appears difficult to convince area residents who are largely single and on a limited budget to pay extra for market produce when the cheaper cost and greater selection of the supermarket alternative will allow them more options in these tough economic times.

What the market does, however, is encourage the formation of a user-public that is fairly gender balanced, includes members of all age and employment categories, is highly educated, and is child friendly and family oriented. Rather than a broad, diverse population the market appears to encourage the formation of a specialized user-public that, based on my participant observation notes, appears to be unified by a support for local and organic food production methods. While this lack of diversity may limit the market’s ability to achieve the theoretical ideal for social capital development, at least under the current theoretical framework, the unified goal of market support and participation may provide just enough social control to allow for the development of specialized network capital without the risk of excessive protest or unrest that may develop in a truly diverse, public environment. Therefore, in order to better understand the impact of the market demographic on the market network’s ability to generate social capital, I need to understand the interactions that are occurring between network members to identify any potential impact that the market’s limited demographic diversity has on the networks ability to encourage active social interaction between its members.
Section 3.2: Social Interaction

To investigate the extent to which patrons actively engage each other within the market space I included two questions within the initial patron survey which asked how often each patron met new people within the market, and how often they interacted with familiar people within the market. Once this initial data was collected and analyzed, participant observation and follow-up interviews were also conducted with both market patrons and market vendors to identify the frequency and character of interactions between members of the market user-public. In general, these results showed that while the market is heavily characterized by social interaction, the physical space and management policies of the market hinder the frequency and diversity of social interactions and, similar to the limitations on user diversity, encourage the development of specialized network capital rather than diverse social capital.

To review the initial survey results (figure 3.10), when asked about the frequency of their social interactions with previously unknown individuals 92.2% of market patrons reported some degree of new social interaction when they participated in the farmers’ market, although 51.1% of market patrons claimed that this occurred only “rarely.” This means that 41.1% of market patrons reported meeting new people sometimes, often, or frequently during their participation in the farmers’ market, and that occasional new social interactions were a characteristic of the market experience for over 40% of the market user-public. When asked the frequency of social interactions with known individuals, however, the initial survey results not only showed that 98.89% of market patrons reported some degree of social interaction with a previously established relationship, with 88.9% of market patrons reporting that these interactions occurred sometimes, often, or frequently. Moreover 62.2% of market patrons reported that these interactions occurred often or frequently, making social interaction with previously introduced individuals a common characteristic of the market experience for over 62% of the market user-public.

These results suggest an interesting relationship between market members that may contradict the literature. When the two charts are compared they suggest that new interactions are somewhat rare for the majority of the user-public, and that they tend to meet with previously introduced users more often. Once the initial introduction has occurred (bridging) future interactions, which occur more frequently, only serve to bond these connections. Bonding, again, can potentially serve as an exclusionary force against the expansion of the market network, both
New Interactions v. Previous Network Connections

![New Interactions v. Previous Network Connections diagram](image)

Figure 3.10

Image 3.1- Photo of Market Aisle
(Photo by Author)
spatially and in content. However, with 40% of participants reporting some degree of first time interaction the results suggest that the market community is not as exclusionary as the literature suggests it should be. Therefore these charts can also be interpreted to suggest that new access into the market community occurs regularly, despite the comparatively high frequency of bonding interactions that are occurring between previously established network connections.

While the initial survey results are highly supportive of the market’s ability to foster a user-public characterized by active social interaction, additional interview and participant observation data suggests that the character of these interactions may limit their social capital development potential. When asked to describe their interactions within the market space, 24 out of 26 interview participants (92.3%) stated that their interactions predominately occurred with market vendors rather than other market patrons. In the words of one interviewer, “it seems like every time I come to the market I meet someone new… mostly vendors. It’s not too often that I meet other shoppers unless we are both talking to a vendor about the same thing, and then I usually don’t catch their name.” These interactions, while important for maintaining the agri-food networks described in the literature (Jarosz, 2000), do not contribute to the local development of social capital since market vendors are mobile retailers who spend only a limited amount of time within the city and therefore cannot be called upon to support other network members in situations that occur outside of formal market business hours.

Moreover, the majority of interview participants described their social interactions as limited to formal market transactions or the transfer of human capital, which was often characterized as agricultural in nature and consisted predominately of tips on how to grow or cook the products being purchased. My participant observation notes also supported this description since I only identified one counterexample to this trend, and that was when a local vendor stopped in the middle of my interview to help a regular patron purchase a car by setting up a meeting between the patron and a friend of the vendor. Although this example is a great representation of the benefits that social networking can offer, the limited presence of non-agricultural interactions raises a question against the market’s ability to contribute to diverse social capital development. Again, while high levels of social interaction are important for maintaining the flow of capital between network members, if the interactions are relatively homogenous in their content they limit the types of capital being transferred and therefore constrain the overall social value of the network.
While investigating these relationships I identified two key obstacles discouraging diverse interactions within the market space. The first, and perhaps most significant, is the physical design of the market which actively prohibits patrons from engaging with each other within the market space. Originally designed to serve as a lumber yard, the market space consists of a series of covered aisles with vendor booths enclosing both sides (image 3.1). As a result, formal access to the market space is limited to the end of each aisle during official hours of market operation. Moreover, other than aisle space the market space does not provide any internal space for patrons to stop, relax, and enjoy the market experience from within the market space. While it is relatively easy for patrons to step to the side of the aisle to interact with market vendors (who are comfortably elevated outside and above the busy aisle way), for patrons to engage each other within the market space they must occupy a space within the aisle and attempt to interact while constantly adjusting for the continuous flow of traffic around them. Since this is often a loud and difficult task, the design of the market effectively discourages patrons from interacting with one another during formal market operation.

The second obstacle discouraging diverse interaction within the market space is the farmers’ market’s formal management policy, which generally prohibits any public display or action within the market space that may interfere with the market retail process. Despite the fact that the farmers’ market is located within an identified “public” market space and is funded by taxpayer dollars, the market’s management policy actively regulates against political action or public congregation within the market space during formal hours of operation (the time when public action or protest is most likely to be seen by other members of the public). While this regulation does not necessarily impact the content of individual interactions, it does effectively prevent any form of petitioning, flyer distribution, or other forms of public knowledge dissemination. Although it is theoretically possible that such topics could be discussed during bonding interactions that occur between market patrons outside of formal market participation, this regulation helps to explain why the bulk of interactions within the market are primarily retail oriented and/or agricultural in content.

As a result of these two obstacles, patrons have been forced to utilize neighboring private spaces for the bulk of their social interactions. As stated in the literature, this may be a problem for social capital development because, unlike theoretical public space, private owners are legally allowed to regulate access and behavior on the property (Mitchell, 1995; Kohn, 2004).
Image 3.2 - Photo of Political Campaigns on Neighboring Private Property

Image 3.3 - Photo of Official Sketch of Market Renovations

(Photos by Author)
However, the two most commonly used private spaces surrounding the Ann Arbor Public Farmers’ Market (one located immediately to the north-east of the market space, the other to the south-east; both owned and operated by Kerrytown Market and Shops) actually appear to be less restrictive against social behavior than the “public” market space. As the image 3.2 demonstrates below, despite the public market restrictions political activists were authorized (and actually encouraged, in the words of several campaign personnel) to utilize the neighboring private spaces for both local and national campaigning. Although the Kerrytown Market and Shops management reserves the right to regulate content that is overly graphic or offensive (one example given was a group of pro-life advocates who tried to campaign with graphic posters featuring photographs of aborted fetuses), current management practices seem to encourage the public to utilize these private spaces rather than restrict actions that do not directly promote private consumption.

Conclusions
Returning to the initial question, which asked to what extent members of the market user-public actively engage each other within the market space, the answer appears to be quite extensively. However, the character of these interactions raises a question about the effectiveness of these interactions for the development of local social support networks. While the survey results suggest that members of the user-public are actively engaging each other during the market experience, and that social interaction is a key characteristic of the market experience (19 out of 16 interviewees reported social interaction as a primary reason for market participation), social interactions are primarily limited to agricultural content and to exchanges with temporary local actors (the market vendors) who are unable to be called upon at a later date and time. Fortunately there does not appear to be any evidence to suggest that the limited diversity of the market demographic has a significant impact on the frequency of social interaction within the market (although the diversity of capital transferred between market members may be constrained by the demographic limitations). Rather, the two biggest challenges to active social interaction within the AAPFM appear to be the physical design of the space, and formal management policy.

While physical changes to the market space can be costly and take years for governmental approval, the city of Ann Arbor has fortunately been in the process of approving a partial expansion and renovation of the market that will help alleviate the current social interaction restrictions caused by the physical design of the market space. As image 3.3
demonstrates, in addition to increasing the number of available vendor stalls the new market design will also include the provision of a pavilion with a central gathering space that could be utilized for social interaction. Moreover, there is hope among local community leaders that the pavilion space will be utilized outside of formal market business hours for community programming events, giving local organizations a formal meeting area within the market space that is currently unavailable due to design constraints and a lack of public infrastructure (i.e. benches, etc). Although follow-up research will be necessary to confirm any changes, this addition may help alleviate some of the physical constraints to social capital development within the market.

Despite improvements on physical constraints, however, constraints on content diversity and public knowledge dissemination within the market continue to limit the AAPFM’s ability to encourage diverse social interaction between market network members. Fortunately for this specific market though, the demand for a public forum is filled by neighboring private spaces which are uniquely managed to be more “public” than the public space of the market. This relationship between the market and its neighboring private property owners is important because it shows that, despite market management concerns, political public action and market commerce can mutually exist in the same environment. Although political action is currently restricted to areas outside the formal market boundaries, the current presence of political activity on the markets edge (which, for all purposes does impact market patrons as they enter and exit the property) shows that the market could weaken its regulation and allow political activity within the market space (or perhaps designated areas of the market) without disrupting the retail process. This would not only allow the public the right to practice its constitutional rights within the public market but also help secure the public’s right to free speech and congregation should the Kerrytown Market and Shops management ever decide to restrict access to their private spaces. Moreover, the provision of more authentic public space within the public market would also help increase the diversity of capital transferred during market interactions and therefore increase the benefit of social capital developed within the market space.

Despite these restrictions though, it is important to note that the market does encourage the active dissemination of specialized agricultural knowledge from rural producers to urban populations, just as Jarosz (2000) described through her work on agri-food networks. Most importantly, the farmers’ market as an institution does this through an intentional preference for
increased social interaction during the commerce process. While the limited diversity of these interactions may constrain this market’s ability to develop diverse social capital under the existing theoretical framework, the markets heavy emphasis on social interaction has encouraged the development of a social network that efficiently transfers specialized products and information between rural and urban populations. While this network may only be able to provide its members with a very specialized form of support, the results of this research suggest that the limited demographic diversity of the market network does not negatively impact the market’s ability to encourage active interaction between its members or its ability to share resources. Rather, my research suggests that it may be a shared passion for the market by market participants that helps increase trust between market actors and provide them with a common interest on which new interactions may begin.

**Section 3.3: Continued Interaction Outside of the Market**

The final question of my investigation asked to what extent members of the market network continued to interact outside formal market participation. Again, while diversity and interaction are important to social capital development, to serve as community support systems network connections must be accessible to members outside of the market, both spatially and temporally. Therefore, to assess the extent of social interaction outside of formal market participation I once again started with questions from the initial patron survey which asked participants to rate their frequency of social interaction with other members of the market user-public outside of formal market participation. I also asked participants to rate how frequently they volunteered their time or services to other members of the market user-public, which once again addressed both issues of trust and reciprocity through the concept of active volunteerism (Hipp and Perrin, 2006). In general, these results showed that despite active social interactions within the market space, there appears to be minimal voluntary social interaction between the majority of market network members outside formal market participation. However, my participant observation notes suggest that the small percentage of market patrons who do voluntarily interact outside of formal market participation do so in an informal leadership capacity, allowing the market network’s specialized capital to be shared with other specialized networks for the collaborative production of larger scale district or city-wide events.

As identified in figure 3.11, while 92.2% of participants reported some degree of new interaction within the market, only 71.9% of participants reported any degree of interaction with
these newly “bridged” members outside of the market space. Moreover, 58.4% of market participants stated that interactions with newly bridged network members outside of the market space occurred “rarely,” leaving only 13.5% of participants reporting interaction with newly bridged members outside the market space “sometimes,” “often,” or “frequently.” However, when asked about their frequency of interaction with other well established members of the market user-public outside of the market, 98.9% of participants reported some degree of interaction, with 80.0% of participants reporting a frequency of “sometimes,” “often,” or “frequently.” Therefore, the survey data suggests that many members of farmers’ market network continue to act outside of the markets formal operation, although such interactions seem to occur predominantly between bonding members of the community network. These statistics may be misleading, however, since the questions do not specify who the market patrons are interacting, and in what capacity or location. For example, my participant observation notes suggest that the majority of these non-market interactions occur between close friends or family members, and frequently occur within private residences or within employment settings. Rather than identifying the continuation of new relationships formed within the market, these results suggest that these relationships were preexisting market participation and would have continued regardless of market participation.

In conjunction with the small percentage of market patrons who voluntarily interact outside of formal market participation, the survey results on active volunteerism also suggest that the vast majority of market patrons rarely, if ever, volunteer their time or services to other members of the market user-public. As shown in figure 3.12 almost 50% of survey participants stated that they never volunteer time or services to other members of the market user-public. Of the remaining 50%, 38.2% of total survey participants claimed they do so only “rarely,” leaving just 12.4% of survey participants who volunteer “sometimes” or “often” (no one claimed “frequent” volunteering activity). While the literature suggests that these results show that members of the market user-public may suffer from issues of trust, fearing that their efforts may be taken for granted and not reciprocated in a time of need, follow up interviews suggest that the majority of market patrons (26/26 interview participants) would assist a fellow member of the market user-public if asked to do so. Those who have never volunteered stated that they had simply never been asked or given the opportunity to do so. While these interview responses may be a little idealistic, especially when compared to the survey statistics that suggested a much
different trend in practice, there generally appears to be an overall level of comfort between market participants that would allow volunteerism to occur, even if not done “actively”. This social comfort makes sense when compared to the relatively homogenous market demographic and a shared appreciation for the market experience identified in the two previous sections.

Further interviews and participant observation notes, however, suggest that the overall levels of active volunteerism within the group network may not be as important as the level of interaction that market network members have with members of other networks. While up to this point my research has focused heavily on the internal workings of the market network and the self-serving support structures developed between market network members, I found evidence of the real benefits of social capital development when just a few select market leaders interacted with members of other networks, bridging the two and collectively utilizing select resources to achieve some mutually desired outcome. For example, I witnessed several interactions where self identified market community leaders met with non-market oriented community leaders to plan other district wide events, including the African American festival, the monthly Trunk-a-Palooza resale market, and the “Nash-Fest” country music festival. While each of these market-oriented community leaders had an active role in farmers’ market network, it became very clear that these individuals were not singularly focused on the farmers’ market and that the market network was only one of the many specialized networks that each of these individuals participated in (supporting the geographic critique that social capital is better understood as a collection of interacting networks rather than a single network entity).

As a result, the data suggests that the benefits of social capital networking vary depending on scale. While the initial survey data suggested that the limited diversity of the market user public would limit the market network’s ability to successfully develop social capital to support network members, the decentralized approach found within this market shows that localized networks do not need to be highly diverse in order to contribute to larger scale collaborative events that provide for the networks members, as well as other members of the larger scale host community. Therefore, despite the existing literature, these results suggest that a collection of decentralized specialized networks working together may actually provide a greater degree of social capital for the larger scale community than a collection of internally-focused local networks that are each striving for capital diversity (and inevitably competing for a limited supply of diverse network participants).
As a result of these changes to the existing theoretical framework, it appears that perhaps the issue of trust and reciprocity between individual members may be less important to larger scale social capital development than the trust and reciprocity between network leaders, so long as the network leaders have the necessary trust of their networks that allows the leaders to access and utilize the networks capital when needed. This presents a difficult situation though, since network leaders must then face two challenges: maintaining a healthy internal network which allows the networks capital to be used, and maintaining relationships with other area network leaders to jointly provide goods for the larger host population. Moreover, within this new theoretical framework it is crucial that both of these challenges are met since highly homogenous local networks are still limited in their ability to provide for their members without the collaborative support of other networks. Unfortunately, my research did not extend far enough to further identify the specific factors involved in the larger scale development of social capital; however this case study does represent the importance of understanding social interaction and social capital development as a multi-scalar and perhaps hierarchical process.

Conclusions

Returning to the original question, these results suggest that members of the market network often interact outside of formal market participation, however these interactions are often heavily bonded and market participation may not be a crucial factor in the maintenance of the majority of these relationships. Therefore, these interactions do not represent the potential support structure that could form as a result of social capital development within the Ann Arbor Public Farmers’ Market. While under the existing theoretical framework this could be a limiting factor on the market’s ability to provide support for market network members, my research suggests that in practice this is not the case. Rather, the market’s highly specialized network capital allows market network leaders to volunteer the collective resources of the market network to collaborative projects with other specialized networks, contributing to larger scale events that benefit members of the market network as well as other members of the larger scale host community. By having a large quantity of a specific kind of capital, network leaders can draw upon the resource share of many individuals without placing an extensive burden on a small, disproportionate number of network members (as may have been the case under the traditional social capital framework where each member individually provides unique capital).
Although this expanded theoretical framework helps to show another way of looking at the importance of diversity and social interaction within social capital development, it is important to note that the social capital development framework represented by this specific market leaves the ability of local networks to provide for its members dependent on cooperation with other specialized networks. Traditionally, social capital development has been supported as an internal support structure, where members of a social capital network directly support one another through efforts of general reciprocity, not through indirect benefits that may or may not result from network member interactions. While my research suggests that the promotion of many specialized networks may produce a greater benefit for the overall host community, these specialized networks may not be able to yield the traditional benefits of social capital networks as identified by the existing literature. Although not the case with the AAPFM which provides its members with a commercial market experience and access to agricultural products and information, the minimal support offered by other highly specialized networks may not be enough incentive to maintain active participation of market networks. Therefore, perhaps the “functional” aspect of functional public spaces may be the key to maintaining the active participation necessary for this “specialized network” social capital development formula to work. However, since this was not the explicit focus of my research, and I only explored on unique case study example, additional research is necessary to identify any potential relationship between specialized network social capital development and social networks centered around functional public spaces.
Ch 4: Final Assessment

To review, my research suggests that the Ann Arbor Public Farmers’ Market (AAPFM) lives up to the farmers’ market literature by providing market participants with an agricultural experience that is designed to place consumers in direct interaction with market producers. The AAPFM also does an excellent job linking rural producers from across Michigan with the urban populations of downtown Ann Arbor, supporting Jarosz’s (2000) idea that farmers’ markets play a significant role in maintaining agro-food networks which utilize the importance of social interaction for the movement of agricultural capital. However, while the farmers’ market experience does encourage a healthy degree of social interaction between market patrons and vendors, my research suggests that the market represented by the AAPFM may not represent the ideal environment for social capital development because of the homogenous character of the market demographic, the existence of management policies that constrain the diversity of interactions within the market, and limitations provided by the physical design of the market space. Under the existing literature, these constraints identify direct limitations on the diversity of capital that can be accumulated by the network, and therefore the network’s ability to provide for its members.

However, despite the market’s limitations as identified by the existing literature my research suggests that the AAPFM does, in fact, still contribute to larger scale social capital development efforts that support members of the Kerrytown District as a whole. Although the diversity of the capital generated within the market network is constrained by the homogeneity of the market user-public and existing market management policy, active participation between market network members has encouraged the development of highly specialized network capital specifically focused on the major agricultural themes of the farmers’ market. While this highly specialized capital can only provide a very limited range of support to the network members directly, AAPFM network leaders have chosen to volunteer the market network’s capital towards cooperative efforts with other specialized networks, consequently contributing to efforts that support members of the market network as well as the rest of the larger scale Kerrytown District host community. Therefore, despite the market’s social capital development shortcomings as identified by the existing literature, my research suggests that the market is still contributing to social capital development through a decentralized, multi-scalar process.
While this new decentralized model identifies an alternative understanding to social capital development planning, or perhaps an understanding of a different kind of social capital development process, it is important to note that my research identified several concerns with this model as well. The most significant is the specialized network’s limited ability to support its own members without cooperation with other specialized networks. One of the central benefits to social capital development as identified by the literature is the network’s ability to provide for itself. By centralizing resources and eliminating the need for contracts and rental costs, social capital networks are praised for their theoretical ability to provide quick and efficient support to the members who actively help maintain the network. Under the decentralized model identified by the AAPFM case study, the market network is limited in its ability to provide its members with much more than specialized agricultural capital. To provide its members with anything more than agriculturally-based support, the network is required to work with other networks (which each have their own needs, goals, objectives, et cetera) to plan mutually beneficial events that may or may not meet the exact needs of either network. While this collaborative process does allow for more network or host community members to participate in the support event, it also significantly increases the transaction cost of providing services to network members.

As a result of this decrease in support provided by the network, it is also possible that network members may lose interest in active participation since they may not feel that they are getting anything from their efforts. Drawing on the economic “tragedy of the commons,” if community members receive the same support regardless of their participation in the specialized local network then many members may chose not to devote their time or resources to network participation. Surprisingly, this was not the case with the AAPFM despite the fact that social capital generated by the farmers’ market network was not directly associated with market participation. My research suggests that this may be the result of the market’s official function as a managed commercial enterprise. Rather than general public space where participation is often voluntary without an explicit overarching purpose, functional public space gives people a reason to utilize the space for reasons other than general social interaction. As it was within the AAPFM case study, the social capital benefits of participation in a functional public space may have been secondary to the enjoyment of participation in the formal function of the space. Of the many market participants that I spoke with none of them mentioned social networking as an explicit reason for market participation, yet many mentioned that they participated because they simply
enjoyed the farmers’ market experience. This is particularly important to social capital development studies because it shows that functional spaces may be a great way to indirectly encourage social interaction and the potential development of social capital, even if social capital development is not an explicit purpose of the functional space.

In conclusion, my research suggests that the existing literature is accurate in its appreciation for the importance of social interaction in the distribution of capital, and that increased interaction between individuals helps to lower transaction costs between them and potentially leads to the development of informal support networks. My research also suggests that the existing literature is accurate in its proclamation that the diversity of the network participants directly affects the diversity of the capital transferred between network members, and therefore the network’s ability to provide support services directly to its members. However, my research also suggests that the existing literature is misguided in its implication that diverse centralized networks are the most appropriate manner through which social capital is developed. As the AAPFM case study shows, even relatively homogenous social networks can contribute to the overall social capital of a local community by collaboratively volunteering the highly specialized capital that can result from a heavily bonded network.

Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, my research suggests that the current literature is limited in its understanding of how different informal support structures are created, and that additional research is required to better understand the different ways in which social capital is created and distributed. It should be stressed that my research focused only on one specific case study of one specific type of functional space, and even then identified a social capital development model that contradicted many aspects of the existing literature. Furthermore, it should be noted that even within the case study my research was only sufficient enough to address the social network of the market patrons and largely excluded the network or market vendors who, I suggest, likely interact in a very different way than market patrons. Therefore, further research is required before I can even claim to fully understand the multiple social capital development processes that are simultaneously interacting within my case study. Clearly there are more potential social capital development models than the literature currently acknowledges.

Finally, regarding the planned development of social capital, my research suggests that it is a very plausible and should continue to be explored further. As Putnam identified, the primary limitation to social capital development is a lack of participation, and as my research suggests,
participation, regardless of the degree of diversity, is the key to maintaining these types of informal support structures. Moreover, my research suggests that the increased development of functional public spaces could increase social interaction, although the social capital benefit of these interactions will be directly related to the function, management policy governing the function, and the willingness of the public to engage in the function. That being said the appropriateness of certain types of public spaces will depend on the public to which they are intending to serve, and there is clearly no one type of functional public space that should be championed for social capital development in all cities. Regardless, it is important that researchers and city planners continue to discuss the practical application of geographic principles that may be able to help combat the decline of social capital in American cities, and continue to conduct case study investigations to identify which types of functional public spaces will help encourage the desired social capital network structure for each individual city. Help the people help themselves.
Works Cited


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Appendix A: Market Patron Survey

Arbor Farmer’s Market Participant Survey

Part One:
Sex:  Male / Female (Please circle one)  Age:_______
Ethnicity:  _____ White/Caucasian  _____ Black/African American  _____ Hispanic/Latino
          _____ American Indian/Alaskan Native  _____ Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander
          _____ Other: _________________________

Current Residence (City, St) _________________________________________________________

Marital Status:  _____ Single  _____ Married  _____ Divorced/Separated

What is the highest level of education you have completed?
____ Some High School  ____ High School Graduate  ____ Some College
____ Associate degree/Technical/Trade School program  ____ Bachelors Degree
____ Some Post-Graduate  ____ Masters Degree  ____ Ph.D.

Are you currently a university/college student?  _____ Yes  _____ No

What is your current employment status?
____ Unemployed  _____ Employed Part-Time  _____ Employed Full Time
____ Self Employed

What was your annual income for the most recent calendar year?
____ Less than $20,000  ____ $20,000 – $35,000  ____ $35,000 -- $50,000
____ $50,000 -- $70,000  ____ $70,000 -- $100,000  ____ $100,000+

By what means of transportation did you arrive at the Ann Arbor Farmer’s Market today?
____ Walking  ____ Personal Automobile  ____ AATA Bus System  ____ Taxi
____ Carpool  ____ Bicycle  Other: ____________________________________________

How many children under the age of 18 accompanied you to the market today?
Was the Ann Arbor Farmer’s Market your primary reason for your trip to Kerrytown? If no, then what was your primary reason for visiting Kerrytown?

On average, how many trips do you make to the Ann Arbor Farmer’s market per month?  
______________________  

In what seasons do you visit the Ann Arbor Farmer’s Market? (Please check all that apply)  
_____ Spring  _____ Summer  _____ Fall  _____ Winter  

On average, how much money do you spend at the Ann Arbor Farmer’s Market each visit?  

On average, how much money do you spend at neighboring businesses each trip to the Ann Arbor Farmer’s Market?  

Part Two: (Please circle the most appropriate response)  

How often do you meet new individuals within the Ann Arbor market space?  

Never       Rarely       Somewhat Often       Often       Frequently  

How often do you engage with these individuals outside of the market?  

Never       Rarely       Somewhat Often       Often       Frequently  

How often do you interact with people whom you already know at the Ann Arbor market?  

Never       Rarely       Somewhat Often       Often       Frequently  

How often do you engage with these people outside the market?  

Never       Rarely       Somewhat Often       Often       Frequently  

How often do you volunteer your time to help someone you met at the farmer’s market, free of charge?  

Never       Rarely       Somewhat Often       Often       Frequently  

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Appendix B: Market Vendor Survey

Ann Arbor Farmer’s Market Producer Survey

Part One:
What is the name of your farm/company? __________________________________________________

Where is your farm/business located? (City, State) __________________________________________

Approximately how many acres is your farm? _____________________________________________

How many years have you been selling products at the Ann Arbor Farmer’s Market? __________

What days do you retail at the Ann Arbor Farmer’s Market? _____ Saturday _____ Wednesday

What other farmer’s markets do you retail at?

Do you participate in any additional activities at the Ann Arbor Public Market other than the Farmer’s Market? _____ Yes _____ No

If Yes, what activities/events?

On average, how often do you purchase products from other retailers at the market?

On average, how much do you typically spend on products from other retailers each week?

On average, how much do you typically spend at neighboring retail locations within the Kerrytown district each week?
Part Two: (Please circle the most appropriate response)

How often do you meet new individuals within the Ann Arbor market space?
Never       Rarely       Somewhat Often       Often       Frequently

How often do you engage with these individuals outside of the market?
Never       Rarely       Somewhat Often       Often       Frequently

How often do you interact with people whom you already know at the Ann Arbor market?
Never       Rarely       Somewhat Often       Often       Frequently

How often do you engage with these people outside the market?
Never       Rarely       Somewhat Often       Often       Frequently

How often do you volunteer your time to help someone you met at the farmer’s market, free of charge?
Never       Rarely       Somewhat Often       Often       Frequently