From Public Market to *La Marqueta*: Shaping Spaces and Subjects of Food Distribution in New York City, 1930 to 2012

by

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Abstract

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Public markets are definitive parts of the urban landscape. Policies shaping municipal food provisioning, including public markets, produce and reproduce differentiated subjects and unevenly developed spaces. Social science has not paid sustained attention to public food markets; this research contributes to a fragmented and multi-perspective body of work that demonstrates the many ways in which markets intersect with urban processes. I look at the geographic distribution of food in and through New York City's public markets from 1930 to the present by mapping intersections of politics, citizens, consumers, social class, gender, ethnicity, race, government, capital, and the retailing landscape. Tracing these processes over more than a century, this study demonstrates that food distribution is a dynamic and highly contested aspect of urban life, underscoring a deep if sometimes under-articulated recognition of the work done by the flow of food through city streets.

Focused on New York City's public markets, particularly the enclosed retail markets built in the late 1930s and early 1940s to contain New York City's pushcarts and street peddlers, this study explores how the immigrant working classes became the objects of municipal food policy. Food habits became a means through which to Americanize – and civilize – the masses. Along with their bodies, their food landscapes became the targets of state intervention. Working class neighborhoods were – and are – vulnerable to state interventions that too often further alienate already disempowered populations.

Food policy has the potential to advance social justice. In New York City, we are witnessing the emergence of a new municipal food policy, which, if implemented, will be the first comprehensive policy to be proposed since the Progressive Era. Aimed at reducing inequities and improving public health, and integrated with broad goals of environmental and economic sustainability, the proposals on the table point in promising directions.

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Chapter 1: Intersections of public markets, municipal policy, and the spaces and subjects of food distribution

Today, in New York City, as in many cities across the United States including Washington D.C., Seattle, Detroit and Philadelphia, there is growing recognition on the part of many constituents including public health officials, parents, and “foodies” that our food systems are broken. Anxiety about what we eat has risen as we become increasingly alienated from our food supply (Jackson 2010; Freidberg 2004). Meat and poultry laced with hormones, pesticides, and pathogens travel thousands of miles along carbon-heavy production and distribution chains. “Fresh” and “healthy” foods like lettuce and tomatoes, products of the agricultural-industrial complex, are blamed for national-scale food scares (Freidberg 2010).

After gaining dominance of the grocery industry in the 1950s and 1960s, supermarkets abandoned lower income neighborhoods, creating food deserts where “over-nutrition” is correlated with epidemic rates of diabetes and obesity, and fast food is more easily found than fresh food. Citizens of food deserts pay a premium for low-quality goods, in addition to bearing the literal burdens of these nutritionally toxic environments (Poppendieck 2008, 2010). The societal costs of food-related illnesses are represented as rising tax burdens and loss of productivity, economic losses that will be shouldered by the middle classes (Guthman 2011; Guthman and Dupuis 2006).

In New York City, politicians and civic leaders are developing comprehensive proposals that address food at the intersection of many aspects of city life including public health, environmental sustainability and the economy. Numerous initiatives encourage “healthy” food habits, including coalitions to improve school food, and initiatives to identify space for the

creation of new urban farms. Investments are being made to improve infrastructure, convert school roofs into vegetable gardens, increase rail connections to New York's Hudson Valley, create a wholesale market for upstate farmers, construct kitchen incubators to support burgeoning entrepreneurs, and build sustainable regional networks of green, local, seasonal food. Existing public markets are thriving; new public markets are opening across the city in many shapes and forms in response to demand from communities across socio-economic spectrums.

While food crises are often presented as universal, their effects, and the discourses used to talk about them, are differentiated by race, ethnicity and social class. The ways the state addresses these crises is also structurally, institutionally, and geographically uneven. Policies geared towards solving "food problems" too often reinscribe differences and alleviate problems without addressing the underlying inequities that produced them in the first place. Municipal policies that address food distribution in New York City today aim to ameliorate the material spaces of neighborhoods, with the potential of adding value to surrounding real estate, spurring economic activity, increasing self-sufficiency, and improving overall health. Produce and other "healthy food" are injected into lower-income communities as an antidote to food-related disease by establishing farmers markets, and by incentivizing bodegas to stock fresh fruits and vegetables and reduced fat milk. Policies like FRESH[1], which uses zoning amendments and tax abatements to incentivize the construction of supermarkets in underserved communities, and

[1] In response to Going to Market, a 2008 study by the Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), City Planning (DCP), and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), City Council adopted FRESH (Food Retail Expansion to Support Health) in 2009. Initially the program targeted neighborhoods underserved by full-service grocery stores in the Bronx and Brooklyn; it was expanded to include similarly underserved sections of Queens in 2011. http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/fresh/index.shtml.

Green Carts[2], which issues pushcart permits to a maximum of 5,000 vendors who locate in neighborhoods with limited access to fruits and vegetables, strive to balance recognition that food environments shape food habits with the desire to encourage and enable the individual's responsibility for his or her own diet.

Historically, policies designed to fix problems of food distribution in New York have also meant increased surveillance and regulation of those citizens whose food habits and food environments were viewed as a threat to the collective health of the city by being foreign, unassimilated. Poor food habits were associated with susceptibility to disease, low productivity, and predilection for violence. Middle class norms and demands were institutionalized as models of legitimacy, and often determined when and how government responded to what is perceived or described as public demand for state intervention in food distribution. Over the course of the twentieth century, policies that were represented as advancing – and in many cases did advance – public health or other measures of collective good, also advanced propertied and business interests whose political support was the paramount concern of policymakers themselves. By taking a long view of the last century, we have an opportunity to look for underlying continuities that can help us understand how food policies arise, the specific discursive forms they take, and how they shape the subjects and spaces they work on and contribute to a critical framework for evaluating urban food policies today.

[2] Green Carts are mobile food carts that offer fresh produce in specific New York City neighborhoods. Mayor Bloomberg signed Local Law 9 in March 2008 that established 1,500 cart permits for Green Carts. The Initiative is funded by private and public funds that provide assistance for vendors, branding, marketing and outreach to residents of targeted neighborhoods http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cdp/cdp_pan_green_carts.shtml.

Urban life is predicated on the ability of the city to import food. Medieval towns had market squares where farmers sold produce from surrounding farms, rivers and forests. The growth of industrial centers like London and New York City were fueled by globalized food systems that supplied the working classes with cheap, plentiful, and often nutritionally inadequate, food (Mintz 1986). The distribution of that food through urban space is a political project that provides a "lens to think about how the management of food maps onto strategies for managing life" (Nally 2011:38).

Maintaining a balance between consumers and suppliers has historically been a responsibility of government. The agora was regulated by the polis in the days of ancient Greece. Royal patents were issued to guilds and churches, giving them the right to hold markets (Pyle 1977). The self-perceived rights of citizens to subsistence, and the equally self-perceived rights of commercial interests intersected in the market place, and not always well. The state's role, often too late to prevent unrest and even violence, has been to regulate the meeting place where the populace obtains its food.

This is a study of the geographic distribution of food in and through New York City's public markets from 1930 to the present. It maps intersections of politics, citizens, consumers, social class, gender, ethnicity, race, government, capital, and the retailing landscape. It examines how policies shaping municipal food provisioning produce and reproduce differentiated subjects and unevenly developed spaces. Tracing these processes over more than a century, this study demonstrates that food distribution is a dynamic and highly contested aspect of urban life, underscoring a deep if sometimes under-articulated recognition of the work done by the flow of food through city streets.

New York City's public markets are the focus of my study, particularly the enclosed retail markets built in the late 1930s and early 1940s to contain New York City's pushcarts and street peddlers. It is difficult to find a concrete, common definition of "public market," given the diversity of public markets in New York City, and throughout the world. The type of facilities they inhabit, the merchandise sold, and the scale and frequency of operations are among their differences. The Urban Land Institute and the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) have identified three characteristics that set public markets apart from other retail activities and settings (Spitzer and Baum 1995, cited in Lechmere 2010):

1. *Public markets advance public goals*. Their primary purpose is the sale of goods, but they also support local businesses, regional farmers, promote access to fresh foods, and create a space where people can come together, as well as acting as economic engines in their communities.

2. Public markets take place in public space. If a market is to be public, it needs to be accessible and inviting to all people. Historically, in New York and other cities, public markets were sometimes constructed on private lands (De Voe 1855; Sauder 1981), and this practice continues today. Privately owned markets can function as public spaces "if they retain the sense of easy, open access" (Spitzer and Baum 1995, cited in Lechmere 2010:7). The bar has been raised in recent decades, and public markets host more than economic activity; they are often centers of community events like art exhibits, musical concerts, and fundraisers. While this broadened function of public markets can make them more inviting, it can also be the source of friction when constituents cannot decide on who constitutes the community served by a particular public market (Low et al 2008; Shepherd 2008).

3. *Public markets consist of local businesses*, not regional or national chains. This emphasis on local businesses sets public markets apart from (most) festival marketplaces like New York City's South Street Seaport, or Boston's Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market, once sites of true public markets. The difficulty lies in identifying what "local businesses" means. In theory, New York-based supermarket chains like Gristede's or D'Agostinos – or even Dean and DeLuca for that matter – would meet these conditions.[3] In practice, an operating aesthetic, or judgment, favors boutique like Saxelby Cheesemongers, a slip of a shop at the Essex Market, or Mike's Deli at Arthur Avenue, a family business established in the 1940s.

Public markets are definitive parts of the urban landscape. Social science has not paid sustained attention to public food markets, although there is a fragmented and multi-perspective body of work that demonstrates the many ways in which markets intersect with urban processes. Historical studies often focus on the conditions of their creation. Researchers investigate negotiations between the state and commercial interests over where to locate public markets, who financed their construction, and who benefited from revenues raised through rents (Lohmeier 1999; Smith 2002). In rare cases like New Orleans, the city maintained a strong monopoly over food distribution and used zoning laws to prevent the development of private retailers until the arrival of chain grocers in the 1920s (Sauder 1981; see also Donofrio 2009). In most cases, public market systems mediated but did not stifle the growth of private businesses.

As critical sites of food distribution, the location of public food markets was often based on existing transportation hubs, among the most important factors in determining how to best

[3] Gristede's, D'Agostino's and Dean and DeLuca were all founded in New York City: two teenagers opened the first Gristede's in 1888, catering to wealthy residents of Manhattan's Upper East Side; D'Agostino's was founded by former pushcart peddlers in 1932 as an upscale self-serve grocery store; Dean and DeLuca first opened in 1977, a gourmet store designed to evoke turn-of-the-century "food department" stores.

serve growing populations of major metropolitan areas. In most cities, public market halls were in the central business districts, designed as symbols of the state's power and wealth (Lohmeier 1999; TenHoor 2007; Metro-Rolland 2009). In some cases like Tokyo's Tsukiji, the world's largest fish market, the market became an important business district on the peripheries of the city (Bestor 2004). New York City stands out as an exception for its relatively late development of a municipally operated public market system in the early twentieth century, and the location of its retail markets in primarily lower income, immigrant, working class neighborhoods (Wasserman 1990, 2008; Donofrio 2009; Bluestone 1992). Transportation played little or no role in deciding where to create pushcart or enclosed retail markets; their purpose was not to improve the circulation of food so much as to contain peddlers and their patrons.

The revitalization of public markets as a strategy for urban economic development has attracted the attention of researchers. These studies often, though not always, focus on the transformation of declining public markets into festival marketplaces designed as tourist destinations. They document contests over competing uses of public space, the effects of gentrification, and government investment in development that may benefit some, but not all. Narratives of decline rationalize top-down processes that may save a public market economically, but may also significantly change its purpose from a neighborhood source of basic foodstuffs to a destination, festival marketplace designed to draw tourists and "foodies" (Watson et al 2005; Shepherd 2008; Zukin 2010).

Ethnographic research demonstrates that social relations are negotiated through the everyday interactions of buying, selling, and simply meeting in the marketplace (Plattner 1992; De la Pradelle 1996; Slocum 2008; Shepherd 2008). The social and cultural significance of public markets cannot be divorced from their economic content; they are often iconic places

embedded in the cultural fabric of cities (De la Pradelle 1996; Metro-Rolland 2008). They are complex spaces where we can practice “being-in-the-world” (Richardson (1984) 2003: 74). Public markets play a conservative role in preserving and restoring traditional ties between urban and rural economies (McPhee 1978; Zukin 2010), or reinforcing class differences between consumers and vendors (Watson et al 2005; Thompson 1997) and racial and ethnic differences amongst vendors (Slocum 2008; Shepherd 2008). They are also spaces in which existing social relations are challenged, where boundaries are relaxed. Contemporary advocates for public markets emphasize their potential as places where diverse communities can be brought together in celebration, or at least mediation, of their differences (Low et al 2008; Watson 2009). Whether these “gains” are sustained outside the marketplace remains a question.

Increasingly, social scientists are using public markets as a “window…onto wider aspects of metropolitan change” (Smith 2002: 48), illustrating how political, economic and social relations at various scales are shaped through, and in, public food markets (Bestor 2004; Wasserman 1990, 2008; Thompson 2000; TenHoor 2007). Bestor demonstrates how Tsukiji’s daily activities and local identity informs, and is informed, by fishing interests across the globe, international law, national identity, and generations of interpersonal relations and protocols that regulate this critical hub in global trade.[4]

Seizing control of a city’s public markets is an important expression of state power (TenHoor 2007), and a way for the state to exercise its ability to provide for its citizens (Nally 2011). In the 1850s, *Les Halles* was redesigned as part of Haussmann’s plan for central Paris. As part of the market’s renovation, the central wholesale grain market remained in the center, and

[4] Tsukiji’s inner ring is a wholesale market for fruits, vegetables and fish, and includes the famous tuna auction. The outer ring has retail shops and restaurants that cater to market workers as well as the general public (Bestor 2004; Tsukiji market website, http://www.tsukiji-market.or.jp).

surrounding retail merchants' stalls were rearranged to reflect newly imposed social hierarchies. Women, who had operated a significant share of stalls, were limited to selling flowers and fish, and relegated to the peripheries. New rules prevented what had been traditional practices of succession, further constricting women's economic opportunities, and reflecting ideal bourgeois gender relations (Thompson 2000; TenHoor 2007). In New York City, pushcart vendors were forced to apply for American citizenship as part of their licensing and permitting process in the 1920s and 1930s, reflecting growing unease with large numbers of immigrants in the city, and suspicions about their loyalty to the United States (Wasserman 1990; 2008). When the enclosed markets were built in the 1930s, new rules governed behaviors, outlawing hawking and bargaining in an attempt to Americanize vendors and patrons alike, and turn them into model citizens of a modernizing city.

Public markets can have destabilizing effects: during World War II and the years immediately afterwards, Japan's black market was a space outside the tightly controlled national economy where people challenged official representations of Japan as a nation of self-sacrificing, obedient citizens (Griffiths 2002). The history of marketplaces shows them to be places of transgression where social classes mixed; carnivals in the Bakhtinian sense (1941/1993). Markets were once places for slumming. In New York City, for example, in the nineteenth century, the upper classes strolled through the markets near Fulton Street to view and experience the everyday spaces of the lower classes (Browne 1869). Unlike carnivals where power relations could be overturned (De la Pradelle 1996), these middle class perambulations were transgressions of bourgeois norms. Nowadays, public markets' revival is not carnivalesque. Rather, I argue, they are more commonly spaces that strengthen class articulations, and have become, to some degree, expected practices of particular social classes.

Situating public markets as windows onto wider processes of change reconciles studies of public markets with histories of retailing and consumption**,** a growing field that argues forcefully for serious consideration of how shopping informs national identity and ideas about citizenship and subjectivity during the twentieth century in the United States (Cohen 2003; Jacobs 2005; Deutsch 2010; see also Zukin 2004 and De Grazia 2005). Focused on the same historical periods, I draw on their analytical frameworks throughout my study. Although historians of retailing and consumption ignore the role of public forms of retailing, they pay close attention to the ways in which public policies helped shape private forms of retailing, suggesting an intertwined history and geography of private and public forms of food retailing that this study begins to explore.

This study then investigates how the state balanced a need to preserve civic order with the interests of businesses and property owners, whose demands for clean streets, modern infrastructure, and "free markets" prioritized profits and not redistributive policies. I consider how the production and reproduction of New York's differentiated retail landscapes, including the identification of public markets with working class immigrant neighborhoods, created and destroyed property values and commercial opportunities. I explore how the enclosed markets – like all retail forms – communicated ideas about who belonged where, who deserved what, and how far the state would go to advance different subjects' access to "adequate, affordable and safe" food (NYC Department of Markets 1934). I argue that public markets should be understood as public spaces in the sense of being open to public scrutiny where written and unwritten rules govern behaviors, and demonstrates how these rules shaped subjectivities (Domosh 1998).

This study explores how discourses including Progressivism, patriotism, the Cold War, and urban renewal – and more recently anxiety, obesity, and economic development – as well as ideas about race, ethnicity, class and citizenship attendant to these discourses were deployed to identify threats to the population, and rationalize state intervention in food distribution. It looks at how public markets work as constituent components of systems of governmentality, and situates public markets within, and in relation to, broader geographies of food distribution, and the regulations that shape them.

Lastly, and throughout this study, I investigate struggles against the state, and ultimately against the interests of capital, by various publics over the form and function of these enclosed public markets – from the time pushcart peddlers first heard about the markets that would contain them and feared for their livelihoods, to the present, when the city's four remaining enclosed markets are struggling to re-define and sustain themselves.

Horowitz et al (2004) identify interactions among the state, the public, and commercial interests as central to understanding state intervention in municipal food systems. By comparing policies regulating meat production and distribution in nineteenth century Mexico City, New York City, and Paris they developed a model that explains when what they describe as public demand results in regime change. Like capitalist economies that experience cycles of booms and busts, state intervention in food distribution on behalf of consumer interests is also subject to cycles of expansion and contraction. The cycle begins with rising public demands for increased state intervention and control of food distribution to insure an adequate supply of food. Subsequent stifling, monopolistic market conditions lead to calls for market liberalization with the expectation that the private sector is more capable of providing adequate and safe supply. Market liberalization often results in market failure, including adulteration, rising prices, and

inadequate supply. Public demand for state intervention in food distribution booms again, with some changes. Although the populace demands more regulation, rather than adequate supply, this time the crisis is one of food safety; concerns about public health, sanitation and wholesomeness take precedence.

In his genealogy of biopower, Foucault also identifies interactions between the state, the population, and capital over food distribution as central to understanding food provisioning in cities (Foucault 1977-78; Nally 2011). His underlying argument is that, at this historical and geographical moment, capital is winning, and the state's interests are tied to the interests of capital. The state reins in capital to prevent civil unrest, and represents its interventions in "the market" as protection from threats to collective wellbeing while ultimately promoting free markets as goods in their own right. The exercise of biopower by the state regulates food distribution in ways that shape the population and rationalize state rule, identifying threats internally and externally, and correcting deviant behavior while legitimizing those members of the population who internalize discourses that sustain existing social relations.

Foucault's model of history can be totalizing, and Horowitz et al, along with other historians including Cohen (2003), Jacobs (2005), Orleck (1993) and Deutsch (2010) provide an important elaboration that was also supported by my research: Foucault's view of history posits capital's maximization of profits and monetization of every aspect of our food system as inevitable (Nally 2011). However, consumers are not without agency. Although policymaking is often steered by the elite, whether politicians or capitalists, citizens weigh in on "marketplace issues" (Jacobs 2005: 9). While research findings do not contest the dominance of capital during the twentieth century, on numerous occasions in New York City citizens rose up, organized, went on strike, protested, testified, and otherwise challenged existing conditions, informing the

development of policies and regulations. Historians demonstrate that retailing spaces including supermarkets (Deutsch 2010), suburban malls (Cohen 2003) and public markets (Thompson 2000; TenHoor 2007; Wasserman 1990; Horowitz et al 2004) are contested spaces, inherently potential sites of consumer resistance, evidence of a fragmented and often messy advance of capital.

In turn, Foucault provides the means with which to address some deficiencies with Horowitz et al's model, and to expand their model. Horowitz et al's model explains the mechanics of cycles of booms and busts and the research conducted for this study supports their model. However, while Horowitz et al acknowledge the importance of cultural, political, and economic contexts, their model does not address the heterogeneous and dynamic nature of "publics," or the intersections of "public demand" with laws, representation, science, architectural forms – discursive strategies Foucault called systems of governmentality. Over the course of the twentieth century, Federal, state and local policies that regulated food distribution intersected with changing conceptions of citizen-consumers and an evolving retail landscape (Jacobs 2005; Cohen 2003; Deutsch 2010). These convergences are central to our understanding of capitalism and emerging neo-liberalism in the United States, and the state's active role in supporting the commercial interests, and the advance of mass consumption (Cohen 2003; Deutsch 2010; see also De Grazia 2005). Gender, race, and ethnicity were, and continue to be, deployed as ways of designating some citizens as targets of state policies, and others as the embodiment of the state's ideal citizens. Class, itself a complex constitution, is key to understanding when food related issues become crises, and when "public demand" leads to state intervention.

This research demonstrates that municipal food policies in New York City were developed in response to the demands of the middle classes. When middle class demands aligned with working class demands, working class demands were legitimized by ensuing state responses. When middle class demands diverged from working class demands, and the middle classes aligned their interests with business, working class demands were reframed as wasteful uses of tax revenues, or "inappropriate" state activities. Policies protected middle class interests at the expense of working class interests: In the early decades of the twentieth century, the middle classes and the working classes fought to protect the diminishing purchasing power of both groups (Jacobs 2005; De Grazia 1993) and for access to what was perceived to be an affordable and adequate food supply. In response to public protests and boycotts, commissions and other collective actions by citizens fed up with a corrupt, inefficient and outdated food system, the City established its Department of Markets in 1917, which introduced policies that improved middle (and working) class access to food supplies including public dissemination of price information, educational programs, and the establishment of the enclosed retail markets. Progressive era populist demands shaped state policies in a form of "statecraft from the ground up" (Jacobs 2005). During World War I, the Depression and again during World War II, city agencies enforced Federal price controls that insured fair access to, and distribution of, limited supplies. Women of all classes fought the wars by being thrifty scientific managers of the home front (Bentley 1998).

After World War II, Federal policies and the post-war economic boom changed the fabric of the United States. Growing prosperity became more than an economic objective. It became a discourse coincident with patriotism, social equality, the American Dream (Jacobs 2005; De Grazia 2005). The middle classes were able to attain and afford an unprecedented level of consumption, while simultaneously, the middle class's "conception of the 'public good'

correspondingly narrowed" (Cohen 2003: 228). Politically, the middle class allied itself with business interests who portrayed working class demands for better wages and labor conditions as a threat to national security. The tentative and sometimes contradictory alliance between working class and middle class Americans began to dissolve in the 1950s (Jacobs 2005).

The urban working classes, many of who were ethnic and racial minorities, were disempowered by unequal access to the benefits of the GI Bill (Ibid; Cohen 2003; Gill 2010). At the Federal and municipal level, government withdrew commitments to redistribute wealth, including support for public markets, leaving food distribution including retailing to the private sector. Pre-war retail landscapes comprised of large numbers of small shops scattered among the tenements were replaced by monolithic high rises and isolated supermarkets.

In the 1950s, consumers began to worry about the chemical additives in the many processed foods that appeared on the market (Levenstein 1993). Reflecting Horowitz et al's model, demand rose again for the state to intervene in food distribution, this time with a focus on food safety. In the 1960s, Mayor Robert F. Wagner was elected on a platform that emphasized consumer protection. Also in the 1960s, New York City Department of Markets surveys confirmed that residents of low-income neighborhoods paid more for food that was often of inferior quality.[5] Regardless of class-based disparities in food distribution, the Department tried to shut down the enclosed public markets (and the few remaining pushcart markets). When the Department of Consumer Protection was created in 1968, Commissioner Bess Myerson promised to "saturate" the slums with inspectors, but Department activities were

[5] Sociologist David Caplowitz published his influential study, *The Poor Pay More*, in 1967, which documented how social and racial inequalities were reinforced by price differences in supermarkets; supermarkets in low-income neighborhoods charged more than they did in higher-income neighborhoods, and the food sold was of inferior quality. Also in the 1960s, African Americans began attending to a lack of access to nutritious foods in their communities (Opie 2010).

aimed at eliminating fraud, not inequity (Lichtenstein 1971:37). The Department of Markets was reduced to its property management functions, and was subsumed by the Department of Ports and Terminals. Middle class demands for "state intervention" in what was perceived to be a crisis of safety were met, though working class citizens still faced crises of supply.

The "boom" of public demand we are experiencing today in New York City for state intervention in our municipal food system further supports Horowitz et al's model. As policies take shape, we need to pay attention to how discourses of anxiety (Jackson 2009; 2010) and public health (Guthman and Dupuis 2009), economic stimulus, and sustainability, among others, are wielded, and how middle classes demands may frame debates and outcomes while sidelining working class voices. We need to be aware of how municipal food policies shaped geographies of food distribution in the past, including processes of desertification examined in this study that reflect environmental and social injustices. We must remember how, and where, food matters.

My exploration of the processes outlined above is guided by three research questions: How was state power consolidated over public market spaces and inscribed in space/place? How did the resulting forms and functions of the enclosed retail markets intersect with dominant ideas about consumers, citizenship, ethnicity and race? What discourses were deployed the advance and rationalize these processes? Throughout the study, I return to these questions as a way of linking a discussion that spans eight decades, taking into account shifts from Progressive to post-war prosperity, and today's uncertain environment in which the remaining enclosed retail markets face challenges and opportunities as they struggle to revitalize and re-define themselves.

Nine enclosed public retail markets were constructed in New York City, the majority during Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia's tenure (1934 – 1945). They were built in neighborhoods where city-sanctioned open-air markets flourished due to a lack of larger scale grocers and "self-serve" markets (precursor to supermarkets). The city used – and continues to use – the enclosed markets as a way of disciplining, civilizing, and regulating immigrant and working class populations and their spheres of consumption. The establishment, decline, and recent revitalization of the enclosed public markets are a lens through which I examined how forms of food retailing informed citizens about their place in society, and how consumers and their consumption practices shaped urban food retailing. The markets' evolving forms and functions were related to more general shifts from a Progressive state that positioned itself as a guardian of its citizens, to the post-war era when growth and prosperity were prioritized, and, since the 1980s, neoliberalism and its emphasis on individual responsibility, "free" enterprise and entrepreneurship, and privatization of public services, including food distribution. Chapter 2 discusses the Methodology used to conduct this study, and discusses how data were produced to explore these historical and geographical processes.

Before exploring the changing shapes and functions of the enclosed public markets, Chapters 3 and 4 describe New York City's struggles to reform the deeply flawed food distribution system from the turn of twentieth century to the 1930s. Citizens were outraged about high prices and dilapidated municipal infrastructure including outdated public markets. Elected officials proposed solutions and enacted policies to meet demands of diverse constituents. Public markets, the focus of this study, were often touted as the catchall solution for the problems of feeding New York. Presumably, public markets would ease circulation, which in turn would lower costs, and prices. Oversight of trade by city officials would curb corruption, which was viewed as an obstacle to free trade, and would re-establish a more natural balance of

supply and demand (H.A.C. 1914). This idealistic view of public markets contrasted sharply with the sorry state of the city's market infrastructure. Even so, the creation of new public markets was limited by a persistent lack of political consensus and by the reigning ideas that favored free markets and competition, and circumscribed the state's role in food distribution. The slow and seemingly reluctant pace of government action contrasted sharply with the innovation and growth of private sector responses.

The onset of World War I rationalized significant state controls of food distribution. The food industry's rapid transformation, including the introduction of chain stores, and eventually supermarkets, radically changed New York's retailing landscapes – and in many ways "solved" the food crises by improving efficiency, lowering prices, and standardizing goods. State policies supported the growth of the private sector, aligning free markets and capitalism with advancement of the public good. City government made several attempts to create and implement food policies, which, while only partially successful, set the foundation for more comprehensive policy efforts in the mid and late 1930s. Many, but by no means all, systemic inefficiencies in food distribution were addressed, paradoxically laying the groundwork for future inequities.

The next three chapters address events in the 1930s through World War II. While supermarkets were forcing retail grocery chains to modernize their operations, Fiorello H. LaGuardia (1882 – 1947), Mayor of New York City from 1934 to 1945, targeted pushcart markets as intolerable relics of immigrant life that had to be swept off the streets of a rapidly modernizing city (New York, *LaGuardia Dead* 1947). In 1936, when the Department of Markets recorded sixty-three pushcart markets, the city was described as "afflicted" by pushcarts. Efforts to clean the streets reached a pitch in anticipation of the crowds of international visitors who

would be arriving for the 1939 World's Fair. With support from the Federal government's Works Progress Administration, the first enclosed retail market, the Park Avenue market (now known as "La Marqueta") opened in 1937 with room for more than 400 vendors (Brobeck 1936).

New York City's Department of Markets eventually built nine enclosed retail markets in three boroughs, continuing their consolidation of the city's public market system. City inspectors and supervisors monitored sanitary condition, prices and weights and measures. Rules were posted. The market spaces and behaviors within them reflected, and reinforced then-dominant ideas about Americanization and modernization. "Consumer services" disseminated through radio, newspapers, and other media taught women how to be ideal citizens, and channeled civic unrest into active citizenship.

Empowered by the municipality, the Department of Markets, like the markets themselves, was the product of policies converging on the consolidation, control and expansion of the existing public food distribution system without impinging on the capitalist production and distribution of food by grocery chains and supermarkets. Chapters 8 and 9 look at the gradual dissolution of the public market system during the 1950s and 1960s that eventually rendered New York City's Department of Markets obsolete. Urban restructuring not only changed the physical landscape of the city and distributions of its citizens across those newly shaped spaces, it reshaped the institutions of previous eras and their coincident structures of power (and biopower) as well. Food retailing and consumer education were no longer perceived to be the proper role of the state.

The state actively supported the growth of supermarkets during the post-War era. Urban renewal policies tore down tenements and the small retail spaces that lined their streets, replacing them with high rises and large retail spaces designed for large-scale retailing.

Municipal government invested in wholesale terminal markets to support and fix corporate interests, and prevent them from shifting business activities to New Jersey and beyond. The city withdrew its commitment to public retail markets. As the middle classes left cities for the suburbs, their political support for policies that advanced the collective good waned. Their alliances shifted from working classes who were once their neighbors to the commercial interests who promised to protect their access to consumer goods and the American Dream.

The final three chapters discuss the state of food policy and food politics in New York City today. Chapter 10 is a series of case studies of the city's four remaining enclosed public retail markets. I started my investigations at the Moore Street Market in Brooklyn where revitalization efforts are staggering along. Fieldwork included the other three enclosed markets at Essex Street on the Lower East Side, Park Avenue in Harlem, and Arthur Avenue in the Bronx. The markets are struggling to balance the needs of their long-time customers who patronized the markets after the city cut its losses and withdrew all financial and political support, with the expectations of new consumers who flock to public markets in search of authentic, alternative, artisanal foods.

The city, operating through the New York City Economic Development Corporation, a private-public partnership, has renewed interest in these sites as well, promoting them as incubators for burgeoning entrepreneurs, as distribution hubs for fresh, local produce, and as economic engines in their respective neighborhoods. While new investments in the enclosed public markets make them more appealing retail destinations, their increased value and financial dependence leaves them vulnerable to the political and commercial interests who support their revitalization, and who are already inscribing ideas about what an ideal public market should be, who it serves, and what kinds of (public) goods it delivers.

Once the culmination of the city's intervention in municipal provisioning, four of New York City's enclosed markets remain—on Arthur Avenue Market in the Bronx; Essex Street Market on the Lower East Side; Park Avenue Market in East Harlem; and the Moore Street Market in Brooklyn. They are no longer symbols of progress in a modernizing city. Instead, they have been reframed as ethnic markets whose social and cultural importance within their respective communities is in tension with their economic viability. Moore Street Market and the Park Avenue Market in East Harlem were places where "exotic" foods like *malanga* and plantains were found. These items are available now in neighborhood supermarkets that have lower prices and accept food stamps. Arthur Avenue Market is the anchor of the Bronx's Little Italy, but can't compete with Mario Batali's tremendously expensive Eataly in midtown Manhattan. The Essex Street Market, after a successful revival steered by NYCEDC, may now be moved to a new location and merchants worry about sustaining businesses that took years to build.

Today the middle classes view public markets as important components of their "foodie" universe. Moore Street Market, with its Puerto Rican *tschochkes*, saran-wrapped peppers and bags of withered yellow onions, doesn't meet their expectations of what a public market should be. Essex Street's cheese vendor, with her carefully assembled collection of local cheeses is more in line with idealized views of public markets, but at $25 a pound, these are not cheeses for the masses. In the past decade, New York City's middle class consumers have patronized, and accordingly shaped, increasingly varied forms of public food retailing.

While renewed interest, and investment, is beneficial to these markets, it is yet unclear whose interests these processes will ultimately benefit, questions investigated in Chapter 11. Constituents jockey for position, and politicians at the Federal, state and city levels secure funding for capital improvements, and with it, control of how funds are levied. There is no city

agency charged with implementing and overseeing food and markets policies, making it difficult to account for, and evaluate fragmented policies and programs, and challenging to citizens without a dedicated forum where they can voice their concerns, and visions.[6] The study ends with a presentation of findings in Chapter 12, and questions about the potential of public markets as spaces that challenge existing social relations, and can be deployed as forces for change.

[6] Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer proposed an amendment to the city Charter that would create an Office of Food and Markets (2010).

Chapter 2: Methodology for an historical study of public markets and public policy in New York City

This study uses mixed qualitative methods, combining historical research with qualitative content analysis of press releases, targeted studies and reports, public events, and expert interviews. Historical research through library and municipal archives, and internet database searches of newspapers and other sources were conducted to gather data on events and processes contributing to the consolidation of New York City's public market system in the 1930s through the late 1960s. Throughout I pay particular attention to the forms and functions of public markets, productions of their geographies in relation to dynamic retail landscapes, and the construction of consumer citizens. Secondary sources were used to analyze the political, economic, cultural and social contexts within which these events and processes took place; they inform the model developed to conceptualize historical moments I examine – the boom of the 1930s, a bust in the 1950s and 60s – and provide a means of questioning both sample and periodization (Horowitz et al 2004). In addition to archival material, recently released reports and studies, interviews and related participant observation were used to examine ongoing revitalization efforts at Moore Street market, and the other remaining enclosed markets, as well as emerging developments in food policy in New York City.

While the examples cited below relate primarily to my investigation of New York in the 1930s, the same methods will be used to produce data about the post war decades, and the present. In each case, I will focus on three categories as a preliminary means of organizing data: first, institutions and customs of government and political economic structures, whether the paternalistic government of the Progressive Era of Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia (1934 – 1945), or the post-industrial, service-oriented government of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's New York City

(2002 – 2013). Second, I consider how consumer preferences, needs and demands are framed by looking at how food problems, or crises are identified in each era, and what solutions are proposed, particular as they relate to state intervention and public markets. Lastly, I identify constituencies weighing in on these processes, and the role of "experts" and expert knowledges. In addition to Horowitz et al's theory about state intervention's cycles of expansion and contraction, Susanne Freidberg's historical geography (2004) of two transnational "market cultures," advances a theory of how food crises converge with local processes and consumer demands to inform how and where is food is regulated.

Historical research

Data for this study is produced primarily through historical research. Data were drawn from primary and secondary sources, or what Bailey et al (1999) call technical (academic books and papers) and non-technical (archival material) literature. The vast majority of material produced by the Department of Markets from 1918 to 1968 has been lost, including maps, permits, recipe pamphlets, course curricula, and training manuals. Remaining archival material includes New York City Department of Market Annual Reports; audio recordings and transcripts of Department of Markets' Bureau of Consumer Services daily radio show (stored in the WNYC audio archives and Kansas State University Clementine Paddleford Papers, respectively). Images on file at the United States Library of Congress, the New York State Library Digital Collection, and other public sources were used to enrich and inform the historical research. For example, photos helped me develop a sense of how goods were arranged at the enclosed public markets, the size of the individual market stands, and the amount of trash that accumulated under pushcarts. Property records, accessed through sites including ACRIS (Automated City Register

Information System), were used to construct histories of individual markets when possible by providing a record of when the lease to a property changes hands. Newspaper archives are the single most significant source of data for this study, particularly archives of *The New York Times*, which are fully digitized and searchable. Microfilms of the *The Brooklyn Eagle*, for example, are only just being digitized and indexed, and made available online by the Brooklyn Public Library. Inquiries submitted to New York Municipal Archives, the City Hall Library of New York where the New York City Department of Records stores documents yielded some essential materials (Annual Reports and additional special reports and transcripts). I tracked down tips from researchers about individuals with holds of records, and contacted smaller archives.

Studies demonstrate that "market cultures" are historically and geographically specific (Horowitz et al 2004; Freidberg 2004; Thompson 1997). In order to develop an understanding of how forces converge in place and time, newspapers offer examples of how public debates were framed, and how constituencies were defined, or defined themselves, in relation to these debates. Granted, newspapers do not present universally shared perspectives, but I am interested in how dominant ideas and middle class norms shaped (and continue to shape) the forms and functions of public markets, and mainstream papers like *The New York Times* have represented bourgeois views over the past century.

Newspaper archives are essential to developing an understanding of how political, economic, cultural and social forces contributed to the consolidation of New York's public markets in the 1930s as a form of food regulation and distribution. Beyond a record of events including food riots, railroad strikes, and corruption charges brought against inspectors working at the Department of Markets, newspapers point to power struggles for control of the food retailing landscape including an ongoing contest between state and city agencies. They provide a

lens on how these problems and their proposed solutions were framed. For example, throughout the 1910s and 20s, New York's dilapidated public markets were compared to modern markets found in cities like Frankfort-on-Main's *Gross Markt Halle*, described as "impressive," modern, convenient and built at "minimum cost" (Miller 1912). When the Department of Markets tried to shut down the enclosed markets, and the city's few pushcart markets, in the 1960s, newspapers followed citizens' protests, and also ran stories about the markets as places of interest, appealing to middle class tastes for ethnic foods and urban adventure.

Articles citing the city's plans to invest in public infrastructure and move towards greater regulation of food distribution emphasized that these were not radical suggestions, but quite rational steps taken by cities across the United States and Europe; New York was "behind the times" (Spiegelberg 1915). The persistent attention to profit margins and the vilification of the "middlemen" as well as "international bankers" and "food barons" contribute to an understanding of how a case was built for particular forms of local regulation, consistent with Progressive ideals and its attendant paternalism. Reading through the newspaper archives, at least two streams of reasoning emerge – one arguing that the city needed to modernize by investing in public markets that would eliminate profiteering and make food distribution more orderly and efficient. Another merged concern for public health and sanitation with questions about the proper economic use of public space, suggesting that enclosed markets, slaughterhouses and other public market buildings should be built in appropriate geographical locations. In both cases, public space and state intervention were framed as "proper" responses to failures of market liberalization.

Producing data from newspaper archives begins with a search for relevant articles using key words like ("public markets" and "New York City" and "food") or ("Moore Street" and "New York City" and Commissioner of Markets' names), further sorted by decade. If an individual reporter authored more than two or three articles related to food and public markets, I search their name. I scan each article, taking notes to develop a chronology of events and processes, names and institutions. In parentheses, I note observations and questions ("Pushcart vendors are never implicated as profiteering middlemen," and, "Why were the city's public markets left to deteriorate? Not a question asked of public officials today."). Then, I bracket off material that relates to emerging themes ("Experts/Expert Opinions" or "Public Markets = Solutions"). Next, I read through my notes, further identifying themes and drawing links between related events. I also note which articles need to be read more thoroughly for details and exact quotes or illustrative examples. Lastly, like an interview, I write a transcript of my notes, creating a loose structure of material that will be analyzed and added to over time, rewriting as "background" becomes distinct from analysis.

A similar process is used to produce data from the Department of Markets Annual Reports: After taking an inventory of which Annual Reports are available, I read them first in chronological order to get a sense of how the Department identified its mission, how plans progressed over time, how problems were framed, or defined (public health, sanitation, etc), and what policies were proposed or presented as "solutions." Also noted are moments when funds are encumbered for a new project, or when new legislation or initiatives are introduced (a daily radio show, or the opening of an enclosed public market). Based on this chronological analysis, I argue that the Department of Markets was a product of the same processes of consolidation that created the enclosed public markets; its slow dissolution reflected a decline, or a major shift, in state intervention during the 1950s and 1960s that also negatively affected

the enclosed markets. The Annual Reports, then, are artifacts that record processes of change – often small changes, like declining demand for freshly slaughtered poultry with the rise of supermarkets after World War II – reflecting more often than shaping consumer demand for particular forms of state intervention and regulation. In the margins, I note where there might be links to data produced from newspaper archives, or how particular data contributes to an exploration of emerging themes. After reading through my notes, adding additional notes, I write a transcript as a way of organizing findings and providing a loose framework for analysis.

Creating these loose transcripts of material from notes is a preliminary way of organizing that data, and helps identify themes and key shifts in policy. It also reveals gaps in reasoning, or questions that the data has not yet answered. Keeping notes in this form allowed me to read the data alongside related historical studies, seeing where development of New York City's public market system coincided with broader processes, and when it may have diverged. I went back to the Annual Reports several times during this process to re-read reports I had previously taken notes on, in light of emerging themes brought out by writing drafts based earlier notes, and data produced from newspaper archives. When I needed confirmation, or further explanation, of events mentioned in the Department Reports, newspapers often provided another perspective. This dialogue of data sources continued throughout the research process, as revisions brought some themes into the foreground, helping me make connections, and develop a better, more nuanced understanding of processes I was investigating.

Interviews

In addition to historical research, I conducted expert interviews, both informal and semi-structured (Cloke et al 2004:149; Burgess 1984). My intention was to interview people involved

with community governance, city and state level agencies including Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation, and New York City Economic Development Corporation, as well as NYC Council for the Environment, and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. From past experience, I have found that multiple, short conversations tend to yield better data than a single, semi-structured interview. However, in the interest of time and logistics, I developed a list of questions to initiate and guide interviews. In addition to taking notes on paper, interviews were digitally recorded, then transcribed. Phone conversations were digitally recorded, and transcribed. Field notes and head notes[7] including conversations were produced on site in scratch form and written up once I returned home. I received (and renewed) IRB approval before conducting any interviews, informal or informal, and before conducting any fieldwork, including observations, conversations and casual exchanges.

I wanted to learn how individuals frame their views of public markets, other forms of public food retailing and/or the Moore Street Market, and how they explain their actions and interests as developers, politicians, community leaders, advocates, vendors, customers or members of other constituencies. How do they talk about members of other constituencies? What, and where, are public markets ideally, and in practice? More specifically about the Moore Street Market, what do they believe the market is, and what should it, or could it be? I was interested in how people construct the past and narrate transitions from past to present. Joan Bartolomeo, Executive Director of BEDC, was very cooperative. She was interviewed twice, and we continued to talk informally in person and via email throughout the research period. Kelly Williams of Project for Public Spaces, a non-profit that conducted research and helped steer the Moore Street revitalization process, was also forthcoming.

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[7] Head notes are “memories, intuitions, and attempts to make the tacit explicit” (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011); they are what runs through a researcher’s head while she is taking field notes, conducting an interview, or thinking about while approaching a field site.

Others, including staff from US Representative Nydia Velazquez's office, encouraged me to contact them, and promised to make time for interviews – "The market is very important to Nydia. She is very proud of her accomplishments for the community." Calls and letters remain unanswered. Inquiries sent to New York City Economic Development Corporation were repeatedly ignored. I tracked down the Manager at Essex Street market who is very excited about changes there, got his card. Nothing. Finally, I was granted a conference call with an executive at NYCEDC who happily discussed the years between 1968 and the present, including which agencies managed the enclosed markets, and operating strategies. A spokesperson for the agency steered the conversation when we veered off subject. The official refuses to be named, and data produced from this conversation is used only as background. It is not clear why NYCEDC is so reluctant to be "on the record." They are proud of their record on New York's remaining enclosed markets, and the interview was hardly prying.

As the project developed, I began visiting the enclosed markets, particularly Park Avenue and Arthur Avenue, and talked to vendors while conducting fieldwork. I spoke to vendors at the Moore Street market who were interviewed informally during an earlier phase of study, listening to their views on what they perceived to be impossibly slow changes. Many vendors want change, but they are wary of losing control, and of having their operating practices questioned by outside managers.

I asked questions at "open houses" hosted by NYCEDC at Park Avenue market to attract outside investors and potential market managers. I attended other public events, including a press conference at a Pathmark on the Lower East Side, and Council Speaker Christine Quinn's rock concert-style unveiling of her FoodWorks report in December 2010, which took place in a large auditorium, complete with props and a pop soundtrack. Manhattan Borough President

Scott Stringer's office released at least three reports that lay out his ideas for a comprehensive food policy. A conversation with staff members reinforced how his approach differs from Quinn's and from Mayor Bloomberg's. A member of Friends of Morningside Park was happy to discuss his struggles to establish a market at the park, and offered key insights into the power that GrowNYC and Greenmarkets exerts over the location and composition of the city's farmers' markets. He was unwilling to sign a consent form because he serves on several Community Boards; a colleague of mine who worked in GrowNYC offices confirmed his experiences.

The historical components of this study became its defining arc once the data demonstrated there was indeed a cycle of boom and bust that warranted investigation. In light of this, the buzz of energy about food policy today can be viewed more clearly as early articulations of an emerging policy regime.

Data Analysis

Data analysis, too, reflects a mixed methods approach, guided by principles of grounded theory. It is informed by Foucault's theories of governmentality, which emphasize intersections, or assemblages, of government and theories of how, when and where the state intervenes in food regulation and distribution. Like Foucault, these theories emphasize the importance of context; state intervention, like market culture, is historically and geographically specific.

Bailey et al (1999) argue that qualitative research and analysis need not aim for standardization but it should be systematic. They introduce grounded theory as an example of qualitative research that can be both systematic ("scientific," rigorous) and creative. In grounded theory, (ideally) theory is explicitly emergent (Dick 2005), with ideas developing out of reflexive processes of data collection and analysis where data from archival material is compared to interviews, archival data to archival data and interviews to interviews when

possible. Reading over notes and observations, themes, or categories, emerge and links are drawn between them. Over time, the themes are refined by the development of sub-themes. The links between themes are the basis of theory grounded in research. While grounded theory is ideally practiced without pre-existing ideas about the research situation, the researcher is recognized to be a social being, coming to the study "with their own ideology, and as such will harbour their own interpretations of others' construction of reality" (Bailey et al 1999:173). Until undertaken, these steps of data analysis sound abstract. As I went through the steps of producing data, and experienced the interplay of observations in the field, conversations about past events, and return trips to the archives to read familiar Annual Reports with new insights, these steps took on a meaningful and enjoyable dynamism. Although short-term research also depends on iterative processes, a long-term project like this one sustained a productive dialogue between sources and findings.

The research process proposes an approach to historical work in geography that combines archival work with fieldwork, and depends on the sustained conversations between past and present, between memory and reportage, to narrate the productions and reproductions of spaces whose forms and functions were, and remain multiply inscribed and contested. While methodologically messy, this was a way of pushing and pulling an historical study into the present. With a conceptual frame guiding this study, drawn from theories and models, especially Horowitz et al, the intersections, or convergences, of political, economic, social and cultural forces that produced particular forms of state intervention emerged throughout the research process, producing and reproducing New York City's enclosed retail markets.

Chapter 3: Laying out landscapes of markets – 1900 to 1917

Hungry Metropolis

Food was a hot-button issue in New York City at the turn of the century. The city's rapid growth put enormous pressure on its already taxed channels of food distribution. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the population of New York City, already the country's largest urban center, surged,[8] aided mainly by massive immigration from Europe. In the 1860s 200,000 people emigrated from Ireland to escape the Potato Famine pushing the city's population beyond the one million mark. Many of the 23.5 million who entered the United States between 1880 and 1920 passed through Ellis Island[9] in New York harbor and settled in New York, where they crowded into the densely packed streets of the Lower East Side and East Harlem.[10] By 1900 3.5 million people lived in the newly consolidated city's five boroughs; by 1920 the population had grown to 5.6 million.

Public markets of various types (See Appendix A: Glossary of Market Types) languished as population centers shifted and residential and commercial development spread north in Manhattan and the Bronx (Domosh 1996; Zukin 2004; New York, *Passing Method* 1912). Existing public retail markets were declared a "menace" to public health, with their floors flooded by

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[8] In 1860, when New York's population was 813,000, second largest Philadelphia had 565,000 residents and Brooklyn, third largest, had 266,000. In 1900, Chicago ranked second with 2,185,000 residents and Philadelphia was third with 1,549,000 (US Census Bureau).

[9] Ellis Island opened in 1892, the first Federal immigration station. Prior to 1890, individual states regulated immigration. Castle Clinton in the Battery served as New York's immigration station from 1855 to 1890 (Official website, http://www.ellisisland.org).

[10] The "second wave" of immigration, 1820 to 1870, was largely from Northern and Western Europe; one third were German. The "third wave," from 1880 to 1920 included many Jews escaping pogroms in Russia (www.yale.edu/ynhti).

dripping pipes, and refuse was piled in corners (New York, *Abolish* 1902; New York, *City Menace* 1902).

In the early 1900s, New York City had ten public markets housed in large, warehouse-style buildings, in addition to pushcart markets that sprang up on street corners and in public squares. City-owned, and often privately managed, the public markets had once served an important role in food distribution, and were a source of municipal revenue.[11] Long-term leases to their valuable stalls were bid at auction, even as restrictions against sidewalk displays and sales limited those profits (New York, *Sale Markets* 1872). They were, however, no longer "deserving of praise on…sanitarian grounds." The public markets were shabby, particularly Washington Market, built in 1813, with extensions jutting out from all sides.

Figure 3.1: At the turn of the twentieth century, shoppers filled the streets of the crowded Lower East Side. Independent grocers and pushcart peddlers served bargain seekers who often shopped twice a day (Ziegelman, Museum of the City of New York, 1895).

Middle class New Yorkers still patronized public markets in the late 1800s and early 1900s, but by the turn of the twentieth century these markets were represented as rough

[11] As the city from New Amsterdam into New York City, neighborhoods built public market buildings on private land and turned them over to the city to manage (DeVoe 1855).

places, especially at night when they served as promenades for the working classes. Outside the Washington Market, on today's Greenwich Avenue in Tribeca, merchants displayed goods onto sidewalks and set up small stands on Saturday nights. Women of the "poorer classes" thronged, looking for bargain-rate produce, cheap clothing, notions, household items and religious icons. A few men shopped, heads down, while longshoremen watched the young "maidens" parade by (New York, *Market Poor* 1882). "Vegetable-scavengers" picked over the heaps of "decayed stalks and leaves" outside the market in sharp contrast to the "rosy butchers and their well-to-do purchasers" within (Scribner's 1877: 729-30). The poor usually frequented Catherine Market[12] near the East River (Ibid 732).

A paean to Saturday nights at Paddy's Market[13], pushcarts stretching for ten or twelve blocks below Forty Second Street on Ninth Avenue, describes a raucous scene where goods were cheap and manners brusque. The crowd, a "homogenous mixture of New York's foreign population," traveled from the Bronx, New Jersey and downtown to shop from crowded rows of trucks and pushcarts. At ten o'clock, the "white folks" went home, and the blacks arrived. The reporter noted that with their arrival, prices "boomed like a pet stock on a tip from a reliable broker" (New York, *Paddy's Market* 1904; Popik 2004).

The condition of the city's retail markets reflected the sorry state of the entire food distribution system. Nearly half of the millions of pounds of food delivered to the city spoiled at

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[12] The other public markets were: Fulton, Center, Jefferson, Clinton, Tompkins, Essex, the Union, and the Manhattan Market on Thirty-fourth to Thirty-fifth Streets between Twelfth and Eleventh Avenues (Scribner's 1877: 734).

[13] Paddy's Market, an unsanctioned clustering of pushcarts, began in the 1880s and was shut down by the Department of Markets in cooperation with the Port Authority 1937 when construction of the Lincoln Tunnel began. The vendors contested the ruling in court; they lost their case in 1938 (Popik 2004; New York, *Glum* 1937).

the outdated terminal markets that lacked cold storage facilities.[14] Poorly planned rail links meant deliveries had to be trucked from rail yards to warehouses. Trucks loaded with food fought their way through the city's traffic-clogged labyrinth of narrow streets. New York lagged behind cities in the United States like such as Boston, New Orleans, and Fort Wayne, Indiana, and such European cities as Paris, Vienna, Budapest and Cologne where state investments in central markets streamlined the distribution of food from the hinterlands. Metropoles in Asia and Latin America had modern municipal market systems that put New York to shame (Miller 1912; Spiegelberg 1915).

Adding to the inadequacy of the city's food distribution system, New York's regulation of the price, quality, and distribution of food was piecemeal and chaotic. The Health, Sanitation, Police, and Fire departments were each responsible for overseeing aspects of food distribution without any clear municipal policy or goals to guide them. Railroad companies colluded with wholesalers to create artificial shortages by holding back, or "losing" carloads of oranges or butter, left to rot in depots across the river in New Jersey. Wholesalers extracted maximum profits by paying low prices to farmers who were unable to bring their produce to market themselves, then charging retailers dearly for scarce items, while the retailers simply passed the higher costs on to consumers (DoM Annual Report 1923).

Yet, food represented a significant share of household budgets and every penny counted. In 1901, New Yorkers spent more than 43 cents of each dollar on food, compared with 23 cents on housing, figures that held steady until the mid-1930s (US Bureau of Labor Statistics;

[14] The amount of food wasted was increasing: In 1918, 25 million pounds of food were condemned in New York City. In 1917, 16 million and in 1916, 12 million pounds were condemned. As late as the 1920s, an estimated 50% of the food that arrived in New York City was lost to inadequate storage facilities and other gaps in physical infrastructure (New York, *Broad Laws* 1919).

See Appendix B, Average Food and Housing Spending the US and New York City). The high cost of food combined with a growing dissatisfaction with decreasing purchasing power informed an emerging consumer consciousness (Jacobs 2005; Cohen 2003).[15]

Increasingly citizens of all classes identified themselves as consumers, and emerged as a unified, powerful and largely female political front (Cohen 2003; see also Jacobs 2005; de Grazia 1993). They called on the state to modernize the city's public food distribution infrastructure, and to reform corrupt and unethical food distribution practices. Their tactics included boycotts against unethical storekeepers, marches, and the dissemination of educational information (Cohen 2003; Jacobs 2005; Orleck 1993). Their growing consciousness as consumers ignited a movement.

Citizens United

In the Spring of 1902, Kosher butchers on Manhattan's Lower East Side began a boycott of wholesale meat dealers, who had suddenly raised meat prices from twelve cents a pound to eighteen cents a pound. The wholesalers refused to yield, and on May 13, 1,600 butchers on the Lower East Side gave up their boycott. Two days later, their patrons punished the butchers for caving in. More than 5,000 women gathered at New Irving Hall on Broome Street and poured into the streets. Men, women and children joined in and their numbers grew to 20,000 (Wenger

[15] Food quality was a grave concern, evidenced by the passage of the Pure Food Act and publication of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* in 1906. But, in New York and other cities across the United States, ability to acquire sufficient quantities of food at fair prices appears to have trumped consumer demands for assurances of food quality.

2007).[16] The protesters broke into butcher shops, seizing meat, soaking it in gasoline and setting it on fire to render it inedible. They yelled, "We will not allow the butchers to skin us," and demanded that Mayor Seth Low[17] force the butchers to lower their prices.[18] Women drew on their experiences in factories organizing unions and fighting for labor rights in the United States, and in Europe from which many had immigrated. They organized women throughout the city, and the riots quickly spread to other boroughs. On May 22, men and women looted butcher shops in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, carrying out chickens and sides of beef, piling them up, dousing the meats with kerosene and dancing around the "bonfire." On Manhattan's Lower East Side, protestors seized a fish peddler's cart and used it to blockade the entrance of Barnet Aswolonsky's butcher shop on Norfolk Street (New York, *Brooklyn Mob* 1902). On May 24, 1902, more riots took place in Brownsville, a predominantly Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn (Hunter 1907: 262-3).

Riots spread to other Jewish neighborhoods in New York including Bushwick and Harlem, and to cities including Newark, Boston and Philadelphia. By early June, the price of kosher meat dropped back down to fourteen cents a pound and the boycott began to lose steam. Meat boycotts and riots against local butchers continued with some regularity (most

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[16] Four police precincts, more than five hundred policemen, were called to quiet the "amazon brigade" [sic]. "Missiles" including a piece of lead pipe were hurled from windows at police officers who tried to calm the angry crowd. A woman slapped a cop in the face with a fresh slice of liver. Dozens of women were arrested (New York, *Fierce Meat* 1902). The "Hebrew papers" including *The Jewish Daily Forward*, a labor paper, described the scene admiringly as nothing short of a revolution, on par with Paris in 1789.

[17] Seth Low (1850 – 1916) was the second mayor of the newly consolidated New York City. He served one term (1902 – 1903).

[18] Initially, small storeowners tried to force down prices set by the "Beef Trust," one of the oligarchies who controlled the trade of commodities like steel, and oil. When prices remained high, storeowners passed the elevated prices on to their customers. http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/).

notably in 1907, 1910, 1912, 1917, 1929, and 1937) as women continued organizing to protect their purchasing power and their ability to feed their families.

Middle and upper-middle class women also battled for better food; but they initially targeted food quality and safety, not prices. As more of the tasks once performed by individual households were outsourced, including butchering, laundering and bread baking, bourgeois matrons grew more concerned about the health of their families (Bobrow-Strain 2008). Packaged foods made with unknown ingredients were processed in far-away factories. The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC)[19] and the Women's Christian Temperance Union were strong advocates of the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act, both passed in 1906 after two decades of debate in Congress where industry groups staunchly opposed regulation of food and drugs.

Middle class women's organizations grew out of the Home Economics movement and shared an interest in self-development and reform. Their numbers grew quickly. Founded in 1890, the Federation had nearly 120,000 members representing 1,405 clubs nation-wide in 1910. While most of their members were urbanites, the GFWC recruited farmers' wives to strengthen alliances between producers and consumers; it also formed auxiliaries in urban working class neighborhoods (Carver 2011). Members lent support to a number of social and political causes including temperance, and the abolition of Sunday cartoons. The Housewives' League was founded in 1912 by Mrs. Julian Heath of Manhattan's Upper West Side. It had 400,000 members nationwide at the end of its first year, 200,000 of them in New York City. Members of the League were middle class, often college-educated women, managing households that, at least until the end of World War I, had cooks and housemaids (Elias 2011).

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[19] GFWC continues to work to advance the safety of women and children and human rights (www.gfwc.org).

Figure 3.2: Members of the Housewives League inspected wares at Jefferson Market. Although many had servants, members did not trust storekeepers and visited grocers and other shops in person to verify quality and sanitation (Library of Congress, 1910).

Although they represented themselves as apolitical, members of women's clubs informed policies and political processes and often stood in for the "public" in support of government initiatives. They advocated reform – housing, health, child welfare, education, public markets – on behalf of the poor, the working classes and immigrants, but sought to educate and assimilate rather than collaborate with the unwashed masses (Heath 1913; Marshall 1912).[20]

In New York City and throughout the United States, clubwomen boycotted merchants whose trade practices they judged unsanitary, or unethical, and boycotted staples such as sugar, meat or butter when prices soared past acceptable levels. Heath, of the Housewives' League,

[20] Club women were proponents of public retail markets on the theory that municipal ownership and management would advance the public good. Storeowners were viewed with great suspicion and treated with indignation. Like the working class women who stormed butcher shops, middle class women directed their ire at shopkeepers. While the working classes were angered by what they perceived as the store owners' complicity with corporate interests and betrayal of a shared cause, their bourgeois peers were piqued by the audacity of store owners, who were of a lower socio-economic class than the League members who graced the society pages of the New York Times (Heath 1913; Marshall 1912).

urged boycotts, but disparaged the more violent tactics used by working class women on the Lower East Side (Heath 1913; Orleck 1993, 1995; Keith 2008:87). Mrs. Dimies T. S. Dennison, Honorary President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs too saw "great danger in lawless women" (New York, *Great Danger* 1912).[21]

For all their differences, common cause for affordable and high quality foodstuffs drew women in New York and across the United States together across economic, political, social and racial lines. After a surge of particularly violent boycotts and raids on butcher shops in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and on the Lower East Side in June 1912, The Housewives' League canvassed for new members among the working class women who had rioted. In another gesture of support for the boycotters, League members formed a Citizens' Committee that leased space at the city-operated Midtown Market, located under the Queensboro Bridge at 59th Street. They invited local fishermen to sell their wares at "cost-price," supplying cheap fish as a substitute for meat. On the first day, one thousand pounds of fresh weakfish, bluefish and flounder sold out in one hour. The next day, two thousand pounds of fish were made available, as well as bushels of cost-price produce. The market was a success and one month later, the League opened a vegetable market (New York, *Fish Quickly* 1912; New York, *Open* 1912).

While women's organizations launched protests and strikes, New Yorkers including university students, progressive activists, and elected officials voiced their anger about the "food problem" in public forums such as hearings and newspapers. Proposed solutions to the

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[21] Mrs. Dennison charged suffragettes in England with "malicious mischief," and said the "uneducated and unassimilated" women who boycotted butchers in New York City did not understand that the high price of meat was the wholesalers' fault, although it was clear the boycotters were, in fact, fully cognizant of the relationship between retailers and their suppliers (New York, *Great Danger* 1912).

high cost of food included granting city government the authority to regulate food distribution by introducing price controls to eliminate profiteering and by investing in infrastructure such as terminal markets and enclosed markets.

Policy Proposals

Public debate, and public protest, about the problems of food distribution in New York City reached a peak in 1912. Food prices rose more quickly than the prices of clothing and other goods, squeezing purchasing power, and threatening the productivity and overall health of the laboring classes (Edwards 1913). Geographic shifts in food production were partially responsible for price instabilities: Expanding suburbs and rising property values had displaced truck farms in the New York City region; farmland was being converted into large estates for the well-to-do that took the place of market gardens where produce destined for city markets was once grown. Grazing lands in the West were given over to crops like wheat and corn. Cattle now grazed on infertile plains and grew fat on grain diets, raising the cost of production.[22] Tariffs kept the price of imported beef high (New York, *Methods* 1912; Freidberg 2010). Shopping habits had changed; consumers of all classes became accustomed to placing orders over the phone, and having their groceries delivered. They purchased more prepared and packaged foods whose prices reflected the millions spent on marketing and advertising of national brands (Heath 1912).

[22] Corn-fed beef retailed for 3 to 6 cents more a pound than grass-fed stock, which was smaller and considered poorer quality meat. Competing demand from manufacturers of popular breakfast cereals drove up prices for corn (New York, *Fish Quickly* 1912).

Politicians at all levels of government responded to consumer anger about the high cost of food by undertaking investigations and scheduling hearings. Bronx Borough President[23] Cyrus C. Miller produced a report based on ten years' research on public markets in the United States and Europe. Miller blamed "much of the unrest among all classes of our city" on the increasing difficulty in buying the food necessary to live." Farm products had to be distributed quickly and cheaply, he argued, much as water and light were. Public markets would drive down the cost and sale price of food, particularly for the poor, who Miller imagined would make up the bulk of market patrons. Terminal markets on the Bronx, Hudson and East Rivers would be connected to one another by rail to facilitate the flow of goods among them. He called his proposal "beautiful simplicity" and predicted that it would catalyze "a veritable revolution."[24]

Government's role was to promote public *wholesale* markets, Miller wrote. He opposed the state "going into the produce business" and competing with the private sector in the retail business. After examining the economics of publicly-supported or regulated markets, Miller noted that at central wholesale markets in Berlin, Paris, Lyon, and Budapest, volume, sales, and revenue rose every year, while at the peripheral public retail markets in those cities, sales and profits fell. In Paris, where *Les Halles* was widely recognized as the most efficient market in the world, and trade was highly regulated in every sense, the city's thirty-three smaller retail

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[23] Before January 1, 1898 New York City was coterminous with New York County and included Manhattan and the Bronx. On that date, the counties of Kings (Brooklyn), Queens, Richmond (Staten Island), and the Bronx were created. The offices of Borough Presidents were established to balance local authority with centralized authority. Borough Presidents had a vote on the Board of Estimate. In 1990, the Board of Estimate was dissolved and the Borough Presidents remain, but with much less power.

[24] Bronx Borough President Miller suggested establishing two terminal markets in Manhattan (on the site of the Gansevoort Market and at Eleventh Avenue), and a third in the Bronx (Edwards 1912).

markets were losing customers to grocers who offered greater convenience, including home delivery and telephone orders (Ibid; Edwards 1912).

That same year, New York's Governor John Adam Dix[25] formed the Food Investigating Commission, mandated to calculate the effects of poor distribution methods on the price of food. The Commission held hearings, and testimonies documented changing consumer tastes and business environments. Independent retailers told the Commission that competition from chain stores forced them to shave profits to a bare minimum, selling staples like flour, sugar and eggs nearly at cost. They blamed the chain stores for reducing the quality and quantity of what was sold to consumers (New York, *Move Food* 1912).[26]

Butchers testified that consumers were "picky." "You can't sell anything but the best cuts," said Edward Johnsdorfer, a butcher from Brooklyn. The "poorer classes" used to eat corned beef, pot roasts and other cheap cuts, said William Schneider, also from Brooklyn (New York, *Public Finicky* 1912).[27] A "marketman" who had worked in the city's public markets since 1876 said the "telephone has spoiled everything." Instead of making the rounds themselves, customers would call "four or five times a day," requiring him to keep three delivery boys on call. "The younger generation isn't like its father and mothers. They want to be waited on – and

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[25] John Adam Dix (1860 – 1928), Democrat, served as New York's governor from 1911 to 1913 (National Governor's Association, www.nga.org, accessed 20 May 2011).

[26] The standard one-pound package of raisins sold for twelve cents; a chain's ten-cent package contained only 12 ounces. Large manufacturers advertised their products in newspapers, forcing grocers to honor those prices regardless of their own operating costs (New York, *Move Food* 1912).

[27] Commissioner James W. Osborne, who presided over the hearings, suggested that some of these changes were due to larger numbers of women working outside the home, who had no time for slow cooking meats, and the advent of gas stoves; in the past, coal fires stayed warm all day, providing heat for simmering stews (New York, *Public Finicky* 1912).

they want to be waited on quick."[28] Would consumers save money by going shopping themselves, the Commissioners asked. Yes, but "it's foolish to talk about that nowadays. Even poor people want more attention nowadays than they wanted ten years ago" (New York, *Passing Method* 1912).

In its conclusion, the Commission was careful to delineate conditions for state intervention: "If the supplying of a community with food supplies is a public utility and if that service is now being rendered in a wasteful and inefficient manner," then the city and State should step in and regulate. The Commission recommended giving city governments more control over their food supply and distribution. Its most "radical" suggestion was to amend city charters to empower each municipality to create a department of markets tasked with overseeing all the "sanitary and economic questions of the city's food supply" (New York, *Traces Prices* 1912; New York, *Move Food* 1912).

The Commission's Report, released in August 1912, was critical of New York's existing public retail markets because they placed a burden on taxpayers. Most ran at a deficit; the system was "obsolete, uneconomical, and wasteful"[29] (New York, *Move Food* 1912; New York,

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[28] Other business owners profited from changing consumer expectations. The 25-year old son of the city's "largest and most modern" retailer whose name is not mentioned in a contemporaneous report, described his company's business model to the Commission: they bought from producers in large quantities, marked everything up by one third, and delivered directly to households, restaurants and clubs "by means of seventy-five delivery wagons" (New York, *Passing Method* 1912).

[29] The markets were antiquated and poorly patronized. As early as October 1902, the New York City Department of Finance advised abolishing five public markets: Centre, Clinton, Union, Tompkins and Catherine. Centre Market was recommended as the site of a new police headquarters. By 1912, Fulton, Gansevoort, Jefferson, Washington, and Wallabout Markets reported losses; West Washington and Delancey Markets reported surpluses. Fulton Market, built in 1883, was located in a neighborhood that had lost a great deal of its population, and housed wholesalers who sold to steamers and restaurants. The city had closed the Clinton, Tompkins, and Castleton markets in the previous ten years and planned to tear down the

Methods 1912). Over the years, City government had become "merely a landlord from whom the retail stall owner rents his place of business." Still, the Food Investigating Commission concluded that the food distribution system could be "simplified and systematized" by changes that included reviving public wholesale and terminal markets, with a commitment to returning them to their original function "the bringing together as closely as possible the producer and the consumer" (New York, *Passing Method* 1912; *Gain Two Ways* 1912).

The Commission favored chain grocers and the "food department store" where foodstuffs were bought directly from producers, and "capital earned a fair return" while providing "educational value" for housewives who could comparison shop amidst a variety of goods. The report also predicted the demise of the individual retailer: "High operating costs makes his elimination inevitable….He is now slowly wearing out." The individual grocer "merely" earned enough to support himself and his family. "Great retail stores," on the other hand, with their own storage facilities, kept costs down, and turned profits (New York, *Solution* 1912).

Retailing revolutions

The rise of chains since the late nineteenth century gave weight to the Food Investigating Commission's views. Chains emerged slowly at first: a successful 5 and 10-cent store opened a few "links," a shoe manufacturer established retail stores in a few cities near his plant. A few decades later it seemed that all of life's needs could be met by chains, providing standardized goods to Americans in rural areas and cities alike (New York, *Chain Links* 1923). The industrialization of food manufacturing aided the spread of chain grocers. Before the advent of

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Jefferson Market next, although Jefferson Market continued to serve a large number of households (New York, *Abolish* 1902; *Methods* 1912; *Passing Method* 1912).

packaged foods, independent grocers bought in bulk, and sold by weight, gradually earning their customers' loyalty. Manufacturers of packaged foods invested heavily in marketing and advertising to make their branded, packaged foods symbols of trustworthiness and quality. Chains traded on the recognition of national brands when they entered new markets.

Figure 3.3: The inside of a Jules Weber grocery store at 213 West 42nd Street, the shelves stocked with an array of processed foods. The branded items attracted consumers who liked their predictability

(Byron Company, Museum of the City of New York archive, 1902).

New York City was a center of activity for chains: the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company (A&P), founded in 1859 as the Great American Tea Company by George Hartford and George Gilman, opened its first store at 31 Vesey Street in downtown Manhattan, selling tea, coffee, and spices. It opened its first "no-frills" grocery store, the A&P Economy Store, in Jersey City, NJ, in 1912. It was a cash and carry operation, with no credit, no delivery, plain fixtures and furnishings. It became the model for all of their stores; the concept flourished, beginning an extraordinary period of development in which A&P grew from about 350 stores in 1910 to 4,638 in 1920. In the 1930s, A&P had over 16,000 stores and annual sales of more than $1 billion.

James Butler, an immigrant from County Kilkenny, Ireland, opened his first store on Lexington Avenue and 66th Street in the early 1880s. He went on to found the James Butler

Company, opening stores in "very selective locations." By 1909 he had more than 200 stores; by the time of his death in 1934, his was the sixth largest grocery chain in the United States, with 1,100 stores in the New York metropolitan region, second only to A&P (Time, *Butler* 1934; Miller 2010).

Early chain grocers were quite small, generally less than one thousand square feet. They sold dry goods including canned foods and other non-perishable items from clerks who filled orders at a counter. Greengrocers and butchers were entirely separate businesses. Large retail chains often produced and packaged their own goods, and had their own wholesale and distribution networks. The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company owned a canning factory, abattoirs, packaging plants and eleven industrial bakeries, selling goods bearing proprietary labels. The Jones Company, another "rapidly rising concern," made half the goods it distributed.

Pushcarts and Peddlers

While chains targeted the most lucrative locations, working class neighborhoods were served by small independent stores, public retail markets that catered to the "poor and the thrifty," and pushcarts (New York, *Permanent* 1913). Thousands of large-wheeled, wooden carts served the needs of the city's immigrant classes, many the second and third generation and still mired in urban industrial America's underclass. Pushcart peddlers were typically immigrants themselves, working long days throughout the year at what was recognized to be a traditional means of subsistence.[30] In 1900 there were an estimated 25,000 pushcarts in New York City

[30] The first pushcart market was formed in 1866 when four peddlers set up carts on Hester Street; unofficial markets sprang up along busy shopping strips, lining the streets of the Lower East Side and East Harlem (DoM Annual Report 1927).

offering goods at "ridiculously low prices," said Jacob Riis, the documentarist of New York tenement life (DoM Annual Report 1927; New York, *Pushcart Remedies* 1912).

Politicians and publics alike focused their energies on grand projects to redesign New York City's food distribution infrastructure, and proposed far-reaching regulations of the food trade. New York City's Board of Aldermen,[31] on the other hand, focused on the food retailing realities of New York's working class neighborhoods. In July 1912, the Aldermen adopted a resolution asking the Board of Estimate to provide funds to purchase sites and construct buildings so the pushcart vendors could "quit the streets." Pushcarts had grown in number and were recognized by the Aldermen as a "fixed method" of food distribution. They were, however, a "condition" which needed to be "checked or better regulated" before they became a "nuisance" beyond the city's control, particularly on the densely populated Lower East Side of Manhattan, said the Aldermen, who proposed building markets with roof gardens that could serve as children's playgrounds (New York, *Aldermen Endorse* 1912).[32]

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[31] The Board of Aldermen was the city's legislative body until the present City Council was instituted as the sole legislative body in 1938. The Board of Estimate remained the chief administrative body until 1989, when Supreme Court ruled it violated the one-person, one-vote mandate (http://council.nyc.gov/html/about/history.shtml).

[32] The idea of building two-story markets to house the pushcarts was first proposed by the United Hebrew Charities in 1906, then dropped out of fear of making enemies of the pushcart vendors. Also in 1906, President of the Public Bank[32] Joseph C. Marcus proposed building three two-story public markets with roof playgrounds, each one a full block in size, on Manhattan's Lower East Side, for pushcart vendors, if the city passed an ordinance against open air markets. The city did not take him up on his offer (New York, *Aldermen Endorse* 1912).

Figure 3.4: Pushcart markets were an important source of inexpensive food in working class neighborhoods. As pushcarts grew in numbers, the city developed policies to control where and what they could sell (Bain New Service, Library of Congress, ca. 1910 to ca. 1915).

Pushcart vendors across the city endorsed the Aldermen's proposal to build enclosed markets. Max Feldman, the President of the Harlem Pushcart Men's Association, said his 1,800 members were in near-unanimous support. The only opposition to the Aldermen's plan came from vendors on the Lower East Side with particularly profitable locations, and from landlords who leased corners, sidewalks and curbs in front of their properties to pushcart peddlers (Ibid).

A Committee on Markets was created by the Aldermen to work with the Mayor Gaynor's Market Commission to draw up an ordinance regulating the pushcart trade. Committee members and Mrs. Julian Heath, President of the Housewives' League, inspected a proposed market site on Park Avenue that stretched from 110th Street to 129th Street. Other suggested locations included an empty space at the foot of Houston Street, one under the Manhattan Bridge from Henry to Moore Streets in Brooklyn, and dock spaces in Greenwich Village (New York, *Pushcart Remedies* 1912).

In the summer of 1914, Mayor John Purroy Mitchel's[33] Food and Market Committee announced plans to establish four "open", or free, markets as an experiment in early September on the plazas of the Manhattan Bridge, the Queensboro Bridge, the Harlem River Bridge (at 129th Street and 3rd Avenue), and at the Fort Lee Ferry docks (130th Street and the Hudson River).[34] These markets were held in open public space where vendors set up stalls or sold from carts and trucks. Spaces were free of charge, and were allotted on a first come, first served basis. Committee member Manhattan Borough President Marcus M. Marks sent out 1,000 letters inviting farmers and dealers to sell their stock at "a fair profit" at any open market, on any morning, at wholesale or retail (New York, *East Harlem* 1914).

The open markets ran into trouble almost immediately. When the Department of Health condemned and seized fish from two open markets, and confiscated over 200 "short weight scales," City officials tried to cover up the events to prevent bad press. Most market stalls were occupied by vendors, not by the "genuine farmers" sought by the Market Commission. Consumers were slow to come. To make the open market experiment more appealing, delivery services were introduced at the Queensboro Bridge, Harlem and Fort Lee markets (New York, *Farmers Wanted* 1914). It was not conclusively resolved whether food was cheaper at New York's open markets than in green grocery stores.[35]

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[33] John Purroy Mitchel (1879 - 1918) served as mayor of New York from 1914 to 1917.

[34] In 1912, the Board of Aldermen asked that all vacant city property be put under their authority, as a means of authorizing locating public markets under bridges and other unused spaces. The Mayor's office took responsibility for this initiative instead (New York, *Aldermen Endorse* 1912; New York, *East Harlem* 1914).

[35] Housewives did save money by purchasing directly from farmers at the four "open" markets if they shopped in person and carried their own purchases home. More generally, food purchased at pushcarts was cheaper, but peddlers often sold second-grade goods. A "stallholder" at Fulton Market defended the market on account of its "excellent reputation," and the variety of goods available, but was not sure if prices were lower than those at nearby grocers. Other "[p]ublic

Despite a rough start, the new open markets were eventually "well patronized." Vendors at the Queensboro market boasted that in addition to "families of limited means," "Fifth Avenue" came, carting purchases home in their automobiles. "Nothing could be more democratic than these markets," wrote a fan in their support (H.A.C. 1914). Thousands of daily patrons signed a petition asking city officials to make the Harlem market permanent (New York, *Harlem Public* 1914). Due to overwhelming demand for stalls, another open market was established on Staten Island.

The open markets' success was short-lived. Retailers complained about competition from the free markets and sympathetic city officials challenged the markets' legality. They wrenched control of the markets away from Manhattan Borough President Marks and handed it to the Finance Department, who imposed rents on the previously free stalls.[36] Vendors complained rent was so high they could no longer sell at prices "that would reduce the cost of living." By April 1915, only the Queensboro and Harlem markets remained (New York, *Rents Upheld* 1912; Washington 2010).[37]

Apart from the experimental open markets, government and elected officials did not reach any consensus or take steps towards strengthening the city's existing public market system, and the struggle for better government regulation of food distribution continued. In

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marketmen," when asked if they offered lower prices in exchange for the "nominal rents" paid to the city (they paid 50 cents/sq ft per month) said they did not make enough profit to undersell large chain grocers, contradicting policy makers' – and the publics' – representations of public markets as places where goods could be had cheaply (New York, *Two Ways* 1912).

[36] Rents were $9.50/week for indoor stalls and $2/week for outdoor stalls. Vendors complained the rates made it impossible to earn a living (Washington 2010).

[37] Vendors at the Fort Lee Ferry terminal formed a cooperative and established a private market on Broadway and 129th Street (present day 125th Street and Broadway); the market closed in 1919 (New York, *Rents Upheld* 1912; Washington 2010). The Queensboro Market closed in 19xx; in 2000, A&P opened a Food Emporium in what was once the public market hall.

1915, George W. Perkins,[38] an organizer and advocate of Progressive causes, addressed the Bronx Board of Trade. He called for the creation of a municipal department of markets to centralize oversight and control of the city's public markets. The State and the City had created departments to look after the people's interests in health, education, and transportation – why not food? New York City "never had" and still did not have "anything that resemble[d] a department of markets whose business it would be to develop and supervise this great problem of how to the people of New York shall be fed." Those opposed to the creation of a department of markets, Perkins said, were "diametrically opposed to the interests of the people" (New York, *Public Demand* 1915).

[38] George W. Perkins (1862-1920) was an organizer and modernizer of the Progressive era. He moved up the ranks from office boy to leading executive in banking, steel and insurance. He was a major financier to J. P. Morgan. President Theodore Roosevelt appointed him chairman and chief operating officer of the Progressive Party. In his last years, he focused much of his attention on New York City politics (Garraty 1960).

Chapter 4: Regulation, World War I and its Impacts on the Market Landscape – 1917 to 1930

Emergency Measures

World War I disrupted European production of all goods including foodstuffs. Prices skyrocketed across the United States as producers took advantage of new markets and exported greater shares of domestic production. Government regulations were depicted as a necessary bulwark against the Germans, and the internal threat of civic unrest from inflation and scarcity of key food commodities. Discourses of patriotism, national security and shared sacrifice branded as traitors the retailers, manufacturers and other "middlemen" who failed to adhere to trade regulations.

President Woodrow Wilson declared war on Germany on April 2, 1917.[39] In May, Congress passed the Lever bill, giving the President the power to establish a Federal Food Administration. The Food Administration's Executive Board included members of all "interested parties": farmers, manufacturers, distributors, and consumers. Wilson appointed Herbert Hoover "Food Administrator" to lead a "campaign against the high cost of living." At the President's urging, Congress passed the United States Food Administration Act in August (New York, *Cut Prices* 1917).[40]

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[39] President Woodrow Wilson (1856 – 1928) served as President of the United States from 1913 – 1921.

[40] The United States Food Administration Act of August 10, 1917; the United States Food Conservation Act of August 10, 1917; the New York State Food Commission Law of August 29, 1917; the Agreement for a Federal Food Board for New York State of November 27, 1917 (Library of Congress, http://lccn.loc.gov/18027062).

Also in 1917, New York City's Department of Markets was created by the passage of a State law[41] that authorized cities across New York to establish municipal departments of public markets. Mayor Mitchel appointed Henry Moskowitz as the city's first Commissioner of Public Markets, Weights and Measures, with jurisdiction over all public markets, market places and lands, and all auctioneers (New York, *Food Inquiry* 1917). Moskowitz was put in charge of New York City's Food Board.

During the summer of 1917, the proposed Lever bill and its "emergency" expansion of government powers was debated in New York City. Retailers and wholesalers associations appealed to City Hall, trying to convince the Board of Estimate that a "multiplicity of supervision" from State and city agencies, and now the Federal government, would "complicate matters" of business (New York, *Federal Food* 1917). Consumers were well represented at the hearings. Mrs. Jeannie Wells Wentworth, Chairman [sic] of the Food Committee of the Woman Suffrage Party, spoke in support of municipal control of food distribution. She advocated empowering the Commissioner of the new Department of Markets to buy and sell food at cost when high rates of inflation made it necessary to control prices and supplies, and "relieve the misery and privation among the poor." A member of the Morris Park Citizens' Association in the Bronx wanted the city to take over all cold storage facilities from private interests. Lucius P. Brown[42] of the city's Department of Health complained of a "confused" situation in New York where the same goods were available for different prices in different parts of the city; Brown

[41] The Department of Public Markets was founded in October 1917 by resolution of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment by authorization of the Farmers and Markets Law (C. 802, L. 1917) amended by Chapters 48 and 367 of the Laws of 1922 (DoM Annual Report 1930).
[42] Lucius P. Brown was the Director of the Bureau of Food and Drugs, New York City Department of Health (New York, *Distributors Fight* 1917).

wanted the city to regulate these irregularities. Dorothy Zeman[43] of the New York City Food Aid Committee suggested wiping out the middlemen entirely, and immediately: "Why prolong the agony," she asked rhetorically. Benjamin Marsh[44], a municipal engineer, thought the Federal government should seize all foodstuffs and supervise their distribution, "We cannot have a private monopoly of any necessity in a democracy. The Government must own or operate such monopolies." Producers would be paid "a fair price" that included "the actual cost of production and a reasonable profit."

By November, a Federal Food Board for New York State was established, and housed in New York City (New York, *Distributors Fight* 1917; New York, *Agencies Seek* 1917). The municipal government's propensity for largely symbolic gestures such as the temporary open markets, and countless commissions was replaced with strict enforcement of a new regulatory regime.

Mobilizing the "American food army"

The Federal Food Administration regulated distribution and consumption across the United States. In some ways, its reach was quite deep. "Eating places" including hotels, as well as the general public, were subjected to meatless and wheatless days as a conservation method (New York, *Food Board* 1917).[45] Regulated goods included eggs, poultry, milk, meats, vegetables, flour, bread, wheat, other cereals, fish and canned goods. No hoarding or "unreasonable

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[43] Dorothy Zeman was an alumna of Columbia University, Teachers College and a member of the New York City Food Aid involved in "district organization or demonstration work" (*Teachers College Record*, 1917; See also *Jewish Charities* 1918).
[44] Benjamin Marsh worked with the Committee on Congestion of Population (New York, *Distributors Fight* 1917).
[45] Food served in public places was structured by twelve "general orders" that forbade serving bread or toast under meat, or bacon as garniture.

profits" were permitted. Wholesalers were expected to base prices on what they paid producers, not "prevailing market conditions."

In practice, the Administration's reach was limited. The law applied only to retailers selling more than $100,000 or more annually of twenty controlled staples, and it affected only 1,200 of the approximately 350,000 retailers in the country.[46] The Administration expected that regulation of large retailers would pressure small retailers to lower their prices. Competition and a "watchful public" would keep prices down (New York, *Predicts Drop* 1917; New York, *Control Food* 1917).

New York City was an exception. Food Administrator Arthur Williams expanded the reach of the Federal Food Administration and brought small-scale retailers under its regulatory grasp.[47] To secure public support for its comprehensive program of food regulation, Commissioner Moskowitz formed a Citizens' Food Council by bringing together members of women's clubs and other civic organizations (New York, *Agencies Seek* 1917). The Council held meetings and distributed literature. "Housewives" served as enforcers. They checked on reported abuses in retail stores throughout the city, and filed complaints to the Food Board.[48] By calling on citizen brigades, the Food Board united women's organizations across the political

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[46] The Federal Food Administration's limited powers did not extend to all retailers, wholesalers, distributors, growers and producers. The majority of large food producers did not participate (New York, *Predicts Drop* 1917).

[47] New York City's implementation and enforcement of Food Administration regulations went beyond Federal efforts in other ways: Nationally, only large bakeries were regulated. In December 1917, all New York bakeries were required to bake bread according to Food Administration guidelines. Many ended up in court for failing to bake "victory" loaves made with less milk and sugar than a pre-war loaf, and no more than 15% animal fat in the shortening (New York, *Predicts Drop* 1917; New York, *Bakers Rules* 1917).

[48] The Federal Food Board of New York encouraged citizens to increase food production at home including canning, and gardening. In collaboration with committees of private owners, the Board asked that all unoccupied land be turned into vegetable gardens (New York, *More Gardens* 1918; New York, *All City* 1918; see also Lawson 2005).

spectrum, and reframed leftist, radical food politics as "patriotic," simultaneously co-opting and legitimizing their demands for fair prices while – and by – limiting consumption of meat, sugar and other commodities.[49]

Before the war, women's organizations promoted principles of scientific household management and home economics through courses and lectures. During the War government rebranded scientific management as principles of "Hooverized living." The Patriotic Milk Exhibition at Grand Central Palace in New York promoted milk as "cheap energy" and a good substitute for meat; "Victory menus" featured milk as a central ingredient (New York, *Hoarded Wheat* 1918). The National League for Women's Services, in cooperation with the New York Food Board, organized a Conservation Food Show, also at the Grand Central Palace. Attending housewives were taught to "best the grocer and the butcher at their own game" by doing their own shopping, and talking to dealers about substitutions for rationed meat, fats, wheat and sugars, including "many varieties of beans" and "squirrels, rabbits, hares and numerous new kinds of fish" (New York, *Kitchen Economy* 1918; New York, *Inventory Food* 1918).[50]

The daily price list issued by the New York Food Board was a "weapon" in the hands of "watchful" housewives. If grocers did not abide by the principle of "fair profit only" on the basis of patriotism, that principle was "forced into play by the ability of the housewife to show the Food Board price list and threaten to appeal to the board." Because the price list used an

[49] The FFA's wartime restrictions were effective. In New York City, when meat was consumed at approximately 800,000 pounds weekly, the "savings" was about 120,000 pounds weekly, for a total savings of almost one million pounds in eight weeks (New York, *Agencies Seek* 1917).

[50] Education was not limited to "housewives." The NY Food Board organized a series of meetings to teach bakers how to make bread with the required percent of "wheat substitute" that included rice flour, potato flour, tapioca flour, hominy, and white corn flour. Bran, whole wheat flour, barley flour, and oatmeal replaced wheat in dark colored loaves. The percentage of wheat substitute depended on the Class of baked good: Class 1, Bread and Rolls, 25%; Class 5, Batter cakes, quick breads, etc, 66 2/3%) (New York, *War Bread* 1918; *Disobey Food Board* 1918).

average of what should “prevail in the retail market,” it benefited large-scale retailers who could afford to sell under the list price. Small business owners complained that Federal guidelines for fair prices were hard to follow since they did not take into account operating costs like labor and rent. In response, the Federal Food Board widened the margin of allowable profit, but did not introduce price floors. Enforcement of price lists was uneven, even in New York. The Board’s inspectors found “abuses” were common in neighborhoods with high concentrations of recent immigrants, and others who did not speak English. Grocers who extended credit often overcharged because their customers were fearful of complaining (New York, *Paring Prices* 1918). The poorest citizens, who most needed protection from price gouging and profiteering, were also the most vulnerable, regardless of strong state regulations.

Compliance with food regulations was framed as a matter of national security. Each family was a separate unit of the “American food army.” All meals were to be consumed with “the wants of all the world in mind.” Food shortages in other countries led to violence, revolution and other “drastic results.” In Russia, breakdowns in food transports meant “unequal distribution” in Petrograd, Moscow and other cities, where violent food riots hastened the Revolution by “many months.” Food riots were “the forerunners of disaster” in Italy. Romanians were forced into an “unfertile” corner of the country by the Germans, where tens of thousands died of starvation, and survivors “caved” to German bidding. The Germans created “famine-conditions” in Poland, a “deliberate determination to denationalize a great nation of 15,000,000.” For the sake of “civilization” the American people had to be willing to sacrifice in support of the struggle for “freedom against an unscrupulous autocracy” (Harris and Ewing 1918; New York, *‘War Conscience’* 1918).

When non-compliance was detected, it was punished, and publicly. Nineteen New York City bakeries were suspended for three days for disregarding wheat regulations and the news was reported in local papers. In a separate incident, fifty bakers were brought in for hearings, and an additional twenty complaints were filed in Brooklyn about bakers flaunting "limitations observed by the more patriotic members of the trade…creating an unfair state of competition" (New York, *Punishment Swift* 1918; *Trouble Wheat* 1918). The Food Board zealously prosecuted retailers that violated the "label rule" requiring that grocers mark goods with the grade, quality and price before putting them out for sale, regardless of the size of a grocer's business. A presiding judge in New York City questioned the Board's tactics when fines were applied equally to a "poor woman grocer" and to James Butler, owner of hundreds of grocery stores. "One dollar to her means more than a thousand dollars to James Butler. There are only a few James Butlers, but there are a multitude of these poor people" (New York, *Grocers Convicted* 1918).

Transitioning from war to peace

When the war ended, on Nov. 11, 1918, New York City's food problem had been solved to a significant degree. Through a combination of state regulation, citizen discipline and private sector compliance intended to help the US troops beat the Kaiser's men, prices were controlled, deliveries were timely and "adequacy" was redefined to reflect more modest and flexible consumer expectations. By bringing food provisioning under government control, civic unrest was minimized and the health of the population was assured.

Yet the unity of the war effort was short lived. Pent-up demand for meat, sugar and other commodities sent prices soaring, and citizens called for the return of wartime price regulations, terminated by Federal government at war's end (New York, *Profiteering Food*

1919).[51] Local, state and federal officials again looked for someone to blame. In New York State, the Reconstruction Commission's Committee on Food Production and Distribution[52] sent a report to Governor Al Smith.[53] After six months of research, the Commission concluded that high prices were due in large part to the "inherent faults and malpractices" in the distribution of food, including speculation that prevented markets from setting true prices. Other problems included shortages of foodstuffs, and a persistent lack of adequate transportation. The Commission condemned the "middleman," who they considered an "economic parasite."[54] They recommended the extension of wartime controls instead of a return to pre-war "laissez-faire" practices. Belief persisted that market equilibrium could be reached, and "unconscionable" dealers who took advantage of "abnormal" conditions prevented this from happening in order to reap greater profits (New York, *Port Plan* 1923). The state's role, the Commission urged, was to structure commercial activity so that markets could balance supply and demand.

In response to the Reconstruction Commission's findings, US Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer pledged to order the Federal Food Administration to organize Fair Price Commissions in each state. He envisioned a decentralized system; state commissions would negotiate "fair prices" in each community, and publish these rates so consumers could protect

[51] The New York Federal Food Board stopped operating in mid-December 1918, marking the end of regularly published price lists. In response, the Commissioner of Markets started publishing lists of prices at Washington Markets and other city markets (New York, *Profiteering Food* 1919).

[52] Members of the Committee on Food Production and Distribution included Mrs. Henry Moskowitz, wife of the first NYC Markets Commissioner, and Arthur Williams, former Federal Food Board Administrator for New York.

[53] Alfred Emanuel Smith (1873- 1944) served four terms as Governor New York. He was born on the Lower East Side (www.nycgovparks.org).

[54] Several years after these allegations, a 1923 study showed that food was handled by approximately fifteen agents between producer and consumer, compared to an average of four in 1912. The cost of distribution was 53 cents of every food dollar. Terminal markets were expected to reduce the cost of distribution by 10% (New York, *Port Plan* 1923).

themselves. Palmer recommended that profiteering be criminalized; juries would make "conspicuous examples" of gougers (New York, *Bill Punish* 1919).[55]

Before and during World War I, citizens and government lobbed accusations against retailers and middlemen; after the War people were less ready to accept the scapegoats handed to them by government officials who were once again pointing accusing fingers at retailers and middlemen. In a letter to the Editor of The New York Times, former Bronx Borough President Miller, observed politicians were so quick to cry out, "Jail the hoarders!" that newspaper accounts read like the "daily blotter of a madhouse." Prices were high, but people were getting along. Seizing wholesalers' stocks did not make sense: if no food were stored, there would be nothing available in winter. "Can you tell your readers what is a profiteer?" asked Emerson P. Harris, an economist who defended consumer purchasing power. [56] What were the "exorbitant prices" and "excessive prices" to which Palmer referred? There were no "little gougers," Harris replied to his own question, just independent merchants earning a living (New York, *Letters to the Editor* 1919).

While the Federal and State governments were resorting to familiar responses to consumer cries for price reductions, New York City Markets Commissioner Jonathan C. Day was building an argument for a stronger Department of Markets rather than relinquish power over food distribution after World War I. His "ultimate solution" was to bring all food under "public utility management." The city would control all the channels through which food was sold. The

[55] Mitchell Palmer, a Quaker, would go on a year later to organize the famous "Palmer Raids," roundups of leftist radicals and anarchists, and to found the predecessor to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, appointing as the head of the Justice Department's General Intelligence Division a young lawyer named J. Edgar Hoover.
[56] Emerson's book, *Co-operation: the hope of the consumer* (1918), is dedicated to "The toilers of America, many of whom know undeserved want through the reduction of the purchasing power of their hard earned dollars by our wicked and wasteful mercantile distributive system."

first move, he said, would be the establishment of more public markets in all five boroughs. “The people have to have food the same as water and the distribution of food and the control of the price should be a public utility” (New York, *Profiteering Food* 1919). Day sought concrete means of achieving the department’s mandate, and putting an end to the “vicious cycle of rising costs, rising wages, and rising prices” (New York, *Vicious* 1919).

Day’s successor, Commissioner Edwin Joseph O’Malley, was also a proponent of public markets, though he specifically supported public *terminal* markets and not public retail markets. If one were built in each borough, he reasoned, food arriving by train, boat or truck would be handled efficiently. Surplus goods would be moved to dry or cold storage immediately; gluts could be prevented and surpluses saved for times of shortage. Public open auctions would take place at the terminal markets, setting “fair prices.” Market advice based on these fair prices would alert “housewives” of what was on its way. “We are trying nothing new or experimental here,” the Commissioner argued, “but are only catching up to what has long been recognized as excellent municipal practice elsewhere” (New York, *Terminal Market* 1920).

In 1920, New Yorkers consumed ten thousand million pounds of food, approximately half a ton of food per person, valued at $1.5 billion. Ten to fifteen thousand railroad carloads arrived in New York each week from every state and almost every country. O’Malley described the creation of a system of public terminal markets the “most progressive step ever taken in this city toward a final and complete solution to the food problem.” Five years later, in 1925, $22,000,000 was appropriated for the construction of terminal markets (Ibid; *New Market* 1925).

In addition to lobbying for improved infrastructure, the Department of Markets began shaping a food policy in response to consumer demands. Consumer movements, informed by

Progressive ideals, remained strong and influential after World War I. They continued their effective campaigns for lower prices and more government regulation of food distribution, particularly on behalf of the working classes and the poor. In May 1923, more than 2,000 delegates to the New York City Federation of Women's Clubs "representing the sentiments of half a million" members of more than 250 women's clubs voted to use less sugar as part of a nation-wide "use-less" movement. Also in 1923, members of the New York Housewives' Sugar Committee, representing more than 200 clubs and led by Chairman [sic] Mrs. Louis Reed Welzmiller, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Public Markets, paraded around City Hall. The delegates pledged to "keep off of sweets" until the price of sugar dropped, and they called on the President of the United States and the Department of Justice to "apprehend and punish the big interests which cornered the Cuban sugar crop and put up the prices, and not simply prosecute the poor dupes who executed their orders on the New York Sugar Exchange."

In response to these and other protests, Gristede Brothers, a publicly traded operator of eighty chain stores, announced it was offering five pounds of sugar for 8 cents a pound when the average wholesale cost of sugar was 9.5 cents a pound. Loss leaders lured customers in who spent money "saved" on other grocery items (New York, *Sugar Crusade* 1923; Time 1925), putting yet more pressure on smaller grocers who served New York's poorest communities. Overall, sugar prices continued to rise and Deputy Commissioner of Markets Welzmiller said women would no longer "take for granted all the propaganda the corporations" were "doling out" about why prices continued to rise on the Sugar Exchange. She and her supporters were ready to stick to their boycott: "sugar is the firing line from which housewives may wage war against all future profiteers," Welzmiller declared (New York, *Sugar Rises* 1923).

The New York Women's Market Committee, representing 800 civic organizations, demanded an investigation into the high price of bread in 1923, as well as its quality and size. Their request was granted by the Department of Public Markets, whose investigators found that a "pound loaf" sold in grocery stores and at bakeries weighed anywhere from 10 ½ ounces to one pound. The Department set the size of a loaf at fourteen ounces, taking steps to remedy a lack of standards in manufacturing (New York, *Bread Profiteers* 1923).[57] The Deputy Commissioner of Markets promised "fur will fly" at the next meeting between wholesalers, retailers, and the Women's Market Committee. The Department of Markets was poised to fight against capital on behalf of consumers, who were still waging battle to fix problems of food distribution in New York City.

Restructuring profits and savings

During World War I, the Federal Food Administration enabled the expansion of chain stores by setting price ceilings to protect consumer purchasing power, and by refusing to set price floors other than making it illegal for a retailer to sell goods for less than their replacement cost. Federal regulations targeted profit margins, and benefited chains that were already purchasing in bulk and negotiating with manufacturers for lower prices. Discourses vilifying "profiteers" and "gougers" further demonized independent storeowners who had little control

[57] The Committee's findings were based on investigations of 1,500 wholesale and 3,000 retail bakers. Bread composed seventy percent of the diet of children from two to fourteen, and one-third of adults' diets. Poor quality bread had deleterious effects on the population. "'Water bread' should not be on the market," declared Deputy Commissioner Mrs. Louis Reed Welzmiller, as it is not a complete food. "Milk bread," in contrast, included milk, sugar and lard (New York, *Bread Profiteers* 1923).

over what producers and distributors charged, or over their own operating costs (New York, *Some Drawbacks* 1920).

In the aftermath of World War I, chains stores experienced a “spectacular rise,” allowing them to capture ever-greater market shares. Their links appeared to be “endless.” Growing with “mushroom rapidity” they “cluster[ed] like grapes” (New York, *Chain Links* 1923). Sales of 129 grocery store chains showed growth of eighty-seven percent from 1919 to 1923. From 1924 to 1925 alone, chains in all sectors grew eighteen percent on average; the greatest growth was in grocery and variety chains. Chains begat chains: the arrival of one chain store on a street corner was a signal to their competitors to open a store. The arrival of a chain grocery would lead to the establishment of a chain shoe store, chain department stores, and chain tobacco store ready to take advantage of what had been identified as a lucrative location.

Location mattered, and chains hired companies to scout out the most desirable addresses by identifying highly trafficked intersections in well-to-do neighborhoods (New York, *Getting Locations* 1923). Large chains had real estate departments with ready cash that could outbid competitors and individual shop owners. Where long-term leases were not available, some chains simply bought desirable property. Real estate holdings also financed the growth of chains. James Butler sold twenty-six properties worth over $4 million at auction to “release capital” needed to fund expansion. His real estate portfolio included many of the stores he operated as well as numerous “investment properties” in Brooklyn, Queens and Long Island along developing “rapid transit” routes (New York, *Chain Realty* 1929).

By the mid-1920s, corporate chains stores battled with the “little storekeeper” and other corporations in a “battle royal for supremacy” (Clark 1924). Stock market takeovers revolutionized retailing as chains merged in deals worth billions of dollars, forming powerful

groups with greater geographic reach. Wall Street "banking syndicates" invested in chain groceries. Merrill, Lynch & Company bought two of the oldest and largest grocery chains[58] in 1916, with plans to issue stock based on new valuations (New York, *256 Stores* 1916) and by the 1920s were specialists in chain store financing (New York, *15 Chains* 1929). In 1927, Lehman Brothers took control of the second largest grocery concern in the United States, Kroger Grocery, in a preliminary move that would result in the merger of three large chains (Ibid; New York, *256 Stores* 1916; New York, *Kroger* 1927).[59]

Chains were ruthless, flexible and well capitalized, and operated in the gaps left by laws that had not anticipated their rapid expansion. Regulation limited, but did not prevent, the growth of chains; they continued to innovate and control even larger shares of the grocery market. Chains branched out to carry wider assortment of goods including fresh fruits and vegetables, baked goods, tobacco and meat. In 1929, the number of grocery-meat combination stores grew nearly eighty percent; the number of stores with grocery only grew only by eighteen percent that year (New York, *Independents* 1928; New York, *Grocery-Meat* 1929).

The rise of the grocery chain captivated the media. Yet, despite the growing, and enormous, power of chain stores over the sale and distribution of food, consumer organizations did not appear concerned about their growing influence. Nationally, this may have been in part because, in the mid-twenties, chain grocers represented only eight percent of all retail food

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[58] Merrill, Lynch & Co. purchased the Jones Brothers Tea Company and the Grand Union Tea Company, both established in 1872, with a total of 256 stores (New York, *256 Stores* 1916).
[59] Mergers caught the attention of regulators. In one of three simultaneous cases, the Federal government administered "prophylactic treatment" against the would-be National Food Products Corporation, accusing it of seeking a monopoly and violating anti-trust laws. National Food was forced to sell some of its holdings in "food concerns" under the anti-trust Clayton Act, and was barred from controlling more than a single concern in particular areas, milk distribution in New York, for example. National Food denied any "aim to dominate," and defended its investments, arguing that by trading shares on the stock market, it gave the public an opportunity to share from its profits (Time, *Mergers* 1926).

trade in the United States (60,000 stores representing 2,000 chains). However, in New York City, chain grocery store sales increased from ten to sixty percent of the total volume of retail food trade in the 1920s, for a total of more than 5,000 grocery stores. In their campaign to protect purchasing power, there was little concern about losing power over an increasingly centralized and corporatized market (New York, *8% Retail* 1924; *Chain Store* 1925; *Review Trade* 1925).[60] And yet, despite their regional dominance, not all New Yorkers had access to chain grocery stores.

In the densely populated, working class neighborhoods of East Harlem and the Lower East Side, immigrants still shopped at independent grocers and pushcart markets. Their daily rounds reflected tight budgets that allowed them to purchase just what was needed – a handful of beans, a few tomatoes, a single onion. Italian women gleaned half-filled crates of wilted greens, taking home the leftovers of the "nightly food market" on Manhattan's West Side near Washington Market in Greenwich Village (Adams 1927: xx2). The throngs of bargain seekers and the organized chaos of the city's public terminal and retail markets were reminiscent of scenes described at the turn of the century. The economic prospects for chains were not as lucrative in lower income neighborhoods where loss leaders such as cheap sugar would not draw customers to purchase pricey beef filets and other items with substantial profit margins.

Retailers in the 1920s, however, were well aware of how drastically their industry had changed; the "new order" had arrived. Initially, independent retail grocers thought the chains would not survive, that independents would prevail because consumers wanted to be catered to

[60] Although chain stores were multiplying rapidly in big cities like New York, their rate of growth was highest in rural areas and in the new suburbs where construction of new homes and the establishment of chain grocery stores were "dependent on each other." Housing developers sought out chain stores because they were an "inducement" to prospective homebuyers (New York, *Chain Increase* 1923).

(New York, *Independents* 1928). When it became evident that chains were securing an ever-larger share of the market, independent grocers scurried to adjust their practices by lowering profit margins and wages. Retail associations advised grocers to stop offering credit and operate on a cash-only basis, a practice that may not have been realistic in working class neighborhoods where many households lived paycheck to paycheck. Rumors of "preferential discounts" of twenty-five or even fifty percent from manufacturers of processed foods for large chains spread amongst independent retailers who anticipated a "united national showdown": they wanted to sell the packaged goods their customers demanded, but did not want to be forced to sell them without making a "fair profit." Some independent grocers formed cooperatives to negotiate favorable terms with manufacturers by buying in bulk (New York, *Grocers Warned* 1926).

Supermarkets – a new model of food retailing

The advent of supermarkets, a "new market plan," made the food trade sit up. A form of "super food markets" first appeared on the West Coast in the mid-1920s. Wholesale grocers ran the grocery departments and rented out concessions to other departments, keeping a close eye on operations. Like chains, their "backbone" was national brands, which served as a shorthand for quality, and proof of the "deals" they offered consumers. Michael Cullen is credited with opening the first American supermarket, King Kullen, in Queens, NY in 1930, a bare-bones operation with tables made of sawhorses and raw lumber, piled high with packaged foods, produce and household items. Two years later, Robert Otis and Roy Dawson opened Big Bear in Elizabeth, New Jersey, attracting an average of 200,000 customers a week. Like King Kullen, the Dawsons emphasized low prices; they operated on slim margins of six to eight percent, underselling their competition by ten or fifteen percent. Supermarkets had tremendous buying

power with manufacturers. Their operating costs were minimal. They were no-frills, self-service outlets with few employees to restock displays set up in abandoned automobile plants, warehouses, and other underused spaces (New York, *New Market* 1933; Zukin 2003; Deutsch 2010).

Figure 4.1: Michael Cullen opened King Kullen in Jamaica Queens, NY in 1930. Compared to other grocers, it was an enormous store with great variety and discounts that became the new standard of food retailing in America (King Kullen official website).

The threat of supermarkets to their livelihoods united chains, independent grocers and wholesalers. In northern New Jersey, the home of Big Bear, merchants associations put pressure on local newspapers, which were forced to bar advertising by the supermarket in local papers. Sales flyers were banned by local ordinance, and merchants associations proposed parking restrictions as a "safety measure." Dawson resorted to flying a blimp over Northern New Jersey to draw customers to Big Bear. Retail grocers in the surrounding areas experienced a fifty percent drop in business (Stiegert 2009; New York, *New Market* 1933; New York, *Grocery Fix* 1937). Big Bear's owners defended their practices, "Many consumers will be able to buy things

they have never been able to afford before because their food budget will be automatically stretched." Existing policies defended the rights of farmers, manufacturers, distributors, retailers. It was time for consumers to get "a break" (New York, *Retailers Slash* 1935).

At first, retailers were confident that supermarkets had only a "small chance of survival," just as retailers predicted chain grocers would not survive. Born of "negative demand shocks" caused by the Depression, they were expected to "disappear with the revival of business." Supermarkets were located outside of local shopping districts, and needed to draw on a wide radius of consumers. "When the novelty of traveling forty or fifty miles to shop" at a supermarket wore away, customers would abandon them, retailers predicted. "Warehouse" style supermarkets in Detroit and Syracuse had a brief period of success in the early 1930s; after an initial boom in business, they were reporting more "conservative" sales volumes.

Supermarkets were untidy, and offered no personal service. Women complained about the lack of a "feminine touch." Like chain stores before them, consumers missed the level of service and selection available at small, independent stores, but the lure of low prices was powerful and supermarkets gained in popularity as consumers learned to recalibrate expectations (Stiegert 2009:131; New York, *Supermarket Wane* 1933; Deutsch 2010; Cohen 2003).

Uneven geographies of food retailing

For New Yorkers living in the city's immigrant neighborhoods including East Harlem and the Lower East Side, the retail revolutions catalyzed by grocery chains and supermarkets did not radically remake their food landscapes. They continued to shop at small stores along streets

lined with networks of markets (wholesale, farmers', stoop-line, pushcart, retail, and eventually, enclosed) that were funded, constructed and managed by the New York City Department of Markets (See Appendix A: Glossary of Market Types). Chain stores chose to locate in well-to-do neighborhoods; getting to a supermarket required a car, and available cash to spend on large purchases. By picking and choosing where to conduct business, chain grocers and supermarkets standardized food distribution across America without creating a standard of food distribution for all. They did not dispel the threat to civic order posed by food insecurity among the working classes and the poor. Many working class families earned subsistence wages, and historically, it was the poor and working classes who were most likely to riot over food. The gaps left by private sector expansion and consolidation of food retailing produced maps of where the state would, in turn, consolidate and fix, power in New York City. These uneven developments targeted the working classes and the poor as subjects of state surveillance and discipline.

Chapter 5: Institutionalizing New York City's pushcart markets – 1930 to 1945

When America's last Golden Age came crashing down on October 29, 1929,[61] fortunes were destroyed overnight. More than 100,000 businesses failed between 1929 and 1933. National unemployment hovered at thirteen million, nearly one out of four Americans. There were one million unemployed in New York City alone, where one out of three New Yorkers was jobless.[62] Lines for soup, bread and jobs stretched across the city in testimony of hardship. By 1930, eighty-two breadlines were serving 82,000 meals a day. Working class neighborhoods such as Harlem and the Lower East Side were hit especially hard. In Harlem, already the "'poorest, the unhealthiest, the unhappiest and the most crowded…section of New York City" before the Depression, unemployment reached fifty percent in 1933 (Gill 2011: 282-83). In October of 1930 on the Lower East Side forty breadlines served 25,000 meals a day. One month later, fifty breadlines were serving nearly 50,000 meals daily (Wasserman 1990: 47).

Thousands turned to peddling, roaming the city with makeshift carts piled with goods of questionable provenance. The most desperate sold pencils and apples[63] on street corners. The New York Police Department estimated 7,000 persons shined shoes for a living (Sobel 1999). The New York Times Neediest Fund's campaign described with heart-wrenching details the fates of

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[61] Stock prices began falling on September 4, 1929. By October 29th, Black Tuesday, stock markets crashed around the world.
[62] The national unemployment rate was 3% in 1925, and 9% in 1930. By 1933, it was 25%, and wages had dropped by 18% (Sobel 1999).
[63] "In 1930 the International Apple Shippers Association was faced with an oversupply of fruit and came up with a unique solution to a national problem: to clear out their warehouses and give the unemployed a way to make a little money, they sold apples on credit. The ploy worked. Months later a shivering apple vendor could be found standing over a fruit crate on the corner of every major American city. By the end of November there were six thousand people selling apples in New York alone" (http://middle.usm.k12.wi.us/faculty/taft/unit7/citylife.htm).

families too destitute to pay for medicine, heat, or clothing. In 1932, hunger was so dire the Department of Markets, in collaboration with the Departments of Health and Welfare, collected and purchased, stored and distributed food boxes. Small merchants throughout the city donated canned goods, hams, jams, and seasonal delicacies like strawberries and watermelons (DoM Annual Report 1932).

Figure 5.1: Apple peddlers became a symbol of the Great Depression. In New York and cities throughout the United States, they stood on street corners, evidence of the desperation facing millions (John Sloan, "Unemployed," Museum of the City of New York, 1930).

The gravity and depth of the Depression forced citizens to turn to the state for help, and for a path towards recovery. President Herbert Hoover (1929-1933), former head of the Federal Food Board during World War I, the "Great Humanitarian" who led efforts to feed Europe in the aftermath of the War, was an ineffective leader. His recovery efforts depended on austerity measures to reduce government debt; his relief efforts were insufficient and depended largely on voluntarism and local initiatives. People who could afford to dug into their pockets, sparing their brothers a dime, but it was not enough to meet the needs of millions. In cities across the United States such as Seattle, Chicago, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C., people who lost their homes built shantytowns along rivers and in public parks. New York's newly-evicted built

shantytowns in Central Park, and along the East and Hudson Rivers. These Hoovervilles stood in rebuke of the President's failed policies. Even as he sought re-election, Hoover continued to insist it was not government's job to address the growing social crisis.

In New York City, the municipal government was not able to take care of its increasingly desperate populace; its agents were deeply corrupt. Mayor James J. Walker (1926 to 1932) resigned on September 1, 1932 amid allegations of corruption and fled to Europe. Walker's Commissioner of Markets, Thomas F. Dwyer (1930 – 1932), was brought up on charges of graft; his administration garnered "frequent complaints" from kosher butchers and marketmen forced to pay tributes to city inspectors who threatened to shut them down. City agencies were larded with officials who pocketed funds, collected bribes, and otherwise enriched themselves while millions were in desperate straits. Not every city worker was on the take, and many did their part, contributing two percent of their wages and collecting nearly $250,000 a week to fund the city's relief efforts, but corruption ran deep, threatening government's ability to respond to the disaster wrought by the Great Depression.

In 1932, a scape-goated, pilloried Hoover lost to Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1933 – 1945) who was swept into office on promises of steering the country to recovery. President Roosevelt's initial response to the Depression was the National Recovery Act (Jacobs 2005).[64] The legislation, which empowered government to enter into voluntary agreements with industry about wages, hours and prices was sharply criticized by small business owners because large industries were allowed to self-regulate. The Federal government struggled to find a balance between boosting agriculture prices, which had dropped 50%, and protecting purchasing power

[64] The National Recovery Act (NRA) passed in 1933 and was revoked in 1935, subjected to criticism from business owners seeking guaranteed profits, and by liberals who wanted more extensive government role in central economic planning (ourdocuments.gov, "100 Milestone Documents").

while holding down retail prices for processed foods and other goods. The recovery strategy depended on encouraging consumption as a way of spurring production.

In order to put people back to work, put wages into pockets, and catalyze spending, Roosevelt made massive investments in public works. The New Deal[65] was a bundle of programs aimed at hiring Americans to clear land and build bridges, libraries and public swimming pools. It employed thousands of out-of-work artists to write plays, design murals and collect oral histories. At a time when the nation was threatened by deep cleavages between rich and poor, the New Deal brokered a bargain between labor and capital: the state took responsibility for the social welfare of its workers to protect them from capitalism's excesses (Fox-Piven 1971).

Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia's election in 1933 catalyzed profound change in New York City. Swept into office on an anti-corruption platform, LaGuardia (1933 – 1945) pledged to clean up government, and make the city a shining example of modern urbanism (Caro 1975). Political support for LaGuardia came from various constituents. Progressives supported his reforms and plans for renewal; they shared his zeal for improving the lives of the urban poor and immigrants. Real estate developers and other commercial interests backed his plans to raze tenements and enclose the pushcart markets because they believed these policies would increase property values, and their profits. The middle classes supported his plans to clean the streets, clear the old, crumbling tenements, and rid the city of its heterogeneous public spaces that offended bourgeois sensibilities (Bluestone 1992; Moore 1992; Gabaccia 1992).

In addition to broad support among New Yorkers, LaGuardia benefited from close ties to

[65] Works Progress Administration (not to be confused with the Public Works Administration that constructed large-scale projects like highways and bridges) hired people on relief who were unemployed to construct small-scale projects like schools, city halls, and public markets. Labor was paid for by the Federal government, municipal government was responsible for purchasing land and materials.

the White House. His inaugural speech drew parallels between Roosevelt's vision for the country, and his vision for a revived New York City – and underscored the close relationship between the President and LaGuardia, who had served together in Congress.

LaGuardia applied for, and was awarded, more than $1.15 billion in New Deal funding.[66] At the start of the Depression, private sector investors took advantage of cheap labor and fueled a construction boom (MOMA, Ribera exhibit 2012). Numerous skyscrapers such as the McGraw-Hill Building (1931), Rockefeller Center (1933), and the Chrysler Building (1930) were added to the New York City skyline. The flood of Federal money made available by the New Deal enabled a public sector building boom that, in turn, reshaped entire swaths of New York according to LaGuardia's vision for the city (Bluestone 1992). It gave the Mayor leverage against the Board of Estimate to move ahead on pet projects such as the enclosed markets, which the Board of Estimate did not support, a decades old reluctance to spend public funds on retail spaces.

Reform was implemented from the top down during LaGuardia's tenure. Democracy was defined not as equal participation, but equal opportunity – including the right of all citizens to better housing, public institutions and economic opportunity. WPA funds allowed the city to employ thousands of construction workers, plumbers, and other laborers. Many New Deal projects were designed to improve the lives of New York's working classes such as housing, public libraries, swimming pools, baseball fields and basketball courts, and enclosed public markets.

The development of a more comprehensive city policy about public markets was framed in relation to growing gaps between rich and poor, and the threats to civic order such disparities

[66] One of every seven WPA dollars, and more than $1.15 billion in total, was awarded through New Deal programs (CWA, WPA and PWA) to New York City during LaGuardia' first five years (Caro 1975: 465; Golway 2009).

could produce. In his inaugural address, Mayor LaGuardia emphasized the need to address the widening rift, "As I see the hundreds of thousands of hungry people in this city, I wonder why the people of New York, and especially those of affluence, do not realize this condition cannot go on forever. Those people are not going to sit by idly while Rolls Royces and other big cars roll comfortably down Fifth Avenue" (New York, *LaGuardia Sworn* 1934). LaGuardia was also well aware of the deep-seated corruption throughout municipal government. After his inauguration, the Mayor put his weight behind the Department of Markets' efforts to break up rackets and trusts, supported efforts to rid the Department of supervisors on the take, and creating regulatory structures and imposing rule of law in municipal markets and throughout the food distribution chain. The Department made a full-fledged campaign to eliminate the pushcart peddlers and the open-air markets; its most visible achievement was the institution of order over the city's open air markets and the containment of peddlers in enclosed markets (New York, *LaGuardia Sworn In* 1934).

Sweeping out the dirt

When Williams Fellowes Morgan Jr. was appointed Commissioner of Markets in 1934 he inherited a deeply troubled institution. City agents, elected and appointed alike, were corrupt. They accepted bribes, falsified payrolls, created jobs for family and loyal supporters. Morgan's predecessor, Commissioner Thomas F. Dwyer was kicked out for failing to explain – among other things – what the employees on the Bronx Terminal Market payroll did to earn their wages (New York, *Mayor Acts* 1932). The Bronx Terminal Market[67], built under Dwyer's watch, was derided as "a monument of ignorance" that cost "four or five times greater than any private

[67] Construction of the Bronx Terminal Market was started in 1925 and completed in 1929 (New York, *Market Dedicated* 1925; New York, *Bronx Market* 1929).

corporation would have had to pay" (New York, *Two Bureaus* 1931; *Markets Attacked* 1931).[68] In his first Annual Report (1934), Morgan described the considerable task of shutting down the rackets that controlled the city's public markets, and cleaning out Department employees who had permitted, and profited from, illicit activities.

To root out the graft and corruption Commissioner Morgan used a combination of legislation, regulation and spatial tactics to shape state power over the city's various public markets. He ordered an immediate reduction of employees at the Bronx Terminal Market, deploring its "extravagant" operations, and describing it as a "grandiose prospectus."[69] After years of delays and cost overruns,[70] the city had built what amounted to a wholesale cold storage depot with no means of earning enough revenue to cover its operating costs, or amortizing its debt (DoM Annual Report 1934).

The city's two farmers' markets were run by rackets, one operated by the watchmen, the other by the carriers; both groups were essential to market operations. Previous administrations issued permits to the carriers and watchmen to operate in the farmers' markets where they extorted fees from farmers. Morgan arrested the rackets' boss, and revoked the watchmen's and carriers' permits. To counter an amendment to the Farmers' Market Ordinance

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[68] Acting Mayor Joseph V. McKee (Sept. 1932 – Dec. 1932) ousted Markets Commissioner Markets Thomas F. Dwyer for failing to submit a plan to make the Bronx Terminal Market self-supporting. Dwyer claimed he was not given enough time to develop such a plan (New York, *Mayor Acts* 1932; New York, *Dwyer Hits* 1932).

[69] The Bronx Terminal Market was built on thirty-seven acres by the Harlem River, at 151st Street, just south of Walton Avenue. The number of employees was reduced by thirty-seven individuals; payroll was decreased by fifty-nine percent (DoM Annual Report 1934).

[70] Estimated at $10 million, the final cost of constructing the Bronx Terminal Market was $17 million. Even without overruns, the cost suggested money funneling. To compare, a commercial company constructed a warehouse three times the size of the Bronx Terminal Market in Manhattan, where the land was significantly more expensive, for $3 million, land and buildings combined. During construction of the terminal market, "machinery manufacturers were given carte blanche to 'shoot the works.'" Other "irregularities" included electricity to operate refrigerators bought at twice the rate of electricity to run the lights and elevators. (Ibid).

passed by New York State that created a loophole allowing speculators to hold stands, and exempting them from paying rent or tax to the city, the Department of Markets required every farmer to apply for a license. To qualify for a license, farmers had to submit an affidavit certifying property ownership, number of acres in production, distance in miles from their farm to the city, average yield per acre, and what they produced, thereby establishing proof of their status as farmers and producers. A corps of full-time supervisors was installed at the farmers' markets, located in the parking lots adjacent to the Bronx Terminal and Wallabout (Brooklyn) Markets. Department field inspectors and investigators visited farms. With these policy changes, over 300 "farmers" were denied access to the municipal farmers' markets. And, as a result of enforcement activities, revenue from licenses increased, making the markets more profitable to operate (Annual Report 1934).[71]

Pushcarts

New York's terminal and farmers' markets were located on the city's peripheries, and while news of their operations was reported in the papers, most citizens did not have first hand knowledge of these markets that were designed to serve grocers, restaurateurs, butchers, and other foodservice retailers. Pushcart markets, on the other hand, were part of everyday life. In immigrant, working class neighborhoods such as the Lower East Side in Manhattan, and Borough Park and Williamsburg in Brooklyn, pushcart markets lined commercial streets where they co-existed with independent grocers, candy stores and delicatessens. Itinerant peddlers

[71] Annual Revenue at the Wallabout Market, the larger of the city's two farmers markets, increased 67% from $38,429.50 in 1933 to $63,230.75 in 1934 (DoM Annual Report 1934).

ranged throughout the city, setting out each morning with their laden carts, which were stored overnight in basements, stables, and garages.

Thousands depended on peddling to earn a living, and tens of thousands of New Yorkers depended on pushcarts as sources of low-cost, fresh produce and other foodstuffs in addition to a wide assortment of household goods. Pushcarts were the source of twelve percent of the produce sold in New York City (New York, *Robin Hood* 1938).[72]

Figure 5.2: In Harlem people of limited means depended on the pushcart markets for cheap produce, clothing, and household goods (Wesley MacArdell Films, Museum of the City of New York, 1932).

Unlike farmers, who were viewed as legitimate participants in the food system, the Department of Markets' treatment of pushcart peddlers was ambivalent. Were they part of the food distribution system, or anomalous to it? Could peddlers be brought under municipal control and made legitimate through licensing, permitting, and supervision? Municipal efforts to discipline peddlers and limit their spatial, economic, and social "transgressions" were

[72] In the 1920s, 25-40% of produce sold in New York City was sold from pushcarts, accounting for sales of $50 million annually (Bluestone 1992: 306).

accompanied by pressure to eliminate them from the city's streets entirely. In 1929, Commissioner Dwyer noted that while the pushcart markets were criticized as "fire hazards and health menace[s]," Department of Health statistics demonstrated that overall mortality was lower in areas served by pushcarts (DoM Annual Report 1929). "The necessity and benefits, as well as the healthfulness of Open Air (Pushcart) Markets" justified their presence, particularly since "recourse to them were had by those in decreased circumstances" (Ibid).[73] Eventually, however, the role of pushcart peddlers as distributors of low cost food was deemed irrelevant to the purported disorder they caused in the streets.

Mayor LaGuardia was not at all ambivalent in his pursuit of pushcarts. In his view, they were signs of corruption, embodiments of evil. Getting rid of them was part of his larger agenda to re-create New York as a model city. Containment of the pushcart markets was not intended to improve food distribution, a focus of policy-making in earlier decades. It was not aimed at lowering the price of food and removing obstacles to trade. In fact, while the state took credit for holding prices low by offering subsidized rents, merchants paid more to vend indoors than on the street, and the enclosed retail markets impeded trade by forcing some peddlers out of business. Rather, the city's efforts to clear the streets was informed by emerging middle class views of appropriate uses of public space, and growing intolerance for a means of food distribution identified with working class, immigrant New Yorkers (Ward and Zunz 1992; Bluestone 1992). Streets were "meant for traffic, and the sidewalks…for pedestrians." Pushcarts were "a traffic hazard, a health problem, a real estate blight, a fire hazard, and a great sanitary

[73] Even as pushcarts were being eliminated, when the Federal government started the food stamp program a decade later in 1940, New York became the only city that included pushcart peddlers in the plan (New York, *Food Stamp* 1940).

expense" (DoM Annual Report 1938:5; New York, *Fire Hazard* 1938).[74] What had once been a thriving informal economy that served an important role in feeding the city's poorest residents was formalized, made vulnerable, and subjected to regulation that neither legitimized peddlers nor improved their collective and individual fortunes.

Commercial interests supported LaGuardia's plans to clear the streets. Real estate developers thought peddlers were "detriments" to improving housing conditions in city's "congested residential districts." Pushcarts were "out of step with modern conditions." Pushcarts, "were incompatible with clean streets and clean homes," wrote I. Goldberg, a representative of the Greater New York Taxpayers Association.[75] Pushcarts were responsible for "large property losses" in areas targeted for "model residential structures" (New York, *Detriment* 1937), argued developers.

At the start of the Depression, storeowners described the pushcarts as "amicable, friendly and beneficial," and asked the city to create more pushcart market areas along store-lined streets to attract more consumers. If carts were only permitted on one side of a street, merchants on the other side often asked the city to allow carts to set up on their side as well, so much greater was the flow of traffic. Store rentals along pushcart market streets were 10% to 20% higher than in non-market streets (DoM Annual Report 1930:10).

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[74] Several years later, Commissioner Morgan wrote, in a *Letter to the Times*, "Streets should be reserved exclusively for 'vehicular traffic' and not "transaction of business." Selling on the street, he wrote, was a privilege and not a right, and was unfair competition to small retailers. Moreover, food belonged indoors, in a contained and enclosed environment. Morgan blamed city magistrates for not cracking down harder on pushcarts and the City Council for not passing legislation that would eliminate itinerant peddlers. One month later, the Council passed the Hart bill (Morgan 1941).

[75] A majority of taxpayers associations represented the interests of "large taxpayers and business interests" (Halter 1937). They were generally fiscally conservative and anti-social welfare (Upham-Bornstein 2009).

By the mid-1930s, storeowners on the Lower East Side and in Harlem were lobbying to remove the pushcarts. Peddlers competed for increasingly scarce trade. Merchants on the Lower East Side considered the pushcarts a "personal and public embarrassment," though they were aware that pushcarts drew customers, many of them residents, as well as former residents returning to the neighborhood out of nostalgia for what Wasserman (1990) dubbed the "good old days of poverty." The pushcarts had become icons of an idyllic past, a "colorful" contrast to the modernizing city (Bluestone 1992: 306).

Although developers, realtors, and retailers weighed in on the pushcart question, consumer organizations were notably silent on the issue. Women's clubs and consumer unions in New York City and across the United States made the protection of purchasing power a top priority and effectively linked their cause to Roosevelt's "New Deal state" (Jacobs 2005: 133). They disseminated their message across radio waves, and created consumer education curricula. They shifted from a focus on community actions to national scale campaigns. Whether fruits and vegetables were sold by peddlers on the street or in a chain grocery store was not a concern, so long as the consumer got a fair price for a quality product. The Department of Markets' Bureau of Consumer Services did not acknowledge their colleagues' efforts to contain pushcarts; material distributed by the Bureau did not indicate preferences for particular retail forms and focused instead on information about prices, supply, quality and emerging technologies. Considering the power and influence of consumers on policies and politics during the Great Depression, this lack of comment is significant and suggests the pushcart markets were not the raging social and economic problem they were represented to be.

Although consensus among powerful stakeholders was buildling for their removal from the street, peddlers were a challenge to bring under municipal control. The city developed an arsenal of regulations and policies to contain the spatial distribution of pushcarts, constrain

peddlers' mobility, and align peddlers' business practices with the law. In the 1934 Annual Report, Commissioner Morgan described the situation before him: Department supervisors had little authority over pushcart markets; they were often "demoralized" and prone to "petty graft." Peddlers ignored orders to keep the areas around their carts clean. They "treated supervisors contemptuously and in some cases…assaulted them." In every pushcart market, one peddler was the designated "fixer" in league with district leaders[76]; fixers extorted money from "less fortunate" peddlers and allocated choice locations (DoM Annual Report 1935).

Methodically, Morgan began addressing these issues. A system of allocation based on merit was established to sort peddler's stands into three categories – good, fair, and poor – according to location and number of patrons. The Department tried to allocate the best stands to peddlers with seniority; second priority went to veterans, then size of family or number of dependents was considered (New York, *Losing Ground* 1935).

While most peddlers earned subsistence wages, some pushcart stands were so profitable that peddlers netted $200 a week.[77] The Department would not transfer permits, so peddlers would sell their permits for as much as $1,000 and, to avoid transferring, would apply for a helper's permit. The "widespread" issuing of helper's permits was an "evil" in the Commissioner's eyes. In the mid-1930s, the Department cancelled all helper's permits and re-issued a limited number once vendors re-applied, and each case had been investigated (DoM Annual Report 1936).

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[76] District leaders are unpaid volunteer elected officials. They are representatives of a district to a political party (Morris 2010).

[77] The Fair Wage Act was passed in 1938, making the minimum wage twenty-five cents an hour. Most peddlers earned, some as little as seventy-five cents a day, or less (McKenney 1936).

A series of city ordinances passed in 1918 by Mayor Hylan's[78] administration "denominated" certain streets as "permanent pushcart markets" (Bernstein 1936). The Department of Markets extended this work by creating maps of New York's pushcart markets, formally identifying pushcart markets with working class neighborhoods and turning what was once a system of spatially dynamic markets into a codified landscape of official spaces with fixed boundaries, defined and monitored by the state. Once a year, supervisors mapped the location of each cart, what it sold, and the stores located across from each pushcart, in an effort to manage competition between peddlers and retailers. This system also helped the Department collect rent. Index cards were used to keep track of individual pushcarts and peddlers, and stored on a board at the Department offices. Peddlers operating in pushcart markets were required to apply for licenses and permits, and were required to display them at all times. Only permitted, licensed, and rent-paying dealers were allowed to trade in the city-sanctioned markets that were regulated to DoM supervisors assigned to "market regions," creating another distinction between legitimate and illegitimate peddlers (New York, *New Fees* 1932). The plan, said the Commissioner, would protect storekeepers from "ruinous competition" with pushcart peddlers, suggesting that while storekeepers were legitimate businesses, pushcarts were not.

Efforts to bring the pushcarts under municipal control created flows of revenue for the city. "New" pushcart markets were created when the Department of Markets surveyed existing pushcart markets not yet under the city's jurisdiction, made them official, and subjected them to city fees and regulations. A new schedule of fees was introduced in 1932, increasing total annual revenue by more than $500,000.[79] An additional increase of $100,000 was projected for

[78] John Francis Hylan (1868 – 1936) served as Mayor of New York City from 1918-1925.
[79] Pushcart markets were not the only targets of new revenue-generating policies. For example, DoM also made kosher inspectional services "self-supporting" by introducing licenses and fees to be paid by dealers of kosher food products (DoM Annual Reports 1934).

1933 through the designation of more “new” pushcart markets (New York, *$200,000 Markets* 1933). The city initially increased the number of “official” markets in response to “consumer demand.” By the mid-1930s, the city was closing the less “efficient” markets in anticipation of replacing them all with enclosed retail markets. In 1937, eighteen small and “unused” pushcart markets were closed. Concurrently, the Department of Markets was reducing the total number of permits issued to peddlers; in 1938 there were 3,800 licensed pushcart peddlers compared to 4,200 in 1937 and 7,000 in 1933 (DoM Annual Report 1938).

The pushcart markets were generally filthy places; most peddlers threw their waste under their carts.[80] Rotten vegetables, apples cores, torn newspaper, even fish guts were tossed to the ground. To make the markets more “sanitary and attractive for housewives,” and as part of a pitch to drum up support for their policies, the Department of Markets compelled peddlers to place waste in receptacles instead of leaving it in the streets. The Department of Sanitation rehabilitated hundreds of oil drums to be used as trash receptacles for market streets. Supervisors were issued blue uniforms in place of the badges they used to wear on civilian clothes, which “impressed the peddlers greatly” and raised “general discipline” to a “higher level” (Bernstein 1936). Lastly, signaling a truly disciplined landscape, during the winter season of 1934 – 1935 while pushcarts were inactive, the DoM painted all carts a uniform green with red wheels (New York, *Ban Goods* 1934).

Peddlers resisted regulation, but there were few limits to what laws could be passed to return the advantage to city officials. For example, unlicensed or otherwise “out of place” peddlers would run from the police after chaining their cart wheels together to prevent easy

[80] Already in 1930 peddlers were required to outfit their pushcarts with a broom, and a refuse bin, but it is not clear if these accouterments were properly used (Adams 1930).

removal of their carts. In response, an anti-peddling bill proposed in 1938 included a provision that allowed police to seize carts abandoned in the streets (New York, *Advocate Ban* 1938).

Often victims of a corrupt system, not all peddlers were above scamming their customers. Department of Markets supervisors cracked down on fruit and vegetable peddlers using doctored scales, a "novel" method of cheating "thrifty housewives" that involved buying a twenty pound scale, and replacing the face with a "million dollar face" that showed a maximum of twenty-five pounds. The vast majority of the 125 peddlers arrested and fined for using such a lucrative scale were unlicensed, the Department was sure to point out (New York, *Weighing Foods* 1934). There was a hierarchy of legitimacy among peddlers created by the Department that differentiated licensed from unlicensed, fixed from unfixed, and eventually enclosed and open air – even if ultimately, no peddler was legitimate in relation to merchants with fixed stores, fixed hours, and a sign hanging over the front door.

The legitimacy of peddling was challenged by civic organizations, trade associations, and city officials, and became grounds for action against peddlers and pushcarts. In a measure intended to protect retailers, the Wholesale Confectioners Board of Trade, Inc. barred the sale of candy by anyone except "bona fide retailers," specifically excluding pushcarts as part of its code of "fair competition" under the National Industrial Recovery Act (New York, *Candy Doomed* 1933). Five years later, The New York Board of Trade, Inc. approved efforts by the city to eliminate pushcarts, viewing it as part of their broad agenda to eliminate "unfair competitive methods" (New York, *Help Trade* 1938).

By 1938, peddlers could renew old licenses, but no new licenses were being issued in anticipation of the construction of the enclosed retail markets that would house some, but not all peddlers. This policy, or the "crusade against pushcarts," faced a setback in court when an

Appellate court judge ordered Commissioner Morgan to issue licenses to three itinerant peanut vendors who testified on behalf of about three hundred peanut vendors citywide, contending that the Department of Markets had no right to refuse a license to a peddler because he had no fixed place of business (New York, *Peddlers Unite* 1938; New York, *Suffers Setback* 1938).

The same year, Robin Hood[81] of Washington, D.C. secretary-treasurer of the National Cooperative Council, an organization of farmer cooperatives instrumental in shaping New Deal farm policies (Guth 1977),[82] wrote a letter of protest to Markets Commissioner Morgan complaining that the city's "campaign" against pushcarts "would hurt the farmer and producer of foodstuffs." Mr. Hood said the peddlers provided a market for "thoroughly ripened but high quality product" because of daily turnover of stock. Mayor LaGuardia responded, "Thoroughly ripened might be a technical term, but, we call it rotten in New York." Conceding that products might be "ripe" in the morning, they were not after traveling several miles, "picking up dust, dirt and drippings which co-mingle, fraternize and perhaps intermarry with the bugs and germs of your 'thoroughly' ripened product." LaGuardia concluded, let people buy that food in "sanitary, clean stores and supervised markets" where they can purchase "wholesome food fit for human consumption" (New York, *Robin Hood* 1938).

Throughout these ongoing processes to consolidate municipal control over pushcarts, peddlers and peddler organizations struggled against an increasingly powerful wave moving against them. In 1931, 8,000 members of the Federation of Citizen Peddlers of Greater New York organized a mass protest at City Hall while a hearing took place before the Board of Estimate on a proposal to eliminate pushcarts and enclose the peddlers in a single central market. President

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[81] Robin Hood was not a pseudonym. The Alumni Review of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, noting his unusual name, quipped, "with that name, he should have been the secretary of the share-the-wealthers" (1936: 280).

[82] The National Cooperative Council, now known as the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, was formed in 1929 (Guth 1977).

of the Federation, Samuel Lehrer said the measure was unfair and "the incomes of about 15,000 people would be affected" (New York, *Retain Pushcarts* 1931).

The Park Avenue Open Air Retail Merchants Association voiced their frustration with changes that, in their view, did not make economic sense. In 1934, Association members who sold food, silk items, women's clothing, and fish under the New York Central tracks held a meeting to discuss the city's plans to enclose the market with glass, steel and "other sanitary equipment." When the city proposed stalls smaller than their carts, they retorted, "an excellent size for a grave but too small for business." The Commissioner of Markets wanted to limit the merchandise sold in the new market to fruits and vegetables. LaGuardia announced plans to eventually limit the sale of everything except for foodstuffs in public markets, "especially…the pushcart markets….Dry goods do not belong in a food market….the sellers of these goods must be prepared to shift into stores" (New York, *Ban Goods* 1934). The merchants protested, arguing it was the bargains on dry goods that attracted customers from the Bronx, Westchester, and Staten Island. These customers would not come just to "save a few pennies on apples" (New York, *Protest New Plan* 1934).

When thirty-five peddlers were arrested in Brooklyn for peddling without a license in 1938, one peddler, Judah Wolfew, formed a "protective association," the Brownsville, East New York, and Flatbush Peddlers Association. With a nearly instantaneous membership of two hundred, the Association accused the City of being "unfair" to pushcart peddlers. Speaking on behalf of the peddlers, Wolfew asked for relief from police harassment, enrollment on lists for eligibility to vend in enclosed markets, and no fines. He said the peddlers were willing to go "into markets" once they were built, and asked, "what are we going to do in the meantime?" in order to earn an honest living. The court issued fines of one or two dollars with an alternative of

one or two nights in jail, but offered no other response to Wolfew's question (New York, *Peddlers Unite* 1938).

Some peddlers resisted simply by operating outside of the state system. The number of "floaters" (itinerant peddlers) increased during the Depression, as thousands turned to unofficial peddling to eke out a living. There were no vacancies in existing pushcart markets, so they spread throughout the city with "little if any tendency to exhibit any sort of ethic in business," constituting "a menace to health and traffic," complained the Commissioner in his Annual Report. In 1935, the Department of Markets announced a plan for the "elimination" of an estimated 7,000 floaters, working with the police to impose fines, and in "flagrant" cases, imprison peddlers. The crackdown on itinerant peddlers continued for years, though legislation was slow to follow. Only in 1941 did City Council pass the Hart bill prohibiting itinerant peddlers on city streets except in designated areas (New York, *Commends Action* 1941).

At a time when so many New Yorkers took up illicit peddling in an effort the survive, the state cracked down hard even on licensed peddlers. Peddlers' overt poverty and "threatening boundlessness" contradicted the vision of a modern metropolis promoted by Mayor LaGuardia. Pushcarts in public space offended bourgeois sensibilities; the middle classes imagined streets as thoroughfares for the smooth flow of traffic, not the sites of social and economic exchange (Bluestone 19992: 287). Some quit peddling in order to qualify for "home relief" at a time when relief was regularly refused to able-bodied adults, and only grudgingly provided to the elderly, disabled, and children (Fox-Piven and Cloward 1977; see also Poppendieck 1999). Although city officials had little tolerance for pushcarts, they had even less tolerance for peddlers who gave up the trade in order to benefit from public relief. The Department of Markets collaborated with Department of Public Welfare to investigate claims of unemployment (DoM Annual Report

1938). And, although city policies put peddlers on home relief, government felt this was justified because peddlers represented an “exceedingly unfair competition to retail storekeepers.”

City officials claimed that peddlers would put thousands of “hard working retail storekeepers on home relief” who paid rent, license fees, and sales tax, and underwent inspections (Ibid). In practice, peddlers, too, were subject to inspections, and paid rent and taxes to the city. Nonetheless, pushcarts and peddlers, who had once been perceived as an important source of municipal revenue, and important players in the municipal food system, were recast as anomalous to the Department of Markets’ goals. Their labor was devalued and represented as a threat to legitimate dealers. Their bodies, their trade, and their presence were problems to be contained, regulated, and removed from view on the modernizing landscape.

Chapter 6: Constructing subjects of municipal policy – 1930 to 1945

In early 20th century America, ideas about food safety, including its sale, purchase, and consumption, mobilized social change, and, by constructing society as a biological domain, aimed to cast out that which were threats to that biological domain, or living body. "Lines of exclusion and social hierarchy" were constituted by these discourses; the middle classes simultaneously differentiated the working classes from themselves, and by disciplining the working classes, they connected them to broader institutions perceived to the foundations of American society (Essex 2011; Bobrow-Strain 2008: 22).

The Great Depression revealed and exacerbated fault lines between classes (Bluestone 1992; Wasserman 1990). The New Deal was a bargain struck between the state, which offered citizens protection from the destabilizing effects of capitalism. In order to prevent riots and revolution, the state shaped its citizens into subjects of a progressive, corporatist society under the New Deal.

The analysis developed in the following chapter traces discursive strategies used to construct subjects who inhabited the ideal food retail landscapes and public markets produced and reproduced by New York City's Department of Markets in the 1930s and 40s. Construction of these subjects – the pushcart peddler and the housewife – was informed by Progressive beliefs in self-improvement, and by concerns about safeguarding a "defined populace" whose well-being was threatened by others whose practices and persons were represented as ethnic, foreign, and dangerous. I look at how the state, civic organizations, and and the media constructed gendered, raced and classed subjects of an emerging food policy regime, and at tensions between these officially sanctioned subjects and the complex, multiply articulated

constituents they were meant to represent. I focus on the peddler and the housewife, dialectically related subjects of Department of Markets policies, because they were central to a vision of an ordered system in which food – as well as the merchants who sold it and the consumers who purchased it - flowed through New York's streets in a sanitary, rational and fully contained fashion.

This model depended on complementary subjects balancing one another in form and function. Peddlers and housewives were each strongly gendered, female and male respectively, even though data indicates that men shopped for food, and some (though not many) pushcart peddlers were women and were employed as peddlers' helpers.[83] In this vision of a modern American city, supply and demand balanced one another "naturally," with housewives setting out each morning to buy what was plentiful, cheap, and nutritious at the market, their choices informed by expert knowledge produced by the state regardless of cultural norms and personal preferences. Merchants would offer their customers the best fruits and vegetables, meat and fish available that day; these high quality, seasonal goods would be priced according to a state-determined "appropriate" profit margin, not in response to consumer demand.

Actual peddlers and housewives exceeded the narrow, conveniently drawn lines of these ideal subjects, and retained agency, resisting and evading the discourses that sought to contain them. And yet, thousands of peddlers were forced from the street, and set up shop inside the enclosed retail markets, making the transformation from peddler to merchant, whether or not their ecomomic circumstances improved. Women may not have achieved

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[83] In 1941, based on findings of the Elmo Roper studies of subway riders, *The New York Times* extrapolated there were 700,000 female heads of household in the city (25% of households) operating "humble little soda counters or food shops in the poorer sections of town," operating pushcarts, or supporting "their families by working for pay at home" (New York, *Topics* 1941).

middle class status by applying principles of scientific management to their shopping, but thousands did seek out information from the Department of Markets. While citizens maintained their agency, it is possible they too sought the possibilities held out to them in representations of a more ordered and democratic future. This model, like any model, was partial and contested; some citizens resisted and others were incapable of meeting its requirements. Actual consumers and peddlers resisted, evaded and otherwise exceeded the bounds of these rather narrowly drawn, politically convenient subjects.

Pushcarts and peddlers – locating and containing contagions

Municipal government set peddlers apart from other New Yorkers by regulating their movements and limiting their spatiality; their geographies were made coincident with the working classes'. The pushcart markets, located in working class neighborhoods represented entrenched ethnic, immigrant practices at odds with "progress" and "modernization." Thus differentiated, peddlers were made justifiable targets of policies to discipline their mobility. Rules became more restrictive, and for many peddlers, the only legal choice was to abandon peddling, and choose a route that promised upward mobility by becoming merchants in the enclosed markets.

While the Department of Markets and Mayor LaGuardia implemented policies to erode peddlers' rights to vend on the streets, civic and trade organizations urged the city to remove pushcart peddlers from the street. A few advocacy groups cited concerns about consumer safety, public health, and sanitation. For example, the Committee of Twenty on Street and Outdoor Cleanliness, an "unofficial but vigorous" group of medical professionals affiliated with

the New York Academy of Medicine,[84] linked their opposition to pushcarts to their general disgust with the "condition of their city's streets" (Time, Art:Receptacle 1930). New York was worse off than most large European cities and many American cities "in the matter of clean air and streets," complained Committee Chairman Bernard Sachs. He cited the "absolutely unsanitary condition of the public markets….a distinct menace to health." The Committee advocated for improving conditions rather than elimination of the open-air markets. A subcommittee investigated pushcart markets and other "outdoor displays of food," taking photographs to document violations. Members of the Committee went to several open-air markets where they worked with peddlers to improve sanitary conditions. The subcommittee prepared a report with recommendations to be passed along to the city. A report published in 1930 criticized the Department of Sanitation for not making progress in "creating a new era of outdoor cleanliness"[85] Sachs "expressed regrets" that reports and recommendations submitted as early as 1929 about public markets had not been implemented (New York, *Cleaner City* 1932; New York, *Clean Markets* 1932; New York, *Doctors Demand* 1932; Soper 1930).

Other organizations worked to protect their class interests. The pushcarts were depicted as contagions that threatened the wellbeing of the bourgeoisie.[86] While sanitation is mentioned, the motivation of these organizations was preserving, and increasing, real estate values. There

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[84] New York Academy of Medicine at 103rd Street and Fifth Avenue, where the Committee of Twenty opened a public exhibit that included models and pictures of street cleaning apparatus and ventilating machines (New York, *Cleaner City* 1932).

[85] Dr. Sachs also questioned into whose coffers the $38,000,000 allocated for municipal street cleaning annually ended up. He said the greatest "obstacle" to clean streets was lack of cooperation between Department of Sanitation, Police Department, Health Department and the Department of Markets (New York, *Doctors Demand* 1932).

[86] In addition to being perceived as threats to public health and property values, pushcart peddlers embodied poverty at a time when many middle class citizens were only a generation or two beyond the "ghetto," and, due to the Great Depression, had a fragile hold on bourgeois respectability (Wasserman 1990; Bluestone 1992).

was no concern for the welfare of the peddlers, who were viewed as illegitimate participants in a capitalist economy.

Figure 6.1: Pushcart peddlers were important sources of inexpensive produce in working class neighborhoods. Although most were hard-working people earning subsistence wages by operating modest, and often tidy, stalls, they were disparaged as unsanitary, corrupt menaces to public health (Sol Libsohn, Museum of the City of New York, 1938).

A representative of the Greater New York Taxpayers Association, Mr. I. Goldberg, declared, “pushcart marketing is out of step with modern conditions” and allowing it to continue would hinder efforts to improve housing conditions in “the congested residential districts.” Pushcarts, in his view, were “incompatible with clean streets and clean homes” and must be replaced with a “more modern and sanitary substitute.” Goldberg advocated for the construction of permanent retail markets, which he said would be better for peddlers and for property owners in market areas who were purportedly losing money because of “disrepute”: the values of residential properties adjacent to pushcart markets had fallen. Goldberg added that although the pushcart “issue” had been raised by numerous city officials, and was the

subject of reports and commissions dating back to 1912, results were "small" (New York, *Detriment* 1937).

The Uptown Chamber of Commerce voiced its support for an anti-peddling ban. In a letter to the City Council's Committee on Markets they advocated for the establishment of enclosed markets to house the "thousands of unlicensed peddlers *roaming* the streets, *invading* high-class shopping and other districts from which they are barred by law… a *disgrace* to the city….Unless some effective measures is adopted before the opening of the World's Fair, the city will be *over run* with peddlers" (Italics mine). Sounding an alarm, the Chamber warned that one day, the streets would be taken over by 25,000 peddlers, and fruit and vegetable merchants would be forced to become peddlers "in self-defense." As for peddlers' employment, a member of the Uptown Chamber of Commerce suggested they might find work in stores created as a result of the ban on itinerant peddlers (Ibid).

The First Avenue Association was a group of Upper East Side professionals,[87] twelve of whom held high positions in real estate; all would gain from development of Second Avenue into a higher class neighborhood. Among their priorities was demolition of the El, the elevated subway, which was slowly dismantled from 1940 – 1942 (Smith 2011; Stelter 2008). Association members petitioned the City Planning Commission to include an enclosed market in their "master plan" for the Upper East Side neighborhood to house pushcart peddlers. They described the open air market on Second Avenue from Seventieth to Seventieth-seventh Streets as "a menace to store rental values." When a location for an enclosed market was ultimately proposed, the Association opposed plans to locate an enclosed market on the Upper East Side at

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[87] The First Avenue Association letterhead from 1940 listed the group's thirty-two directors. Most were professionals – lawyers, doctors, judges, business executives and real estate executives (Cohen 2001).

all. Any public market, it appears, threatened the nascent gentrification of the Upper East Side (New York, *Oppose 2d. Avenue* 1940).[88]

Walter Sparry, Chairman of the Broadway Committee of the West of Central Park Group, whose members included bankers and realtors, claimed that "many parts of the city, particularly the west side from Seventy-second to 116th Streets have been "'*infested* with hundreds of pushcart peddlers flagrantly selling their wares with utter disregard for public health'" (Italics mine). Sparry, a real estate developer, continued with a litany of complaints: the peddlers (150,000 by his count, the majority unlicensed, he claimed)[89] were a traffic problem, they competed with "legitimate" merchants, and they raised the cost of street cleaning. In the Chairman's view, all peddlers, licensed or not, were equally illegitimate, regardless of where they peddled or whose needs they served (New York, *Limiting Peddlers* 1941; New York, *Sparry Serve* 1943).

Consumer-as-housewife – embodiment of modernity

According to its mandate, the Department of Markets' primary responsibility was to the consumer. Its efforts to establish and sustain flows of "safe, affordable and adequate food" were informed by a particular construction of who that consumer was, and how that consumer would interact with the food retailing landscape of New York City. Unlike the retailing landscape – and the pushcart peddlers who toiled upon it – the Department had no authority over what

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[88] A market was eventually built on Second Avenue between 72nd and 73rd streets. The neighborhood gentrified rapidly in the post-World War II building boom, and the market was closed in 1957 (DoM Annual Report 1957).

[89] In 1939, the number of licensed peddlers was 2,000 compared to 2,700 in 1937 and 5,500 in 1933 (New York, *Limiting Peddlers* 1941).

foodstuffs consumers purchased, where they purchased those foodstuffs, and from whom.[90] The Department had no direct means of quelling food activism which manifested itself in riots, boycotts and other public demonstrations. It could not legislate against ethnic, immigrant foodways, and appetites for familiar foods, or – in the case of meat – foods that symbolized access to the American Dream (Horowitz *etal* 2003). Through the efforts of its Bureau of Consumer Services, the Department embarked on a campaign to educate consumers, or "housewives," about the principles of scientific management, and to inform consumers about prices, quality, seasonality and standards. It provided models of acceptable forms of protest, redirecting activism and public protest as a tool of government. Projections of the ideal housewife reflected Progressive optimism in the power of information and knowledge to transform habits, practices, traditions and tastes, and to turn immigrants into modern American citizens.[91]

The Department of Markets' attention to consumption and its effort to regulate processes of social reproduction at the muncipal scale intersected with national scale processes (Szabo 2011). During the late 1920s and 1930s, Progressives "transformed" their purchasing power platform into a national recovery and reform strategy, moving from the left to the center

[90] For all the city's efforts, "housewives" and other consumers continued to buy food, clothing and other wares from peddlers. In 1941, the Commissioner of Markets, frustrated by what amounted to a decades-long effort to contain (and eliminate) pushcart peddlers, proposed forming a "Citizens Committee to Eliminate Itinerant Street Peddling" charged with "educating the public." There was no mention of who would sit on this committee, and what the "education" would consist of (DoM Annual Report 1941).

[91] It is important to view New York City Department of Markets' "consumer services" within this context, and remember that although it reached hundreds of thousands of women, the state was able to steer, but not stop food activism. For example, during the "Meatless Summer" of 1935, Jewish and Black women picketed butcher shops. Although less violent than the boycotts at the turn of the century, over 4,500 butchers shops were closed down during the four weeks of public protest. (New York, *Six Arrested* 1935).

of political debate (Jacobs 2005:9; Upham-Bornstein 2009). Women activists did not challenge traditional gender roles, though they stepped outside their traditional boundaries and behaviors by becoming political actors. The home was bound in a "web of social and economic relationships to labor unions, the market place, and government" (Orleck 1993: 149). Food, they argued, could be regulated, like wages and hours (Ibid: 148).

Factory owners and other capitalists began to view their workers in relation to their consumption power rather than their production power, a concept Henry Ford understood decades earlier when he designed the Model T. President Roosevelt recognized that recovery from the Depression depended on stimulating consumer demand as a way of spurring production. The New Deal's significant investments were designed to put wages into people's pockets and boost purchasing power. Government positioned itself as consumers' partner; consumption was recast as synonomous with citizenship (Jacobs 2005; de Grazia 1993).

The acknowledgment of consumers as stakeholders with special interests represented a shift in thinking about consumption. New York City's Commissioner of Markets Morgan observed, "in food as in many other essential commodities of life, the battle between capital at one extreme and labor at the other has resulted in a gradual but positive indifference to the plight of the great mass of the population which stands in between." This rift was not sustainable in a democracy, he warned. Capital and labor were "vigorously championed" by lobbies and unions., but consumers, the "mass…in between," suffered from a lack of unity in aim and method" (DoM Annual Report 1935). Commissioner Morgan, like President Roosevelt and other politicians, called on consumers to form unions of their own, and to fight as an organized front to protect their purchasing power (Jacobs 2005). If this call denied decades of women's activism to protect consumers' rights, the co-option of their cause by the state was also an opportunity for cooperation.

After decades of fighting to protect purchasing power in communities and cities across the United States, consumer councils, women's organizations and other critics of corporate practices allied themselves with Roosevelt's administration to combat price-gougers and profiteers (Jacobs 2005: 131). Acknowledging consumers as emerging subjects of a new social order created a universal identity with broad appeal that cut across lines of social class, race and ethnicity. The strategy depended on establishing the state as the source of protection, information and education against corporations and labor unions in an ongoing tug-of-war over profits and wages (Ibid; de Grazia 1993).

New York City's Department of Markets had very limited authority over food prices and supply beyond clearing out rackets and speculators whose corrupt practices elevated the costs of food. Geographical shifts in food distribution already created distances between producers and consumers in the first decades of the twentieth century. As early as 1923 only 12% of food consumed in New York City was produced in New York State, and in general, New Yorkers viewed their cosmopolitan diets as something to celebrate. By the 1930s, food distribution chains often spanned several states (DoM Annual Report 1923; Elias 2012). When high prices set by meat packers in Chicago sent thousands to the streets in New York, Mayor LaGuardia could not respond to their demands for lower prices (New York, *Meat Price* 1935; See also New York, *Mayor Acts*, 1937). Instead, the Bureau of Consumer Services instructed housewives to be "scientific" consumers, implement the principles of scientific management, and respond to changes in market supply by choosing cheaper cuts of meat. Disciplining consumers did not emerge from explicit directives, but rather from various forms of engagement and encouragement.

The Department of Markets was determined to "design information" that would bring about a "psychological change in the housewife's attitude towards food" (DoM Annual Report

1935). From a tactical perspective, empowering women as consumers made sense; they were already in charge of the bulk of household purchasing. Women usually worked the lowest paid jobs, in the least skilled sectors, but as consumers, they were powerful: 85% or 90% of household expenses were bought by women (Ibid; Orleck 1993:154), and forty percent of household budgets were spent on food (US Bureau of Labor Statistics). In theory, teaching women how to consume food scientifically re-directed a significant share of wages to a broad range of seasonal, plentiful and cheaper foods. It also redirected consumers' tastes to cheaper foods in an attempt to prevent riots, a literal use of home economics as a civilizing tool.

Arming housewives with education and information

At first glance, the Department of Markets' housewife was a passive subject, a vessel for information provided by the state that effectively homogenized household food practices across New York City's vastly differentiated neighborhoods. A closer look at the Bureau's message suggests a more complex construction that empowered consumers even as it shifted their everyday food work from collective to individual actions, and the sphere of activity from the street to the classroom, the grocery store, and the home (Flammang 2009). Constructing a consumer subject re-shaped women's power in relation to food, heightening the importance of household food work by linking knowledge and information to consumption, and by emphasizing that scientific management did not preclude taking pleasure and interest in food.

The Bureau of Consumer Services in particular used information to (re-)shape consumer practices and consumers' food knowledge. Re-locating knowledge in this manner disrupted more traditional means of sharing food knowledge through everyday practices and "food work" among family members in the home, at the table or the stove. It is easy to view these processes

as simply classist and paternalistic, yet, unlike Progressives who passed through the South, teaching poor women how to make beaten biscuits in the place of cornbread[92] (Engelhardt 2001), the Bureau of Consumer Services did not correct existing practices outright. While dieticians counseling the poor viewed the slums as "the laboratory of New York's relief work," the Bureau of Consumer Services did not view lower income residents and the "unemployed" as "objects" for "careful study and experiment" (Ripperger 1934). Rather, they provided a framework and a way of thinking about food flush with options, and opportunities for creativity.

"The consumer has been neglected by past administrations," Deputy Commisioner of Markets, and Director of Bureau of Consumer Services Frances Foley Gannon wrote (1934: 144). She viewed the "progressive administration" as the provider of "practical help to the ten million consumers." In Foley Gannon's view, "scientific buying" was the rational, intelligent and economical way to purchase food, endorsed by corporations, government agencies and public institutions alike. Her responsibility was to help the "housewife…[who]…has neither the training, nor the inclination to do the necessary research" required of "scientific buying" (Ibid). The goal was "to bring the consumer to an intelligent understanding of herself as a purchasing agent, and to aid her in getting the most and the best for her money" (Ibid 145). All women were her audience, and all could benefit from good information, whether they lived on "Fifth Avenue or First Avenue."

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[92] Biscuits were viewed as a more civilized food: they were made with white wheat flour, whereas cornbread was made with coarse versus cornbread, mixing methods (Engelhardt 2001).

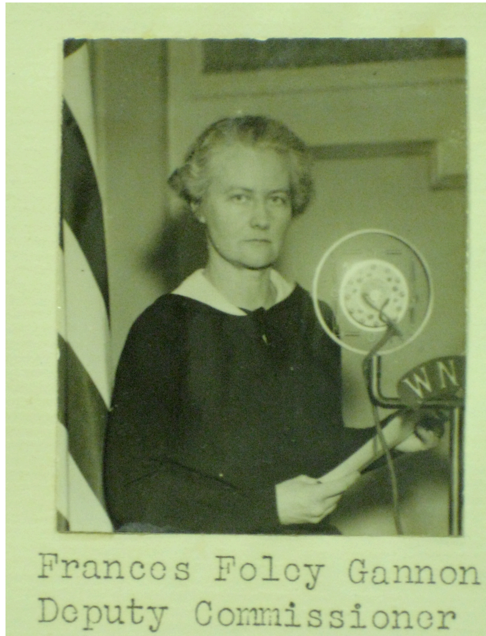

Figure 6.2: Frances Foley Gannon, Deputy Commissioner of Public Markets. Her daily radio show debuted in 1934 (DoM Annual Report 1934, New York Public Library at City Hall).

Information about food was produced by "experts." It flowed one way only – from the state to the consumer. The Department of Markets quantified flows of food into the city, counting the tons of butter and cabbage arriving every year. It recorded how many pounds of chicken were slaughtered, and how many fish were netted. Researchers collected data about how much food was consumed by individual households, where that food was shipped from, and how many hands it passed through on its way to a retailer. The DoM tracked shortages, and gluts, informing customers when to expect high or low prices. The Department's Annual Reports were replete with numbers, graphs, and tables.

In 1933, the Federal government's Civil Works Service[93] sent ninety-six research assistants, all "college bred and trained" to work at the Bureau of Consumer Services. There, they studied 380 "basic raw food products," gathering information intended to become a

[93] Civil Works Service (CWS) was the "white collar" professionals' branch of the Civil Works Administration (1933 – 1934), the first public employment program of the New Deal.

3,000,000 word “Food Reference Library.” Reporting on their progress, Foley Gannon wrote, “it adds to the romance of nations and stimulates the digestive juices when you read of the once ‘deadly poisonous love apple’ which we of this generation know to be the highly nutritious and delectable tomato” (DoM Annual Report 1934). Bureau staff visited the city’s wholesale markets each morning to record prices, assess quality, and report on overall market conditions. Graduate students of home economics taught cooking classes.

The DoM’s Bureau of Consumer Services used various media to distribute information including radio shows, cooking classes, exhibitions and demonstrations. Staff delivered lectures for more than 3,000 women’s organizations in the New York area; they spoke at settlement houses and “mothers’ homes,” where unwed pregnant women waited to give birth. Recipes were collected and added to the Food Reference Library; some were made available in pamphlets. Ten thousand mimeographed copies of “134 Ways of Preparing Potatoes” were distributed. Other pamphlets were compiled including collections of Chinese, Italian and Turkish recipes (DoM Annual Report 1935: 24). In 1938, the Department announced plans to start a consumers’ magazine for those who did not listen to the radio program or attend lectures provided by the BCS’s Speakers’ Bureau (DoM Annual Report 1938).

A cooking school was housed at the Midtown Market, a public retail market at 59th Street and the East River, on Tuesday and Friday afternoons. Each class demonstrated the preparation of a full dinner (soup, entrée, salad, dessert and beverage) that cost twenty cents a person for six people. The classes were immediately popular: while the record attendance was 700, the average class drew an audience of 300 women. Two other schools were soon started to meet demand; one was housed at the Essex Street Market, and the other in Brooklyn at a YWCA where a teaching kitchen with state of the art appliances was constructed. Audiences typically

consisted of women, although some older gentlemen would interrupt their marketing to listen, and some young boys came to class (Ripperger 1934b).

Radio reached the widest audiences: In April 1934, DoM's Deputy Commissioner of Consumer Services, Frances Foley Gannon, inaugurated a daily report on WNYC to discuss "quality, quantity, prices, and sources of foodstuffs" and provided recipes to those who wrote in and requested them.[94] The five-minute show was broadcast on WNYC, New York City's public radio station at 8:30 a.m. (changed to 8:45 a.m. in the late 1940s). Tuesdays featured guest experts on food from various government agencies, and the food industry. Numerous radio stations eager to cooperate with New York City's Department of Markets aired the show.[95]

Foley Gannon's show was based on reports of what was plentiful at the city's wholesale markets at 6 a.m., and "therefore should be available for lower prices," exhibiting confidence in market's logic. From files of the Food Reference Library, staff would select the "most interesting facts" about the vegetable, fruits, meats and fish featured in the daily report. A summary was prepared after the show, printed and sent out to offices of New York City newspapers for people who did not catch the radio broadcast.[96] Data collected by BCS was studied by members of the Consumers' Council of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and used as a model for bureaus of consumer service throughout the United States. The five-minute show reached over one million people daily, and generated as many as 860 letters in a single day; on average, 250

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[94] Before Foley Gannon's appointment, the DoM aired bi-weekly radio broadcasts: fifteen-minute recitations of retail prices of 200 foodstuffs. Unsurprisingly, the reports failed to hold audiences' attentions and often the information was wrong (DoM Annual Report 1934).
[95] When inaugurated, eleven radio stations that aired Foley Gannon's daily reports: WNYC, WJZ, WDR, WABC, MCA, NEW, WHN, EVD, WPRO, and WHBH (DoM Annual Report 1934).
[96] Newspapers that carried transcripts of Foley Gannon's daily reports: *The Sun*, *The New York Times*, *World Telegram*, *Evening Journal*, *Daily News*, *New York American*, *Brooklyn Times Union*, and the *Brooklyn Eagle* (DoM Annual Report 1934).

women throughout the listening area sent letters asking for copies of recipes, or for additional information and advice about other household matters.

In 1938, the Board of Estimate planned to eliminate Frances Foley Gannon's position, allocating only $1 for her services in the budget. Letters and telegrams poured in expressing "vehement disapproval." The City Council adopted Mayor LaGuardia's original budget that had fully funded Foley's position, aware of the thousands of women who sought her helpful advice on matters ranging from preparing Thanksgiving dinner to redecorating a dingy kitchen (DoM Annual Report 1934; 1939). Foley Gannon stayed on the air until she retired in 1963, and the daily radio show was cancelled (New York, *Broadcasts Doomed* 1938; New York, *Gannon* 1969).

Rather than framing supply as shaped by demand, the way it is understood to be in a capitalist economy, the Bureau of Consumer Services worked to re-align demand with supply. This approach was shaped by two forces. First, agricultural prices plummeted during the Great Depression, and driving up consumption for gluts was essential to recovery. Also, it reflected awareness that New York City did not produce, but rather consumed food (DoM Annual Report 1923; 1937:9). Produce from all forty-eight states and beyond came through New York's ports where it was auctioned before being distributed all over the world. While the city's terminal and wholesale markets set prices globally for many goods, they were not able to control supply by their demands; New York's millions were but a fraction of the goods' consumers. Instead, the Bureau of Consumers Services framed supply as "natural" and demand as shaped by socio-cultural quirks, or, ideally, by market information and Bureau advice: "Consumers can help materially solve the farm problem by eating those products which are in overabundance" (New York, *24% Saving* 1939).

Figure 6.3: Consumer selecting fruit at a stoopline stand where prices were clearly marked, and the produce was carefully arranged, qualities Foley Gannon appreciated. If the consumer listened to the daily broadcast on WNYC, before setting out, she would have known what was plentiful, and therefore, available at a good price (Sol Libsohn, Museum of the City of New York, 1938).

Women were instructed to expect that prices would decrease to reflect gluts, and were alerted to seasonal and local cycles of production. The BCS provided tips on preparing unusual foods that would stretch their "food dollars," and provided tips on how to judge quality. The Bureau emphasized the possibility and importance of "appetizing" preparation, and of flexibility. If string beans were "high," buy kale instead if it was "low." The markets were always shifting; in twenty-four hours the price of strawberries could fall "from the luxury class to the range of a poor man's budget;" meat prices would "sour" while "a million pounds of fresh fish flood[ed] the wholesale market" (DoM Annual Report 1935). Efforts to shape consumption patterns worked: When the Bureau of Consumer Services inaugurated "Fish Tuesday" to boost consumption of fish, dealers reported a 15% to 20% increase in sales. Before this, 76% of fish sales were on Fridays (Ibid).

Shaping the retail environment

Commissioner Morgan asserted that the Bureau's daily broadcast took a lead in showing housewives "how to buy intelligently and economically." Lower prices were credited to a combination of pressure on retailers from public markets where relatively low rents resulted in lower prices, and price information (New York, *24% Saving* 1939). Information on prices and "appropriate" profit margins was announced on the air. Thus armed, housewives were a significant ground force, putting pressure on retailers to lower prices, or to adopt new standards, effecting changes the state lacked the authority to enact. When Foley Gannon reported a "six-cent excess profit made by retailers" on eggs in January of 1937, the city saw "an overnight reduction of six cents in the retail price of eggs" (DoM Annual Report 1937).

Foley Gannon urged consumers to buy USDA graded meat. Although it was more expensive, it represented a better value in New York where quality was inconsistent because meat grading was voluntary. To offset costs, Bureau of Consumer Services provided consumers with recipes using less expensive cuts of meat. The Bureau also organized meat-grading exhibits in five boroughs to show housewives how to judge quality meats (DoM Annual Report 1939).

To save money, women were advised to reverse trends and shop in person instead of phoning in their orders and depending on delivery services, practices that became widespread in the 1910s among women of all classes. By going to market, housewives would save money by not using delivery services (New York, *24% Saving* 1939). Women were mobilized to take part in the marketing process rather than depending on habit, or their grocer, to decide what foods they purchased. Information "designed" by the state was inscribed throughout the city through hundreds of thousands of everyday events as women stepped out in the morning armed with up-to-date market advice. The advice shaped their purchases, their interactions with store keepers, their travels from one shop to another in search of bargains.

Frances Foley Gannon's message and the vocabulary she employed militarized women without paying heed to the concurrent radicalization of the streets. Like women rioters and activists, the radio shows emphasized a universal goal of affordable food. However, Frances Foley Gannon and the Department of Markets effectively denied any connection between politics and food. Over the years, she delivered her message with the seriousness of a financial advisor discussing investment strategies. "Good morning housewives!" rang out. Her voice was firm and matter-of-fact, and she rarely acknowledged events beyond a bumper crop of peas or anticipated seasonal specialties like shad, or chestnuts. Budget, nutritional value, and efficiency were her main concerns. Knowledge and scientific management would help achieve those goals. Calling on industry representatives, and experts from other government agencies at the federal, state and local level, her radio show was a platform for promoting, and translating, policies and campaigns into advice to guide daily life.

A critical aspect of the housewife's subjectivity, as constructed by the Bureau of Consumer Services, was the illusion of her universal achievability, and universal appeal. By elevating domestic food work to a science guided by professional experts, up-to-date information about the market, nutrition, and technological advancements, the housewife was defined by her application of knowledge and principles of scientific management. Her intelligence and ability to learn were assumed. She embodied a modern, American way of thinking about food that transcended class, race, ethnic and other differentiating bounds. More accurately, she was nearly always addressed in the plural; housewives were the force of change, not individual women feeding their families.

One can imagine housewives preparing meals using recipes provided by Foley Gannon that emphasized seasonal ingredients, and simple preparations with few herbs or spices, or even garlic or onions. Although Chinese or Turkish foods were discussed, and recipe pamphlets

were made available, the few "ethnic" dishes mentioned on the air were Italian, or sometimes specialties prepared by observant Jews during the Passover or Rosh Hashanah holidays (Foley Gannon 1948, 1951, 1955). Unlike the enclosed markets where bargaining, hawking, and other displays of "ethnic" behavior were not permitted, BCS recipes did not tell consumers to stop making liberal use of garlic, or to use less dried fish and pungent cheeses, it merely relegated these foods to the periphery.

Although geographies of the city's food supply (lettuces from California, cherries from Michigan) were often invoked by Foley Gannon during her radio shows, the city's vastly differentiated retail landscape was never mentioned. Rather, a kind of optimistic obtuseness permeated her dispatches and created an abstract terrain on which housewives mobilized, armed with information, inscribing new geographies of food. I do not suggest that this vision is wrong so much that it was unrealistic given the uneven topographies of the city and its existing food system, food work, and foodways. It is useful to consider who might not have been included among these newly articulated housewives: Recipes developed by the Bureau of Consumer Services used very few prepared foods, only the occasional bouillon cube or tinned peas. In general, whole foods were preferred because of price and value, and taste. These menus were demanding. Even lunch often consisted of three courses: a soup, a main dish and a dessert. Glancing over recipes and suggested menus, following them would have required a lot of time, in addition to a well-equipped kitchen, including sufficient pots, bowls, plates, and flatware.

With no data to draw on, it is impossible to know if audiences prepared entire meals, or used menus as a guide, integrating them with their own recipes. According to Department of Markets Annual Reports, thousands of literate women wrote in for recipe books and other informational pamphlets. It is difficult to imagine how a woman working outside the home

would have had time to do the shopping let alone the cooking required of these menus. Cooking courses were held on weekdays, in the mid-afternoon. While the Bureau of Consumer Services ascribed value (including economic value) to domestic food work, wage labor was rendered antithetical to the modern housewife subjectivity.

All Bureau courses, exhibits, pamphlets, and radio broadcasts were delivered in English. For people whose familiarity with English was limited, or who were illiterate, none, or very little, of this material was accessible. During World War I, enforcement of Federal Food Board regulations explain was spotty because residents of immigrant neighborhoods did not know the rules, and/or were beholden to grocers who extended credit. During World War II, BCS did provide translation services to help consumers in predominantly immigrant neighborhoods make sense of ration point systems, and other wartime food measures. Illiterate women could get information from the radio, a common feature in homes by 1940 when nearly 95% of New Yorkers had radios, but were unable to write down recipes, or write to WNYC and request recipe pamphlets.[97]

Households where religious or dietary rules applied, including a significant number of Jewish households who kept Kosher, could not make easy use of many BCS recipes. Recognizing this barrier, the Department offered a course in "scientific Kosher cookery" for "East Side mothers" at the Essex Street market. Three hundred attended, mostly women, and a few elderly men, to learn how to prepare stuffed mackerel, scalloped celery, a vegetable and grape salad and "Mount Vernon pudding" (New York, *East Side* 1941). Kosher or not, for every household where new foods were welcome, there were surely women put off by bland recipes (or the idea

[97] According to the US Census Burea of Labor Statistics, 4.6% of the total population was illiterate in 1930; illiteracy among foreign-born whites was ~10% and among Blacks only 2%. Further, literacy did not insure literacy in English. Radio ownership was high: in 1930, families reporting radios in the Bronx: 64.9%; Kings (Brooklyn) 59.4%; New York (Manhattan) 45%; Queens: 75%; Richmond (Staten Island): 67.4%. By 1940, ~95% of New Yorkers had radios.

of using a recipe at all), and children and spouses who categorically rejected unfamiliar foods and methods of preparation. Although for many, food was among the more accessible routes of leaving behind an immigrant past, food is often the last thing to change in immigrant households (Ray 2004; Gabaccia 1998).

Lastly, in this construct, "housewives" were defined, in large part, by and through their engagement with everyday life as consumers. To consume, one had to have cash. In 1935, there were hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers dependant on relief. Until Mayor LaGuardia reformed public welfare to include some cash support, people on "home relief" received boxes of food and food tickets, which he argued destroyed housewives' "initiative and self respect" (New York, *Cash Relief* 1933; New York, *Relief Bill* 1934). The food distributed to those in need, unsurprisingly, consisted largely of basic commodities (potatoes, carrots, cabbages, onions, macaroni, canned tomatoes, jam). It was distributed once a week, in a box whose weight was calculated to provide enough nourishment for a family of six. During Passover, boxes containing matzoh meal, beets, and vegetable shortening were distributed to over 6,500 Jewish households (DoM Annual Report 1930:15). Many adults and even larger numbers of children lived on insufficient diets (Syndenstricker 1933). For the poorest citizens of New York City, many of whom were recent immigrants who lived in the "congested" neighborhoods targeted for reform by the LaGuardia administration, they may have listened to Frances Foley Gannon's daily reports, but her recipes for achieving a modern, American life and identity could not be realized.

Photographs of women attending the Bureau of Consumer Services' cooking classes show young, white, fashionably dressed women with styled hair and fresh faces (Ripperger 1934b; New York, *City School* 1938). While the photographs are aspirational, showing women a world, they, too, could participate in, I wonder to what degree they also served to say to working class women, and to women of color, you don't belong. You, with worn hands, or lank

hair, or your constant worries about buying food with limited means, not only do you not belong, you are not visible, you have no claim to this model universe.

Why does this matter? The state took broadly based "consumer demand" for intervention, and turned that mandate into a force, shaped that power through discursive strategies that advanced some interests, and rendered others invisible. The state re-shaped and redefined geographies of food distribution – and consumption – by excluding forms of distribution that were inconsistent with ideas of a modern, American city. The state produced a food retailing landscape, instituted, and reflected and advanced a system of public markets, and scripted a dynamic geography of food through their consumer services informed by knowledge: price, quality, quantity, recipes, nutritional information, embodied by housewives. The state averted civic unrest by promoting a very different, and not altogether negative, women's activism through food. Consumption was put forth as a route to social, economic, and cultural inclusion. However, those who could not accord their consumption practices with these new rules were excluded. Social relations were not challenged, and the state in its Progressive mantle instituted middle class dominance that would change form, but not function, in the decades that followed.

Chapter 7: Constructing enclosed markets as embodiments of regulation – 1930 to 1945

At his inauguration, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia described "drastic" plans for New York City that included the "transform[ation]" of the pushcart market under the Park Avenue viaduct (111th to 116th Streets) into a "modern, sanitary enclosed market." When the market opened in 1936, it was the first of nine enclosed retail markets LaGuardia's administration built to contain pushcarts in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx (New York, *Replace Carts* 1934). The enclosed retail markets were heralded by the Mayor and the Department of Markets as symbols of progress.

Enclosed retail markets had been proposed as "solutions" to the pushcart "problem" since the beginning of the 20th century. Time and again, consensus amongst citizen groups, politicians and state agencies was never reached. The enclosed retail markets were central to Mayor LaGuardia's vision of a fair and modern American city; they would change "the pushcart peddler of today into the small merchant of tomorrow"[98] (DoM Annual Report 1934). The markets were a first step in the development of new enterprises, providing peddlers "with tiny stores of their own" (New York, *End* 1941). LaGuardia spoke of them as democratizing institutions that would create a more equitable food system for all citizens, regardless of race, class or ethnicity. His election, an expression of public support for Progressive politics and public demand for state intervention, gave him the momentum to push forward with his plans, particularly after he successfully lobbied for a large appropriation of nearly $1.2 billion from the Public Works Administration.

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[98] Commissioner of Markets, William Morgan Jr. wrote this in his 1934 Annual Report; Mayor LaGuardia repeated this line at the opening of the Moore Street market on July 28, 1941 (New York, *End* 1941).

Rules posted on the walls shaped consumer and merchant behaviors; Department inspectors patrolled the crowded aisles, keeping an eye on prices and quality. On-site cooking classes and other information services guided housewives' purchases. Yet, the day-to-day bustle, the repeated transactions between consumers and merchants also shaped the market spaces, not resisting so much as converging with government designs. And, while the state represented the markets as signs of neighborhood renewal and modernization, others did not distinguish between the pushcart markets of old and the newly constructed enclosed markets: in their eyes, all public markets were authentic, ethnic places reflective of the working class, immigrant neighborhoods they served. The enclosed markets were at once embodiments of municipal policies, and spaces produced and reproduced by the very populations they were designed to assimilate and Americanize.

These contradictions suggest the state's ability to regulate spaces and spatial production was limited and partial, mediated by the processes of everyday life and by competing narratives about what the markets were, and their relative location on the city's landscapes. Municipal government was able consolidate and exercise force; it was able to eliminate thousands of pushcarts, contain most of the city's open air markets, and surveille the working classes whose foreign foodways, political activism and informal economies were perceived as threats to the populace. However, the class mobility and democratization LaGuardia imagined would be realized by these markets depended on more radical restructuring than the reshaping of working class food retailing landscapes.

Implementing 'drastic' plans

Five hundred people attended ceremonies led by LaGuardia to commemorate the start of construction on the Park Avenue "model market" on August 19, 1935, in the Harlem neighborhood he represented during his term as a US Representative. Using a compressed air

drill, the Mayor broke ground for one of the market's four block-long buildings (New York, *Begin Market* 1935). Summer was peak season at pushcart markets and crowds flocked to them, seeking bargains. However, the peddlers at the Park Avenue pushcart market, who had moved north to 121st Street to make way for the new construction, were uneasy about the Department of Markets' "assurances." They were concerned that fees would be too high, and that there would not be room for all vendors (Mackenzie 1935). They had reason to be fearful; the new market would have room for 416 vendors, but there were nearly 700 vendors at the pushcart markets it would replace.

The Park Avenue Market opened on May 4, 1936; it was declared a success almost immediately (New York, *Open Soon* 1936; *Mayor Harlem* 1936). It was praised as "clean, bright and orderly" (Bernstein 1936). Daily patronage exceeded 25,000 (New York, *New Market* 1936). Merchants fortunate to have stalls reported increased revenue. Some 300 members of the Park Avenue Open Air Retail Merchants Association praised the Park Avenue Market for providing a "roof over their heads." Association president Sam Specter said their revenue had doubled (New York, *Proclaimed* 1938). The "psychological effects on the peddler whose status was "raised overnight" to that of "small independent merchants" was demonstrated by "an initiative that had long been atrophied by the conditions of the old dirty outside markets," said the Commissioner of Markets (New York, *New Market* 1936). He looked forward to a future when "the open air markets will be supplanted by a system of enclosed markets scattered throughout the City" (DoM Annual Report 1934: 37).

Efforts to clear the streets of pushcarts and build additional markets reached a pitch in anticipation of the crowds of international visitors who would be arriving for the 1939 World's Fair. Although the Park Avenue Market was well received, plans for more enclosed markets

were not approved unilaterally. Even with Federal funds footing a significant portion of the bill, there was limited public support.

The middle classes wanted clean streets, and did not want a public market in their backyards, even a modern "glass enclosed" market. Mayor LaGuardia met "vigorous opposition" from property owners in the areas targeted for enclosed retail markets at Second Avenue and Seventy-third Street, 142nd and 143rd Streets from Eighth to Edgecombe Avenues, and First Avenue from Eleventh to Twelfth Streets, neighborhoods investors were eyeing for development. LaGuardia decried these "selfish interests," arguing they would "depress realty values" if they blocked construction of the markets (New York, *Proposal Shelved* 1936). The First Avenue Association argued the proposed location of an enclosed market at Seventy-second Street would "depreciate property values in this section…built up with large apartment houses." They suggested moving the market to a "non-residential street" (New York, *Hearing* 1936). Maurice P. Davidson, former New York City Commissioner of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, represented Bing & Bing realty interests; Bing & Bing owned five apartment houses in the vicinity of the proposed market, and were concerned the market would threaten the value of their investments (New York, *Proposal Shelved* 1936).

Elected officials were not keen on plans for expansion either. The Board of Aldermen was slow to approve a "local law" submitted by Commissioner Morgan to authorize the establishment of four enclosed markets.[99] Morgan said he would appeal directly to peddlers. Peddlers, he contended, showed support for new markets: 1,200 had deposited a total of $18,000 to assure stalls in new markets "if and when they were built." Their "support" may have

[99] Plans to build the Essex Street Market were announced in 1936. Before building a market, plans needed the Board of Estimate's approval, and an ordinance passed by the Board of Aldermen permitting use of the land for "market purposes" (New York, *New Market* 1936).

been well-grounded fear of being left without space to conduct their trade, but regulations of pushcarts left peddlers with few options. Morgan also said he would ask for help from "housewives and civic and trade associations" (New York, *Plan Held Up* 1936).

When the Commissioner met with a small group of women, representatives of civic organizations, they discussed the "superiority of the Park Avenue Market" in comparison to open air markets. At that meeting, Morgan accused the Board of Aldermen of stonewalling in an effort to deny LaGuardia credit for constructing the enclosed markets. Mayor LaGuardia sought the support of the City Federation of Women's Clubs, and asked them to conduct an "analysis of city's food markets, past and future," to "make a study and survey" comparing pushcart and enclosed markets, and to give his administration their "opinion and support" (New York, *Women's Aid* 1936).

Plans were gradually approved for additional enclosed markets. The First Avenue Association's request was granted, and a new location was identified for a market on Second Avenue between Seventy-second and Seventy-third Streets to quell developers' objections. The project was finally approved early in 1939 by the City Planning Commission, along with four more including markets on Havemeyer Street in Brooklyn and on Avenue C between Fifth and Ninth Streets in Manhattan[100] (New York, *Add Markets* 1939). In April 1939, Commissioner Morgan asked the City Planning Commission to pass an amendment to the city's outlay budget to provide funds for yet another two enclosed markets, Moore Street in Brooklyn and Arthur Avenue in the Bronx. The Commission deferred decision. One week later, they commended the

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[100] The sizable market approved at Avenue C was eventually constructed at First Avenue between Tenth and Ninth Streets, a significantly smaller project.

two markets (New York, *Markets Planned* 1939). The city eventually built nine markets[101] between 1936 and 1955 located at “strategic points” in “congested” areas of the city where they could “do the most good,” supplanting New York’s fifty-six pushcart markets in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan (See Appendix C: Map of New York City’s Enclosed Public Retail Markets, 1940s).

Ringing (up) in the new

Like the ceremonies at the Park Avenue Market, each subsequent opening day was greeted with fanfare. LaGuardia addressed the crowd at a podium draped with bunting when the First Avenue Market opened in 1938.

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[101] The nine enclosed markets: Park Avenue Market (110th to 116th Sts, Manhattan); Essex Street (between Stanton and Broome Streets, Manhattan); 1st Avenue (10th Street, Manhattan); Second Avenue (btwn 73rd and 74th Streets, Manhattan); Harlem Market (8th Avenue at 142nd Street, Manhattan); Havemeyer (at South 1st Street, Brooklyn); Moore Street Market (btwn Humboldt St. and Graham Avenue, Brooklyn); 13th Avenue (btwn 39th and 40th Streets, Brooklyn); Arthur Avenue (btwn 184th and 186th Streets, Bronx).

Figure 7.1: Mayor LaGuardia speaking at the opening of the First Avenue Market (Sol Libsohn, Museum of the City of New York, 1937).

When the Thirteenth Street Market[102] in Brooklyn opened on October 1939, the Mayor boasted that New York City was producing not only armaments, but “schools, parks and playgrounds” and “markets” (New York, *Brooklyn Market* 1939). The city’s fourth enclosed market opened at Essex Street in January 1940, with 533 stalls in four market buildings, permitting a “partial abolition” of the district’s crowded pushcart markets. 3,500 people watched an “old era” passing. LaGuardia declared, the Lower “East Side is as much a part of New York City as Riverside Drive,” referring to an upper middle class neighborhood on the Upper West Side. He warned, don’t be fooled by people who say, “‘I come from the great East Side; we don’t want any changes’” (New York, *East Side 1936*; New York, *War on Pushcarts* 1940).

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[102] The city requested $13 million from Public Works Agency for schools, hospitals, markets, and sewer plants, among other public works (New York, *PWA List* 1938). An $111,117 grant of PWA funds was made towards construction of the $300K Thirteenth Street market with 137 stalls (New York, *PWA Market* 1938).

Figure 7.2: Opening day at Essex Street Market, the crowds gathered around a fruit seller displaying grapes, and clearly marked prices (Museum of the City of New York, 1940).

Moore Street in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn was the fifth market to open, "absorbing" the pushcarts that operated on Moore and Seigel Streets, Bushwick Avenue, and Delmonico Place (New York, *End* 1941). That day, the *Events* page in The New York Times included the market's opening among the seven highlights of the day. The opening drew a crowd of eight hundred spectators, in addition to the 150 people leaning precariously from tenement windows facing Moore Street, craning to catch a glance of the mayor. Mayor LaGuardia urged the crowd to continue patronizing the stores in the neighborhood, stressing that the market was not intended as competition for the neighborhood stores. However, because the city regulated prices in the market, the market would keep storekeepers from "jacking up their prices." The market would end "the obnoxious features of the pushcart while preserving its principal benefit, inexpensive wares, and giving the consumer more protection" (Ibid).

Though pushcart peddlers once served a purpose, the Mayor conceded, they also "cluttered" streets, selling "questionable" goods (New York, *Paddy's* 1938). When asked about the loss of the "one of the most picturesque aspects of street life in New York City," LaGuardia chided reporters: "Only sentimentalists will mourn the general passing of one of New York's typical 'institutions,' the pushcart peddler. For he is disappearing from the city streets, pushed aside by the opening of municipal enclosed retail markets." Now, merchants, many of whom were once peddlers, serve "thrift housewives" [sic] who "learned" that the enclosed markets were sources of "economical, reliable goods" (New York, *End* 1941).

Large enclosed public municipal markets like the Midtown Municipal Market under the 59th Street Bridge[103]and the Bronx Market never attracted the crowds the pushcarts markets did, but the new enclosed retail markets served tens of thousands of consumers daily (Mackenzie 1935; New York, *New Market* 1936). In the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan, crowds poured into the unassuming concrete market buildings through glass-paned front doors, filling the aisles lined with stalls that were less than 10 feet across. The stalls were piled high with goods; merchants often specialized in a single item – potatoes, or apples. On its busiest days, the First Avenue market, modestly sized in relation to the other enclosed markets, had more than 30,000 customers (DoM Annual Report 1938); Essex Street Market served 55,000 patrons a day (DoM Annual Report 1940-41).

[103] The Midtown Municipal Market, aka the Queensboro Market, was closed during the Depression (Irizarry 2003: 38).

Figure 7.3: Interior of the First Avenue Market on opening day: "housewives" and men shopped at the new market (Sol Libsohn, Museum of the City of New York, 1938)

Butchers, fishmongers and egg-and-butter men sold their wares at refrigerated counters. Lights dangled from the high ceilings, supplementing the sunlight that poured in through windows over the doors, and skylights on the roof. The largest markets – Park Avenue and Essex Street – had four market buildings apiece, one of which was dedicated to the sale of meat and was lined with refrigerated cases. Eventually, some enterprising merchants installed neon signage.

Figure 7.4: Market interior, aisles of butchers and their neon signs (Stanley Kubrick, Museum of the City of New York, 1949)

Department of Markets inspectors and supervisors monitored sanitary conditions. Merchants had access to running water, and crews of laborers maintained the markets. By keeping an eye on prices, the Department of Markets was able to “attack the spread,” keeping profit margins and prices low, assuring a steady supply of affordable food to the neighborhoods they served. Studies conducted at the First Avenue and Park Avenue markets found prices to be 24% under the average retailer’s due to low overhead and high patronage. Price regulation was rationalized by the relatively low rents on stalls, which were essentially a public subsidy (New York, *New City* 1939).

Even with low rents, the enclosed markets more than covered their operating costs: net revenue from Park Avenue Market was so substantial that the Department anticipated its debt

would be amortized within five years of opening (DoM Annual Report 1937).[104] From the day it opened, there was a waiting list of vendors hoping to rent a stall (Ibid). There were waiting lists at all the enclosed markets; the city never intended to build sufficient capacity to house all pushcart peddlers, and thereby reduced their overall numbers. The Park Avenue market opened in 1936 with room for 416 vendors, replacing a pushcart market that had between 600 and 700 peddlers. When the city's fourth enclosed market, opened at Essex Street, its 475 spaces were filled, and more than 1,000 peddlers were waitlisted.[105] Pushcarts were barred from surrounding and "many other neighboring streets" (New York, *War on Pushcarts* 1940).

Regulating public markets and New York's publics

In addition to containing peddlers and cleaning the streets of open air markets, the state regulated what happened within the walls of the enclosed public markets. The spaces and activities within them reflected and reinforced then-dominant, middle class ideas about Americanization and modernization.

The Department of Markets enforced hours of operation, and this represented a significant change from the pushcart era when peddlers set their own hours. The enclosed markets were open seven days a week, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and until 10 p.m. on Saturdays. A majority of pushcart peddlers were Jewish, and while not all observed the Sabbath, many did not work from sundown on Fridays until sundown on Saturdays when many pushcart markets

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[104] Some markets also had store units for rent at market rates. At Essex Street, the four market structures had five store units apiece measuring ~15' x 20', and fronting Delancey Street, solely as a source of additional revenue. Essex Street's potential annual revenue was $139K annually. Stores rented for $4.25/weekly including both heat and cleaning (DoM Annual Report 1938).
[105] First Avenue Market on Manhattan's Lower East Side had 230 stalls, considerably smaller than the original plans, and Thirteenth Avenue Market in Brooklyn had only 90 stalls. Moore Street Market, also in Brooklyn, had 150 stalls (DoM Annual Report 1938, 1942).

were closed. The markets' set hours were an abrupt form of assimilation. Some merchants hired assistants; some "Americanized" and worked through the Sabbath (Wasserman 1990; Bluestone 1992).

Rules were posted on the walls, and enforced by Department staff. Vendors had to stand behind their counters; they were not permitted to hawk their wares. Prices were clearly marked. Customers – always represented as "housewives" although photographs and fieldwork indicate that men, often accompanied by their children, did a share of household shopping – were not permitted to bargain. It is difficult to imagine that these rules were easy to enforce, even with supervisors and inspectors on site. The markets were crowded places. Customers pushed through the packed aisles, arms filled with packages. Interviews and descriptions of the markets suggest that for all the state's attempts to create the enclosed retail markets as spaces of governmentality and assimilation, they were simultaneously shaped by citizen's everyday uses of the spaces. The goods for sale reflected the ethnicities of consumers at each market, just as they did at the pushcart markets. Crowds bantered back and forth in Yiddish, or Creole and Spanish.

The state was invested in the enclosed retail markets, and represented them as institutions that advanced public goals, assuring citizens their construction and operation were appropriate expenditures of public monies, and emphasizing the good they accomplished. A more critical view of the market reveals their shortcoming. If the markets were "modern" when compared to pushcart markets, they were outmoded when compared to grocery stores and the gleaming supermarkets available to consumers in middle class neighborhoods. The enclosed markets offered opportunities to peddlers who could become merchants, but the pressure of low prices on surrounding merchants, many of them independents already feeling the assault of chains, added to the inequities of opportunity in food retailing. And while the enclosed retail

markets improved conditions for merchants and consumers alike, it wasn't long before merchants began reporting a loss of revenue, as much as forty percent in some cases, particularly on the Lower East Side. The markets were crowded, but small aisles filled more quickly than streets, and although nearly half a million people poured through the markets every week, there was no guarantee they would spend a dime (Wasserman 1990; DoM Annual Report 1939:5).

Nostalgia for Old New York

After the enclosed markets were built, consumers continued patronizing pushcart markets and itinerant peddlers while the state continued to wage its battle against pushcarts (the last pushcart markets were not closed until the 1960s). The number of itinerant peddlers had multiplied with the Depression – the Department of Markets reported at least 12,000 unlicensed, itinerant peddlers "roaming the streets" in 1938 – and people sought them out, content to find a bargain, even if it the tomatoes were bruised, or the pears were past the peak of ripeness. Some rallied to preserve peddlers, arguing that the disappearance of the pushcarts would be a "great loss" to many who depend on them for cheap fruit and vegetables that stores would not bother to sell because of appearance, or because they needed to be used immediately (Boyer 1941).

Some mourned the changes for more aesthetic reasons. A section of The WPA Guide to New York titled *Jewish Quarter* described "the famous" Orchard Street pushcart market, filled with an array of fresh produce, "hot knishes," "hot *arbes*" (chickpeas), "tools, hardware, and work clothes," and added, "it may not be long before this and other open-air pushcart markets will disappear, for the Department of Markets, more interested in sanitation than the picturesque, plans to house them all indoors." In a jarring acknowledgement of the iconic value

of the pushcart markets, and in contradiction of their policies to contain them, among the Department of Markets' exhibits at the World's Fair was "The Romance of the Pushcart" (DoM Annual Report 1938).

Forecasting the disappearance of the Lower East Side prompted an anticipatory nostalgia for the "good old days of poverty." Former residents of the Lower East Side, often Jews who "made good" and moved out of the neighborhood to posher districts on the Upper West Side, descended to the Lower East Side to relive their past as a time of innocence, warmth, and communal life (Wasserman 1990).[106] Bourgeois housewives would haggle over the price of potatoes or smoked fish at pushcart markets; families brought their children to stroll past pickle barrels and baskets piled with bialys.

All this was happening at time when the Lower East Side, once the most densely populated area of New York City, was hemorrhaging residents (Bluestone 1992). New residential options opened up in Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island and beyond. Storeowners, desperate to preserve what trade remained, threw their lot in with LaGuardia, and supported the abolition of pushcarts and the construction of enclosed retail markets. They didn't understand that tourists from the Upper West Side wanted to experience the pushcarts and the vibrant, bustling street life they remembered. Ordinary stores may have offered great bargains, but not the visual satiety of pushcart markets. By creating a spectacle of working class life, the newly arrived middle classes were able to safely distance themselves from their pasts, while mourning all they had lost by ascending from the tenements to townhouses.

[106] This historical rescripting was not limited to former Jewish residents of the Lower East Side. In Harlem, "soul food" was emerging as an imagined tradition of African American foodways in the Deep South. These nostalgic visions of the past countered LaGuardia's vision of a modern city progressing forward (Mosely 2008; Opie 2008).

If some sought familiarity at New York City's public markets, others celebrated the markets for their differences. Journalists, members of the Federal Writers Program, and, increasingly, middle class spectators, flocked to public markets in search of the exotic and the ethnic. Their detailed descriptions provide us with a record of what was sold. Markets reflected "the tastes of their neighborhoods" (Mackenzie 1935), providing a shorthand for the populations each market served.

Markets drew fascinated attention; they were scenes of activity, places where one could view the underpinnings of city life. The wholesale markets, critical infrastructure, included Gansevoort Market where "farmers in overalls and mud-caked shoes" stood by while "commission merchants, pushcart vendors and restaurant buyers" dug "warily" through piles of produce (FWP 1939: 71). Washington Market injected a "rude vitality into the district." During hours of operation, trucks and "freight cars discharged their burdens," a "great selection of international goods": "caviar from Siberia…sardines from Norway, native quail, squabs, codfish tongues…bluefish cheeks…bear steaks" (Ibid: 74).

In Harlem, along with the "waffles, fried chicken and sweet potato pie" that defined emerging constructions of soul food, "West Indian fruits" and "[s]trange vegetables" were easily found at the Park Avenue pushcart market (New York, *Native Foods* 1934; also Opie 2008; Mosely 2008). The Federal Writers Project used the city's markets to illustrate neighborhood ethnicities. At the pushcart market on Belmont Avenue in Brooklyn, Yiddish was "the shopkeepers' tongue," and "all varieties of kosher foods" and delicacies "favored by Jews" could be found (FWP 1939: 498). In Little Italy one could find "relics of a thriving [pushcart] market that once embraced the four streets west of the Bowery" (Mott Street, from Canal to Broome). For sale were "green olives, artichokes,…finochio, and ready-to-eat pizza, an unsweetened

pastry filled with tomatoes and cheese, meat, or fish" (Ibid: 118). Uptown, in Italian Harlem, stalls lined the crowded sidewalks, where pomegranates and sea urchins were sold (Ibid: 268-70). Descriptions of voluptuous foods veered pornographic: "sweet Italian onions…their shiny magenta skins, and elongated green squashes looped over a pole like pendant eels….big cantaloupes…cut like giant pink rosettes as samples of ripeness and texture" (Mackenzie 1935).

To the west, in Spanish Harlem, amidst restaurants, shops, music shops, bodegas and *carnicerias* catering to the "thousands of Puerto Ricans and Latin-Americans" who came after World War I, the enclosed Park Avenue Market whose "glass and steel sheds" replaced the pushcarts "most vividly" expressed the Latin-American character of the locality. Residents who faced high rates of malnutrition and tuberculosis, and racial discrimination "thronged" here to buy "green limes, tangerines… tamarinds," and "fiery red peppers" (FWP 1939: 268-70; also Grutzner 1949). The Park Avenue Market had become the heart of the neighborhood, an expression and embodiment of the new waves of working class immigrants struggling to make a life in New York.

The enclosed retail markets were modern in appearance, but were anachronisms in relation to the ongoing transformation of the private food retailing sector. Supermarkets did not perish after the Depression ended, as some predicted. Rather, chains jockeyed for position in a crowded market, making plans for their "post-war stores," where self-service would be "on a scale unimagined," goods arranged in "help-yourself cases" (Holt 1945a). D'Agostino Brothers Super Market of Distinction planned to expand with an eye on the "prosperous district" in mid-town Manhattan, with signs to guide shoppers through their self-service stores, and a young woman acting "as a kind of hostess" to answer customer inquiries (Holt 1945b). As the private food retailing landscape was making plans for greater market segmentation, the enclosed

markets were fixing in place retailing styles of eras past, further differentiating working class from middle class neighborhoods.

New York City's policies on public markets in the 1930s and early 1940s sought to integrate the markets and their patrons into a broader idealized landscape wherein lower income neighborhoods and their working class, and often immigrant, residents lived were "transformed" to resemble those of the implicitly American middle-classes. The enclosed markets strove to achieve Progressive goals; they also advanced the less idealistic interests of real estate developers, and the bourgeoisie who wanted the streets swept clean of pushcarts, but cared little about peddlers' fates. While city government was investing creative energy and capital in building these markets as models of modernization, the private sector was making plans to seize on post-war opportunities.

Discourses celebrating the enclosed markets as ethnic, exotic spaces produced by everyday, local processes reinforced and legitimized the state's regulation of the markets and the working classes they served by emphasizing the distance between their practices and the middle class norms the markets were intended to institutionalize. The Department of Markets did seek to guide, protect and inform working class patrons. The Bureau of Consumer Services offered cooking classes at the enclosed markets, a popular service that reached hundreds if not thousands of consumers. When rationing was introduced during World War II, DoM stationed staff at the enclosed markets to help customers make sense of the complex point system. To maximize outreach, services were offered in English and Spanish at Park Avenue Market (DoM Annual Report 1943). On the Lower East Side, a partnership of the Manhattan Civilian Defense Volunteer Office and Department of Markets opened the first consumer service center at Essex Street market. The center "cooperate[d]" with "housewives on… conducting their homes under

the new government regulations." Services were offered in English and Yiddish; interpreters of Spanish, Italian, Yiddish and Russian were available to help "customers of foreign extraction" (Ibid; New York, *Market Service* 22). In Harlem, DoM opened a "point rationing and menu planning information service" to prevent "unwise buying and incorrect use of ration stamps" (New York, *Information Service* 14; New York, *Teach Rationing* 1943).[107]

Nonetheless, the enclosed retail markets were sites through which and in which the state shaped power. Although individual stalls were private retail enterprises, the municipal agents regulated the rent, prices, and the hours of operation. Municipal government prioritized containment over pushcart markets, putting thousands of peddlers out of work and employing hundreds of construction workers to build the enclosed markets. Mobility was defined by LaGuardia, by the Department of Markets, who viewed respectability, scientific management, and bourgeois behavior as the paths to (self-) improvement. The enclosed retail markets helped produce New York's working classes as the natural objects of food policy, foundation for decades of policy regimes to follow.

[107] This service was offered by Department of Markets in collaboration with eight welfare agencies and the NYC Department of Health and Welfare. Literature was available in Italian, Spanish, and English (New York, *Information Service* 14; New York, *Teach Rationing* 21).

Chapter 8: Renewing Food Policy and Relocating Public Markets – 1950 to 1968

Post-war processes reshaped New York City's complex food systems again and forced a realignment of Department of Markets' priorities and operations. "Public demand" for state intervention in New York City's food supply culminated in the 1930s and 1940s. New York City's Department of Markets reshaped its mandate during the 1950s and 60s, abandoning Progressive ideals and withdrawing from regulation of food retailing. Price controls and regulation of supply were relaxed. Concerns about food safety were on the rise, particularly among the middle classes whose concerns defined "public demand." Regulatory attention shifted to consumer protection, shifts that are consistent with Horowitz et al's model (2004).

More significantly, the Department, like municipal government more generally, turned away from its commitment to improving the lives of the working classes. It subjected public expenditures to cost benefit analyses, narrowing definitions of public good. Its priorities shifted away from the enclosed retail markets and towards the development of wholesale and terminal markets to support the regional food industry. Its robust suite of consumer services was declared an inappropriate government intervention, and, eventually terminated. While these changes can be characterized as state withdrawal, or market liberalization, it is useful to keep in mind Foucault's definition of power as a force that is not exhausted and produced anew, but reshaped (1979). Lack of government support produces and reproduces spaces as much as government institutions and investments.

Immediately after World War II, however, the public faced the full force of unleashed markets, and clamored for the reinstitution of government controls that had regulated food distribution during the Depression and the war.

Postwar uncertainty and upheaval

President Harry S. Truman[108] announced the end of World War II on August 14, 1945. The party lasted more than forty-eight hours in Times Square, along Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn, in Harlem and Chinatown. Tens of thousands jammed the streets, embracing servicemen, passing quart bottles of booze, and dancing. "The biggest city in the world went its way towards picking up the biggest hangover in its history," wrote Sergeant Sanderson Vanderbilt (1945).

New Yorkers sobered up quickly. Inflation rocketed when the war ended. Key foods were no longer rationed, and demand for commodities like meat, fats, oils and eggs spiked. Bread prices reached their highest levels since 1920 (Grutzner 1947b; New York, *Retail Food* 1951). Supply was short; many goods were shipped to Europe in an effort to speed recovery. When the Marshall Plan (formally known as the European Recovery Plan) was implemented in 1948, food and fuel were the focus of the reconstruction policy (O'Dea 2009:4), putting additional pressure on food prices in the United States. The public was faced with the full force of unleashed markets, and clamored for reinstitution of government controls.

The front page of *The New York Times* was filled with reports about the surging cost of food especially in 1947 and 1948 when rates of inflation peaked. Concerns about public health, particularly the "ill effects" of deprivation on expectant mothers and infants, were raised by "advancing food prices" that rose more than 40% in twenty months (Lissner 1973: 56).[109] The DoM issued daily reports detailing "low-cost meals" using "lower-cost foods."[110] Information

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[108] Harry S. Truman (1884 – 1972) served as President of the United States from 1945 to 1953.
[109] In a single week, New York City's "market basket" for a family of four rose 1.6 percent, an increase attributed to meat prices that rose three to eighteen cents a pound, depending on the cut (Lissner 1973: 56).
[110] Beginning in 1947, the Bureau published *Low-to-Moderate Cost Menus* that outlined the preparation of daily menus, breakfast, lunch and dinner for a family of five. The estimated cost, on the basis of these menus, was $1,900 or $36.50/week. In 1955, 50,000 copies were

about food price fluctuations was disseminated over the radio and via posters on subways, buses, and trolleys (Grutzner 1947b; 1947c).

Across the U.S., public appeals were made to President Truman by "all major consumer and labor groups" who demanded "immediate reinstitution" of price controls (Grutzner 1947a; 1948a; New York, *Price Rise* 1954). The New York League of Women Shoppers, a group that identified itself as nonpartisan and its mandate as "nonpolitical," urged Mayor O'Dwyer to support "compulsory price control and rationing, with subsidies," arguing that voluntary actions were "ineffective" (LWS Records).[111] Faced with growing unrest and demand for state intervention, O'Dwyer proposed "a return to wartime meatless days in public eateries" as a "stopgap" against advancing food prices" (Grutzner 1947d; 1948a).[112]

Congressional committees found that speculative trading of commodities was driving up prices; it was suggested that the Federal government regulate commodity exchanges. Some members of Congress observed that economic laws did "not seem to be working fully;" others blamed "excessive" exports. Fingers pointed to "pyramiding," whereby each step along the food chain added customary mark-ups (Morris 1947).

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distributed. Consumers who sent $1.50 in an enclosed money order to cover the cost of postage received budget menus for a year (Endress 1954).

[111] The League of Women Shoppers was founded in New York City in 1935. Membership grew quickly to the thousands, and by 1937, LWS had branches in major U.S. cities such as Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago. They fought for better wages and working conditions in the stores where they shopped, and in the factories where the food they consumed was produced. They supported social justice causes including civil rights for African Americans. At least some members had ties to progressive and labor organizations, and LWS was labeled "subversive" by the Dies Commission in 1939. They continued organizing campaigns, and supported Roosevelt's re-election to a fourth term in 1944. After 1945, they gradually limited their activities, and "faded out of existence," though not before rallying once again on behalf of consumers (LWS Records, Sophie Smith Collection, Smith College).

[112] Voluntary 'Wheatless Monday' was added to (also voluntary) 'Meatless Tuesday' and 'Eggless Thursday' to conserve food. The Hotel Association of New York City called a meeting to discuss the "emergency," and to develop a "meat conservation plan." Food conservation measures had already been reinstituted in Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington, DC (Grutzner 1947d; 1948a).

Food processors, meat packers and farmers defended high prices, blaming the rising cost of labor. Consumers, said the spokesman for the American Meat Institute, "set the prices by their demands" (Fogarty 1948). Nearly two million more Americans were employed in 1948 than in 1947; the average wage had doubled from $24 a week in 1939 to $52 a week in 1948, and food consumption increased by 12% in the same time period (New York, *High Food* 1948).[113]

Initially, consumer organizations fought back as a unified front, refusing to wait for an inactive Congress to end their debates, and rejecting the food industry's rationales. Nonetheless, consumer alliances splintered post-war, as multiple forces converged and weakened their organizations. US cities experienced profound shifts politically and demographically. In New York, many of the Jewish and Italian workers who formed the core of the women's and consumers' organizations ascended to the middle classes and left their tenements for the Bronx, Queens, and the suburbs. Their successors, whether Puerto Rican or other new immigrants, did not bring with them a legacy of union organizing, Communist politics, left wing ideas, or a working class identity (Orleck 1995).

Labor went on strike frequently in the years immediately after the war to protest diminishing wages, but increasingly without the support of consumer' organizations. There were railroad strikes, meat packers' strikers (Grutzner 1948b; 1948c), truck strikes (New York, *Mayor Fears* 1948), bread strikes and beer strikes[114] (Resner 1949). The Department of Markets

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[113] Demand for staple foods and meat was high due to wages and to consumer behavior; consumers were still in a war-time state of mind, hoarding sugar and other "formerly rationed items" in neighborhoods throughout the city despite USDA assurances that stocks were high and there was "no justification for hoarding" (New York, *Sugar Supply* 1950).

[114] Illustrative of labor's weakened ability to make local action count, a seventy-seven day beer strike in New York was "almost painless to the consuming public" because breweries located outside of the city launched "expensive advertising and promotional campaigns," gaining

represented strikes as threats to national security in their Weekly Food Summary (DoM Annual Report 1951). Although the Department never advocated collective actions such as boycotts and strikes, they had supported activist consumption in the past, and now represented any form of civic unrest as a boost to Communism. They, like other branches of government, positioned themselves as industry's allies.

Prosperity in place of Progressivism

Wages rose, and the relative cost of food decreased. Access to "affordable, adequate and safe food" (DoM Annual Report 1934) was no longer a consuming political issue once it no longer affected the expanding middle classes (Jacobs 2005). At the turn of the 19th century, food was the biggest household expenditure. Food commanded nearly 37 percent of median household dollars in the mid-1930s. By 1960, food dropped from first place to second (after housing), and represented just over a quarter of household spending (US BLS). While the poor still struggled to afford adequate food, the middle classes no longer demanded that the state step in and protect their purchasing power.

Business interests gradually and successfully drove wedges between the middle and working classes by arguing that recent gains in (middle class) purchasing power would be lost to (labor's) higher wages (Jacobs 2005; Orleck 1995). By the mid-1950s prices for meat, bread and other commodities including soap and textiles began to drop. Middle class loyalties faltered as dollars stretched further, cutting support for working class demands for higher wages.

"lucrative markets," and challenging the local beer industry whose quality was "tops," but was not strong enough to resist nationally distributed brands (Resner 1949: 6).

Federal programs such as the VA loan program and the GI Bill attributed with catalyzing rapid growth of the middle classes were not available to all, particularly African-Americans and other minority groups. Alienated from the promise of the American Dream, citizens left without a route to the middle class were isolated within their class and ethnic/race boundaries, often in urban neighborhoods where various forms of disinvestment led to decline, and the production of areas described as "ghettos" (Kaplan and Valls 2007; Cohen 2003; Deutsch 2010; Gill 2011).

New York City was transformed by urban renewal, suburbanization, and related emerging geographies of production, consumption, and social reproduction (Cohen 2003; Caro 1975; Zipp 2010). New typographies and topographies were mapped. Immigrant working class neighborhoods on the Lower East Side, East Harlem, Central Harlem, South Williamsburg in Brooklyn, were categorized as blighted, and were systematically "renewed." Public housing swept away rows of tenements, often changing the flows of vehicle and pedestrian traffic (Bartnett 1960; 1962b). Neighborhoods and their networks of small businesses including several public retail markets were knocked down to make way for new retail spaces whose size and square-foot rents limited the spaces where mom-and-pop shops could relocate (Arnold 1962a). Merchants struggled to make sense of a "new retail environment" that squeezed "minority groups" and entrepreneurs alike (Barmash 1969). The way was paved for chain stores and supermarkets, whose cost-benefit based decision-making would wreak havoc on low-income neighborhoods, setting the foundations of desertification.[115]

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[115] Many food deserts were created when chain grocers and supermarkets abandoned low-performing stores rather than operate on relatively thin margins. In neighborhoods with limited access to fresh food, the closure of a supermarket can have devastating impacts on food access.

New appetites

On a most basic level, consumer tastes had changed. A decade and a half of depression-era austerity followed by wartime rationing had whetted consumer appetites. Patriotic thrift gave way to mass consumption on a national scale, and illusions of universal solidarity gave way to differentiated consumption patterns and celebration of prosperity (Weber 2009). Rising post-war wages caused consumption of basic goods to rise dramatically. As household wealth grew, industry was poised to take advantage by offering more goods to buy. New food processing technologies were developed during the war, and were now marketed aggressively; advertisers worked to convince women that using convenience foods was the way to be modern (Shapiro 2005).

New shopping habits and shopping environments emerged. Supermarkets expanded at explosive rates during the 1950s[116], and while residential and supermarket growth was concentrated in emerging suburbs, well-to-do urban areas were also targets for expansion. The design of modern supermarkets taught American consumers how to shop differently (Cohen 2003; Deutsch 2010). Supermarkets were no longer the cavernous warehouses with goods piled high on rough tables they were during the Depression. Now glass-fronted refrigerated cases were filled with a wide selection of foods, produce was carefully arranged to catch the eye, and branded items lined the shelves. Post-war supermarkets were intentionally designed to be social places where consumers "roamed" the aisles, and women stopped to catch up on neighborhood gossip. Colorful displays enticed shoppers; men filled their carts with "impulse" buys. Supermarkets functioned as the public spaces public markets once did, except they were more

[116] From 1946 to 1954, the number of supermarkets increased from 3% to 5% of the total number of food retail outlets in the United States. Their share of sales grew from 28% to 48%. Supermarkets' share of food sales reached a peak of 87.2% in 1985 before falling to 65.8% in 2006 due to the rise of supercenters (Stiegert and Hovhannisyan 2009: 133, 137).

segregated by class, a reflection of growing residential segmentation (New York, *Food Patterns* 1961; Deutsch 2010).

Figure 8.1: At the A&P supermarket, consumers had several brands of mayonnaise to choose from (Museum of the City of New York, 1950).

A report in *The New York Times* found the "modern homemaker" of all classes, ethnicities, and races considered supermarkets to be the standard in food retailing. The supermarket had become an American icon at home and abroad; in Germany, the Army Exchange Service opened supermarkets for GIs and their families (New York, *GI Wives* 1946). Women on average reported shopping once or twice a week, enjoying the "feeling of independence" self-serve provided. They appreciated the time saved by not making daily trips to a grocery store or public market. One disadvantage was that shopping at supermarkets required a significant outlay of cash, something not all "homemakers" could afford (New York, *Food Patterns* 1961).

Figure 8.2: Consumers appreciated the independence of self-service in modern supermarkets, which expanded rapidly when World War II ended (Stanley Kubrick, Museum of the City of New York, 1946).

Frances Foley Gannon's radio show continued emphasizing seasonal products, and recipes that depended on scratch cooking (*Asparagus* 1951; *Cranberries* 1954; *Shrimp* 1960), but the growing volume of pre-packaged foods sold in "self serve" groceries necessitated a shift in daily price reporting by the Department of Markets. Whereas reports once focused on basic commodities like eggs, bread, and potatoes, now they included a range of processed and branded foods, as did recipe and calorie counting books (Bennett 1960).

The number of live poultry processed in New York underwent a "precipitous" decline in the 1950s. The tastes of Jewish and Italian consumers changed as they assimilated and abandoned their "ethnic" foodways (Gabaccia 1998). Second and third generations preferred eviscerated and dressed birds, and the ease of modern supermarkets where they could buy pre-

cut meat on Styrofoam trays. A subsequent decrease in the number of inspectors doing field visits meant the quality of the poultry still being slaughtered in the city was less certain (DoM Annual Report 1954, 1958). Many slaughterhouses were located in areas categorized as "slums" and were condemned to make way for the construction of housing and other projects, including the United Nations on the East Side of Manhattan (Zipp 2010).

Across the United States, agriculture was increasingly industrialized and residential patterns changed dramatically with the expansion of a national highway system. The Department of Markets' farmers' markets[117] shrank. Rapidly decreasing numbers of permits and truckloads of produce were attributed to changes in regional land use (See Appendix C: Farmers' Markets Licenses and Truckloads of Produce). Local farmers within "effective trucking range" were selling "acreage" to developers "at good prices," feeding post-war demand for housing, especially in Nassau County on Long Island, and in Northern New Jersey. Farmers went into other lines of work, or started growing crops such onions, apples, potatoes and other fruits and vegetables further from the city. Increasing competition from frozen and canned farm produce, more direct sales at roadside stands and to chain stores, and changes in "food habits and requirements of consumers" aversely affected the number of farmers selling at city markets (DoM Annual Report 1952).[118]

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[117] The city had two "modern" farmers' markets, one at Cromwell Avenue and 150th Street in the Bronx within Bronx Terminal Market; the second at Foster and Remsen Avenues in Canarsie, Brooklyn at Brooklyn Terminal Market. Both had paved drives, sheds to protect farmers and their goods from the weather, and "adequate lighting and draining facilities" (DoM Annual Report 1952).

[118] Though they generated little revenue, and consumer demand waned during the 1950s and 1960s, farmers' markets were described by the DoM as "vitally necessary." They were represented as "a public service" that provided the "consuming public" with an "open market for the distribution of fresh farm products at fair, reasonable prices established through economic channels of supply and demand." In times of "wartime economy" – the Korean and Cold Wars were both under way – farmers' markets were of "considerable added importance" (DoM Annual Report 1953), a rare acknowledgment of the importance of local production in

Wholesale and terminal markets – New measures of "public good"

Patterns of state investment in New York's food distribution system shifted from the neighborhoods where citizens' everyday lives took place to the peripheries of the city where revenue-generating public infrastructure such as wholesale and terminal markets was developed to support business interests. Measures of public good were reduced to cost benefit analyses, and a new emphasis on maximizing returns on public investments.

The gross revenue generated by New York's nine enclosed retail markets and eleven remaining pushcart markets was minimal and falling each year. According to Department of Markets' Annual Reports, some barely earned enough to cover their operating costs. The pushcart markets had barely a dozen peddlers each when once they had hundreds; the rents on their stalls no longer covered the cost of street cleaning and inspection. When the enclosed retail markets were proposed to the Board of Estimate in the 1930s, their estimated costs and amortization schedules were considered, to assure that construction of the markets would not burden the state, or the public. But, when enclosed markets were "sold" to the public – at their grand openings, for example – Mayor LaGuardia celebrated them as institutions that would keep prices low, and turn peddlers into merchants, not as revenue-generating investments. In the 1950s, the Department of Markets reevaluated its policies, and concluded, there was "some question as to the advisability of continued ownership and operation of the many enclosed retail markets" (DoM Annual Report 1954).

Although public retail markets faced financial losses, and dwindling political support, wholesale and terminal markets were viewed as appropriate investments of public monies.

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relation to the city's food security. Notably, although New York's enclosed retail markets and few remaining pushcart markets sourced the second-best goods that met neighborhood demand for low cost food at the farmers' markets, they were not recognized as playing a role in assuring the city's food security.

Whereas day-to-day regulation by corps of DoM inspectors and market managers inscribed state priorities and shaped public retail market spaces, the city employed employed a handful of property managers to oversee physical plant at terminal and wholesale markets. Terminal and wholesale markets, "important links in distribution," earned more revenue in absolute dollar terms and as a percentage of operating costs than retail markets (DoM Annual Report 1954). They were also credited with creating private sector jobs; the large corporations who leased space in public facilities hired many porters, drivers, and other laborers.

There was growing demand from powerful business interests for publicly funded infrastructure to support the region's food industries. In 1952, New York's wholesale and terminal[119] markets were at 100% capacity. There was a waiting list of merchants at the Bronx Terminal Market, anticipating completion of the Major Deegan Highway (DoM Annual Report 1960). There was also a waiting list of merchants at Brooklyn Terminal Market. Nonetheless, although property was available for expansion of the markets, there were no available funds, and no anticipation of funds in near future. These massive projects required coordination of municipal and Federal monies, as well as negotiations, and contractual agreements, with private interests before construction could begin.[120]

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[119] Terminal market facilities were designed to support various types of food trade. For example, the Bronx Terminal Market included a Wholesale Section, Restaurant, Complete Wine and Champagne Plant, and a Banana Ripening Plant boasted the Department of Markets' 1954 Annual Report.

[120] In 1945, Mayor LaGuardia announced that $750,000 in Federal funds were earmarked for New York's "post-war wholesale market" on the site of Washington Market, and declared that he would ask Board of Estimates to appropriate $42 million before he left office (New York, *U.S. Funds* 1945). Plans showed eight buildings intersected with 110-foot streets and an auction and sales platform ten times the size of Madison Square Garden. It would have been the world's largest terminal market, a "huge" facility extending from Laight Street to Murray Street, running west from Greenwich Street to the Hudson River, covering fifty-seven acres (Donofrio 2008). Ten years later, spoilage, and unnecessary food handling at the Washington Market had reached an "intolerable stage," but there was still (only) talk of a new modern market facility connected to bridges, railroads, and highways. Wholesalers and farmers pressed for either municipal government or the Port of New York Authority to rebuild Washington Market. Frustrated by the

The USDA, in cooperation with DoM, conducted a preliminary study to expand the Bronx Terminal Market (DoM Annual Report 1957). In 1958, the USDA undertook a survey of the Hunts Point area in the Bronx. USDA and private engineering consultants advocated for a "modern overall food center" to *replace* the Washington Market. Other cities, including Philadelphia, were already developing large terminal market facilities. Plans were approved for a new terminal market in 1960, to be paid for entirely by the City of New York (DoM Annual Report 1960,1966; Phillips 1966). The twenty-five block site of Washington Market was condemned and marked for $100 million redevelopment" (New York, *City Speeds* 1960). Ground was broken for Hunts Points Terminal market in 1962.[121]

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inaction, they proposed the creation of a new market authority empowered to build, own, and operate a terminal market. Their campaign attracted the USDA's attention: 19% of produce grown in United States passed through New York City's terminal and wholesale markets, and when it sold at auction, those prices became the base for prices throughout the country (DoM Annual Report 1954).

[121] Bronx Terminal Market, with its outmoded refrigeration, faced an uncertain future: the anticipated effects of the new market at Hunts Point opening five miles away would "doubtlessly be profound." Bronx Terminal Market went through a period of decline after being leased to Daniel Buntzman in 1972. The property was sold to private developers in 2004. Twenty-three remaining food vendors were evicted after a two-year struggle with the city, and the Market was demolished to make way for a $500 million private development project, the Gateway Center; the first store, a Home Depot, opened in 2009. (http://www.plannyc.org/taxonomy/term/686 Last accessed 27 Dec 2010). In 2012, CUNY Hostos Community College's Division of Continuing Education and Workforce Development is now housed in the last remaining market building. While the interior has been entirely renovated, the exterior still reads, City of New York 1935 Bronx Terminal Market.

Figure 8.3: Mayor Wagner and USDA Secretary Orville Freeman look at plans for the new markets at its groundbreaking ceremony in 1962. Hunts Point Market would not open for another four years (Al Ravena, Library of Congress, 1962).

This new concept for "re-planning" and expanding the of area Hunts Point in co-operation with the Division of Port Development and the Departments of Marine and Aviation and of Commerce and Industrial Development included development of one hundred acres for future meat and fish markets, and a 125-acre produce market. Low cost financing was available to firms interested in locating at Hunts Point, and for taking part in the "master plan" for this "vast food complex" (DoM Annual Report 1966 sup.). Plans dovetailed with New York City's economic goals of developing industrial sites including "modern, self-sustaining facilities for the receipt, sale and distribution of all food commodities."[122]

Although some merchants were concerned about the cost of relocating to Hunts' Point, proponents promised the Hunts Point market would replace the "unsanitary and unsafe"

[122] Although industry demand spurred development of Hunts Point, Department of Markets faced hostility from branches of the food industry. Markets Commissioner Masciarelli held meetings with "key players" including the butchers' cooperative at the Brook Avenue Meat Market, Fulton Fish Market dealers, florists, and chain store operators to work out lease agreements (DoM Annual Report 1958, 1965). Fearful of losing tenants to a facility being planned in nearby New Jersey, Masciarelli sent rental commitment forms to wholesale fruit and vegetable vendors, trying to "bind tenants." He received commitments and $500 "good faith" deposits from 180 vendors, securing two-thirds of the $25 million produce market's 240 stalls (New York, *City Speeds* 1960). Challenges persisted. Members of the Marketmen's Association of the Port of New York opposed the $65 million plan to establish a meat and fish market adjacent to the planned produce market. Commissioner Pacetta, Masciarelli's successor, accused a "'small group'" of dealers of "sabotaging" the city's plans (New York, *Meat Men* 1965).

"waste-making" Washington Street produce markets (Cook 1966).[123] Thousands of trucks would be removed from Manhattan's "traffic-swollen existing streets," permitting redevelopment of "these blighted areas" while yielding higher real estate taxes for the city. The Market would create thousands of jobs by fostering a "favorable business climate" and maintain New York's position of leadership "by materially assisting in the retention of food companies" already here, and attracting those located elsewhere.

When Hunts Point opened on October 1, 1966, all units were leased or in negotiation; it was estimated that the market would generate $200 million in trade annually, in addition to creating three thousand jobs. Unlike the enclosed retail markets that opened with fanfare, Hunts Point's "oompah-oompah" occasion was cut short by a plumbers' and pipefitters' strike. The market, more like "a mausoleum," was silent for months. Merchants camped out at the Washington Market where the physical plant had been allowed to deteriorate in anticipation of the market's demolition, and replacement with an "urban renewal project" (New York, *Rent Losses* 1966; Phillips 1966). Hunts' Point finally opened for business on March 6, 1967 when a load of onions was delivered from a New Jersey farm (Krebs 1967).

Discontinuing "Improper Functions"

As the Department of Markets repositioned itself on a radically shifting political, cultural, social terrain, once central components of its policies, like the Bureau of Consumer

[123] Washington Market was demolished in 1967. $100 million was allocated by New York City Housing and Redevelopment Board for the Washington Market site (AR 1966 sup.). By the 1970s the site of Washington Market was designated a "public open space." In the late 1970s, a Federally-funded Community Block Development Grant was obtained by community activists who designed and developed Washington Market Park (http://www.washingtonmarketpark.org/index.html).

Services, were gradually marginalized, illustrating changing constructions of commitments to consumers and citizens.

After the war, as inflation soared, the Department of Markets established its third cooking school at the Second Avenue Market. Lessons in "economical shopping" helped "housewives fight high food costs" (New York, *Free Classes* 1951). The opening session drew a crowd of sixty-five women, and one man – Fred Steiner, a retired postman who lived on East 73rd Street. (Mr. Steiner did not cook, but attended class because one "can always learn something new.") Instructors showed the audience how to prepare "balanced meals on moderate budgets," and provided "information on seasonal and reasonably priced foods" (New York, *Housewives Learn* 1951).[124] In addition to cooking classes, BCS translated menus into "purchase units" for use during an "atomic disaster," and made recommendations about food reserves to be kept at home (Nickerson 1954). In partnership with the Emergency Welfare Division of the Department of Welfare, the Bureau organized exhibits of household reserves.[125]

Within a few years, the Bureau's relative position within the Department of Markets began to change. Their activities were accorded less space in Annual Reports, and their services were no longer viewed as essential to the Department and its priorities. More immediately, ruptures caused by urban renewal displaced the BCS's students and schools. Neighborhood demographics changed; overall attendance numbers suffered from these "adjustments." Between 1955 and 1960, attendance at the Bureau of Consumer Services' classes dropped from

[124] The three course menu included pork shoulder cooked in barbecue sauce, new potatoes and carrots, a pineapple salad as well as a chilled soup made by combining a can each of cream of tomato and cream of pea soups with milk, a departure from Foley Gannon's recipes that did not employ convenience foods and emphasized the cost savings of cooking from scratch (New York, *Housewives Learn* 1951).
[125] In 1954, twenty-six identical exhibits were held simultaneously at New York City Department of Health community centers. The list of food items to be kept on hand in case of a "war emergency" included evaporated milk and cans of "main-dish foods" like spaghetti and *chili con carne* (Nickerson 1954:17).

10,200 students served at three weekly cooking schools held in the Bronx and Manhattan to barely 2,000 students attending cooking classes in two locations (AR 1955; AR 1960).[126]

The Bureau of Consumer Services made adjustments in order to continue providing services to citizens whose place of residence no longer coincided with the public markets. Cooking classes were no longer held at set locations. Instead, "it was decided to bring instruction to the people most needing it by conducting these sessions in various housing projects." Instructors made a special "effort to show how tasteful and nutritious meals can be provided easily from surplus foods distributed by the Federal government" when it was discovered that low-income residents did not know how to make "attractive dishes from the distributed items" (DoM Annual Report 1963-64: 47).

Redefining Consumer Services as Consumer Protection

Uncertain geographies of service coincided with the dissolution of the once-powerful imaginary of housewives across the city inscribing the principles of scientific management to modernize New York City. The promise of transformation and the illusion of universality embodied by the Bureau of Consumer Services' "housewives" lost their political, cultural and social currency. In the early 1960s, Department of Markets decided to "discontinue services which no longer provided civic returns consistent with their cost" and were judged to be "outside our proper functions." These cuts were "borne out" of the "quality of public

[126] The population of the Lower East Side around Essex Street Market was steadily decreasing; the Upper East Side, where the Second Avenue Market was located, became bourgeois. Middle class consumers did not patronize the enclosed market and they did not attend cooking classes in an era when private cooking schools offered classes for every taste and every price point. "Recent housing changes will…aversely affect the attendance at the Second Avenue Cooking School," predicted the 1958 Annual Report. The Bureau sought new quarters. When the Second Avenue Cooking School was eventually "accorded space," it was at a YWCA in central Brooklyn.

acceptance" of "instituted changes" (DoM Annual Report 1962-63). Although working class women, increasingly ethnic and racial minorities, consumed Department services, middle class support for working class education and transformation had fizzled out.

As support for Consumer Services waned, public demand for Consumer Protection rose quickly. Whole categories of new foods emerged such as snacks, and diet food. With all the novelty came new concerns. Consumers were increasingly worried about the composition of processed food products appearing on grocery shelves, fearful of contamination and adulteration, pesticides and preservatives (USDA 2008). By the end of the 1950s, the subject of chemical additives to food attracted the attention of consumer organizations and the Federal government (Branen et al 2005). The Department of Markets experienced a surge of requests for information. They needed a "sound program of trade surveillance and enforcement" including routine inspections, adoption of new methods to test food and other products, and investments in new equipment to detect fraud (DoM Annual Report 1958).

Inspection procedures had to adapt to technological changes like the growth of frozen food preparation and a myriad of non-food products such as silk stockings and gold jewelry. The Department expanded its purview to include the widening array of consumer goods available as the proportion of discretionary spending grew in the 1950s and 1960s (US BLS), particularly since expanding markets for consumer goods also meant new opportunities for fraud, and the perpetuation of more "traditional" forms of cheating such as adulteration or short-weighting.

Department of Markets' representation of consumers became more generalized. Whereas housewives were once equated with consumers – and the target of Department of Markets' Consumer Services – the Department of Markets now represented "consumers" as the eight million New Yorkers who had patronized the city's 25,000 food stores, and 89,000 retail operations, allowing that they varied greatly in age and income. The Department positioned

itself as a guide to an existing and naturalized retail landscape, ensuring that "wherever something is sold," consumers received a "fair value for money." It did not seek to shape that landscape, nor deploy their emerging subjects, universal consumer-citizens, to shape that landscape. "Public demand" for intervention was informed by an unwillingness to confront business interests head-on; consumption was depoliticized and represented as a relatively passive activity (Deutsch 2010).

The Department of Markets' newly instituted Public Relations department reached out to consumers and trade by enhancing educational and enforcement activities. In 1963, DoM changed the format of their long-standing radio show. Though food was still a "major topic," the "At Home with Betty Frank Show" [127] covered a wider range of subjects, including "rugs, bedding, furs," and "extended coverage of consumer protection problems" (DoM Annual Report 1963-64). The new radio show also provided "food news, weekend shopping advice, and information about the regular functions" of the Department of Markets; each week a staff member described their role and explained how to use the Department's services. A pamphlet, "14 Rules for Shopping," outlined consumers' rights and encouraged "cooperation" with the Department. A quarter million copies, printed in English and Spanish, were distributed through chain stores, trade associations, labor unions and schools, settlement houses, clubs. "Additional steps were taken to publicize the actions of the Department in the large Spanish speaking population of our City" (Ibid).[128]

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[127] The fifteen-minute show aired on Thursday afternoons at 2:45 p.m. Betty Frank appeared on two "Negro-oriented" outlets (including WLIB) and had another home economics show, "Homemaker's Club" (*Billboard Magazine*, June 22, 1963).

[128] The Bureau of Consumer Services was not involved with the production of the new radio program, or with implementation of consumer protection policies. They were peripheralized as the Department of Markets developed new strategies for reaching consumers without drawing on its internal resources.

To meet growing demand for consumer protection, the Department sought greater authority and expansion of the law. Commissioner Masciarelli asked for additional inspectors "to crack down on dishonest television repairmen" (New York, *TV Inspectors* 1955). In 1960, when a law was passed requiring all milk and cream to bear date of pasteurization on label, the DoM was authorized to enforce "milk-dating mandate" under "consumer protection" (Crowell 1960). Also in 1960, one hundred Department inspectors and fifteen "women civic volunteers" conducted a pre-Christmas sting of 1,180 stores. More than 12,000 packages of meat and more than 3,000 scales were inspected; 274 violations were served for short-weight (Bennett 1960). Despite these high-profile victories, the Department was not granted the resources its Commissioners felt were needed to get the job done.

When Robert F. Wagner, Jr. ran for his third term as Mayor of New York in the summer of 1961, his 36-point policy platform described a Consumer Protection Agency whose duties would "embrace" those of the Department of Markets (New York, *Wagner's Election* 1961). After his inauguration, Wagner placed the "greatest emphasis" on the development of a "consumer protection program" and his pledge to increase inspections and investigations of "new fields of commodities, public education, and adoption of new legislation" (DoM Annual Report 1961; New York, *Excerpts Wagner's* 1961).

Department of Markets' resources remained insufficient. Masciarelli's successor, Pacetta, complained that Department staff was "too small." For "some inexplicable reason" the number of personnel was decreased as "the complexity of the marketplace increased," and despite Mayor Wagner's promises. Commissioner Pacetta asked for an analytical lab and more

tools to "adequately protect" the public. He called for legislation to define the Department's new and emerging purview, drafting eleven bills over two years.[129]

Pacetta was relentless when defending New Yorkers' purchasing power. He vehemently opposed an application from upstate dairy farmers to raise price of milk in response to a drought, and spoke out when bakers increased price of bread when cost of flour rose particularly because "When wheat and flour prices were low, bakers never reduced the price of bread. I believe bakers can absorb this small and temporary increase in the price of flour." When Congress considered a bill that would significantly decrease the amount of meat imported to the U.S., a favor to "Western cattlemen," the Commissioner warned the prices of "hamburgers, salami, bologna" and frankfurters would rise. The bill sent to President Johnson was modified, and made much weaker (Bennett 1964).[130]

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[129] One bill drafted by Market's Commissioner would have outlawed false advertising by jewelry stores: "'There's no such thing as a blue-white diamond," quipped the Commissioner. Another would have regulated the "'mushrooming, multi-million dollar' car-rental industry." A Fair-Drink bill was proposed to insure full shots. Pacetta wanted to make it illegal to attempt to light a cigarette, cigar or pipe while in or on a bed in "any public abode" (New York, *Council Study* 1963). None of these bills were passed by City Council, and Pacetta blamed the Council's inaction on lobbyists, and "'some assistant'" at City Hall that allowed bills to "hibernate" (DoM Annual Report 1962; O'Kane 1964).

[130] Commissioner Pacetta took on a number of critical battles; he also attracted attention to his cause by championing less-serious consumer causes. When the Commissioner discovered a Broadway hero shop was filling its "ham-and-egg heroes" with a combination of pork shoulder and chopped spiced ham," he proclaimed, "Debasing of ham and eggs, which is a most characteristic symbol of America, is about as serious as an attack on motherhood" (New York, *City Acts* 1964).

Figure 8.4: Markets Commissioner Pacetta used a sledgehammer to smash scales confiscated by department inspectors. He made use of dramatic statements to advance the cause of consumer protection (Photographer, Fred Palumbo; Library of Congress, 1964).

During his third term, Mayor Wagner created a Public Relations Advisory function to serve as a liaison to consumers, but did not further empower the Department of Markets. Moreover, neither the Mayor, nor the Commissioner articulated a view of "consumer protection" that acknowledged or addressed inequities in the city's food system by confronting retailers and other private interests. "Public demand" for this kind of state intervention did not emanate from the middle class "publics" whose interests were protected by the state, but from "publics" denied representation by perspectives on consumers, and consumption, in New York City that white-washed differences. The state framed its responsibility as enforcement of safety laws, elimination of fraud, and insurance that consumers got their dollar's worth on what was represented as an equally accessible playing field.

The question of consumer inequities began gaining attention in the 1960s. Already during Wagner's re-election campaign, five hundred black residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant addressed the Mayor at a town-hall meeting. Among their complaints was the sour milk sold by

grocers in their neighborhood (New York *Gripes* 1961). In 1963, David Caplovitz's groundbreaking study, *The Poor Pay More*, was published, in which he concluded that low-income families paid more for basic goods, exploited by what he termed the "ghetto tax."

Three years later, the Department of Markets conducted a two-day survey of "slum" neighborhoods.[131] They compared prices to cost averages for New York City. Not only were prices higher when compared to prices in branches of a supermarket in a higher-income neighborhood, the quality of meat sold was "greatly inferior." While the average cost of large white Grade A eggs was 69 cents a dozen, the same eggs were 75 cents in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and as high as 89 cents in Harlem (Carey 1966a). A self-study conducted by Harlem-based Masses Economic Neighborhood Development confirmed findings. Residents were furious; community organizers in east Harlem reminded crowds that while all New Yorkers were angry about rising food prices, "the fact has been forgotten that the poor pay more" (Carey 1966; New York *Gouging* 1966). Puerto Ricans banded together to form grocery cooperatives to avoid the "high credit costs charged by owners of many bodegas" (Carey 1966b)

The Department's response to its findings was radio announcements on local stations serving low-income neighborhoods advising residents to be "selective." Markets Commissioner Samuel J. Kearing suggested that shoppers "cut their food costs by buying substitutes for expensive food items" (Carey 1966); the Department proposed no plan for fighting these systemic inequities.

As it rearticulated its mandate in response to new historical and geographical contexts, the Department of Markets was made vulnerable to dissolution. It terminated commitments to what had been defining policies, and Commissioners were unable to significantly expand their

[131] The Department of Markets' two-day survey of food prices was conducted by neighborhood consumer law enforcement offices in low-income neighborhoods: Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, south Bronx, and south Jamaica (Carey 1966).

authority, or consolidate greater control of what had become an increasingly complex portfolio of properties and priorities. Its purview expanded to include a multitude of consumer goods other than food, and yet, the Department's ability to influence the retailing landscape diminished. As the role of the state shifted from consumers' ally to corporate partner, the Department of Markets lost ground; it was no longer actively shaping everyday geographies of food distribution. Power was reshaped during the post-war era, and with it the institutions that had once deployed it.

Emerging discourses in the post-era rationalized new conceptions of citizens, the state's responsibility to them, and citizen's ability to demand state intervention to correct food crises, be they crises of supply or safety. Housewives were no longer viewed as a force trained by the state to inscribe its Progressive vision, but as the passive consumers of post-war plenty. The road to assimilation was longer and bumpier, and was not accessible to minority-raced women in urban neighborhoods. The next chapter explores these processes from the perspective of the city's public markets, as the publics served by the Department of Markets became increasingly differentiated from the middle classes with whom they were once allied.

Chapter 9: Contesting the Costs and Benefits of New York's Retail Markets – 1950 to 1968

During the 1950s and 1960s, New York City Department of Markets withdrew support from public retail markets as it reframed Department priorities and public demand. Lack of government support, financial and political, for the public retail markets was crucial to their devaluation, and paralleled decreases in government funding for public housing and parks during the post-war era. New emphasis on the maximization of rents raised on public properties is also consistent with periods of low government intervention in food distribution, when the value of public investments is measured in dollars, not in the social good they might accrue. The Department of Markets' assessment of the costs and benefits of New York City's enclosed retail markets and its remaining pushcart markets was contested by various stakeholders including merchants, consumers and public officials, as were the metrics used to evaluate their worth as public investments, community institutions, and small businesses.

Their symbolic and functional values were discounted by the state. Nonetheless, as spaces redefined and revalued by the middle classes, who defended these public retail markets on behalf of working class merchants and market patrons, the markets continued to function as spaces through which, and in which, differences were located, and contained. The state peripheralized working class demands, only to be challenged by various publics who assigned new meanings to the markets derived from everyday use, and the shifting demographics around them. New York's public retail markets were (re-)framed as historical, authentic, ethnic, and economically important to their communities.

This chapter looks at changes in administration, operation, and evaluation of New York City's public retail markets during the 1950s and 1960s. The discussion focuses on the forms and functions of the markets in relation to emerging state priorities in an era of market liberalization, and their diminished value as public institutions within official metrics. When the enclosed retail markets were built to contain the pushcart markets, they were represented as modern institutions. Not even twenty years after the first enclosed retail market opened on Park Avenue, in fact, before the last enclosed retail market (Harlem Market) was constructed in 1955, these "modern sanitary markets" were represented as outdated; they were relocated as public policy problems instead of solutions, and spurred the emergence of publics who defended the markets as integral parts of the neighborhoods they served.

Middle class experts, though they struggled against the state to preserve the city's public retail markets, framed them as places apart. The markets were described as European, as Latin American or Caribbean. By affiliation, so were the communities who patronized the markets: the crowds teeming through East Harlem's *La Marqueta* on the weekends, or the elderly ladies who picked over piles of vegetables at the pushcart market on Belmont Avenue in Brooklyn. As public institutions, New York's public retail markets continued to do the work of sustaining and legitimizing existing social relations by disciplining and containing the poor, the racial and ethnic minorities.

The chapter ends with a reflection of how the radical restating of Department of Markets' policy priorities in the post-war era informed, and reflected, changed conceptions of the role of government in the regulation of food distribution, and the role of food as an object of policy.

Operations, administration and evaluation

In the post war era, the Department of Markets faced pressure to cut budgets and increase efficiency. While new investments were made to improve terminal and wholesale facilities, retail markets came under scrutiny. In response, Department of Markets operating procedures were streamlined. All vending permits once expired at the end of the calendar year, creating a crush of clerical labor, now, permits were made permanent until "voluntary surrender," or death. DoM began cooperating with the New York City Department of Finance to collect sales and occupancy taxes from merchants. Privileges were suspended for not meeting tax obligations (DoM Annual Report 1954). Mayor Wagner instructed his Commissioners to slash budgets "to the bone" (New York, *Closing* 1958). The Department of Markets cut inspectors and maintenance staffs, which contributed to the increasingly decrepit condition of the markets. Commissioner of Markets Anthony Masciarelli declared his intentions to close all the city's retail markets. It was inappropriate for the state to be involved in retailing, he said. The public retail markets were no longer relevant. They were a burden on taxpayers and did not maximize the revenue generating potential of the public land (New York, *Closing Markets* 1958; *City Will* 1958).

Building a case against pushcart markets

In 1958, the Commissioner announced a plan to close all remaining pushcart markets because they were a too great an economic drain on the city, a case he had building for several years (New York *Closing* 1958). Pushcarts once provided "housewives in low-income areas" with few retail stores access to fresh foods, Masciarelli explained, but now "supermarkets and other retail markets abound" (New York, *Closing* 1958). In all, eight pushcart markets remained: five

in Brooklyn, and three in Manhattan.[132] Although the markets were significantly smaller than they had once been, pushcarts continued to serve working class neighborhoods such as Prospect Park[133] and Brownsville-East New York in Brooklyn.[134]

Of the city's nearly 1,000 pushcart stands, half were empty.[135] In addition to inspection and supervision, there were fire, police and sanitation costs. Peddlers paid one dollar a week, far from enough to cover expenses (New York, *Closing* 1958). The pushcart market at Prospect Place in Brooklyn generated $1,587 in permits and licenses, and cost the city $6,281.28. The market at Avenue C earned $907, and cost $4,365.27 (DoM Annual Report 1956). Altogether the pushcarts generated only $24,000, which did not cover the reported $40,000 in annual costs. To lower expenses, fewer personnel were dedicated to inspection, cleaning, and regulation. A force of nine inspectors regulating the pushcart markets was cut to four (DoM Annual Reports 1952). Part of the operating deficit was made up with revenue from licenses and permits for itinerant peddlers[136] (DoM Annual Report 1960).

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[132] In 1958, there were five pushcart markets in Brooklyn at Cleveland-Blake Avenue between Elton and Warrick Streets; Belmont Avenue between Stone Avenue and Thatford Street; Union Street between Hicks and Columbia Streets; Prospect Place; and Union Street. In Manhattan, the three markets were on Avenue C between 5th and 7th; Mott Street; and Bleecker Street between Cornelia and Seventh Avenue (New York, *Closing* 1958). A pushcart market at East 114th Street between First and Second Avenues was abolished when surrounding buildings were demolished to make way for a public housing project in the mid-1950s (DoM Annual Report 1956; 1966).
[133] The pushcart market at Saratoga and Prospect Avenues in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, was closed in 1962 (Library of Congress).
[134] Brownsville-East New York was a neighborhood in decline where, since the 1940s, African Americans moved from Harlem, and were joined by an "influx" of several thousand Puerto Ricans. The area experienced "increasing poverty" and "unrelieved squalor" as middle class residents fled to Queens and Nassau, leaving behind deteriorating housing stock (Schumach 1955:19).

[135] There is no further specification of where these empty stalls were located, and if vacancies were evenly distributed throughout the city (New York, *Closing* 1958).
[136] There was a greater demand for licenses than were issued by the city. Though the city increased the number of licenses by 10%, from 626 to 701, there were many unlicensed

'Liberalizing' enclosed retail markets

No new public retail – enclosed or pushcart, farmers or stoopline – markets were proposed for New York City after World War II, until the founding of Greenmarket[137] in 1976. In the early 1950s, Department of Markets' efforts were focused on increasing revenue at existing retail markets, particularly the enclosed retail markets. For example, Park Avenue Market's Building #5 was enlarged to make room for fifteen stalls where before there were only twelve to generate an additional $800 annually. "Improvements" made at the Essex Street Market included opening an exterior wall, installing a display window, and mounting an electric sign outside the building to draw customers. Alterations to Essex Street's Building A's increased the number of stalls, and resulted in $3,500 additional annual revenue (DoM Annual Report 1952).

Many of the nine enclosed markets continued to thrive. In 1953, the Park Avenue Market had 400 permit holders and 1,500 additional applicants; the Arthur Avenue Market had fifty vendors on its waiting list (Kihss 1953). Moore Street earned the city $4,500 annually. Rents and leases at the Essex Street Market added $48,000 a year to city coffers, making up for the small losses incurred at other markets, some of which, such as Second Avenue Market and Havemeyer Market in Brooklyn, were losing money. And, despite the sustained patronage at a majority of enclosed retail markets, vacancies grew steadily.[138] In 1954, Second Avenue Market had fifty-two vacancies, compared to thirty-eight the year before (New York, *Closing* 1958).

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peddlers. Enforcement by New York Police Department and DoM kept the numbers "under control" (DoM Annual Report 1960, 1967).

[137] Greenmarkets, operated by GrowNYC, a private-public partnership housed in the Mayor's Office, are a network of farmers' markets. The first Greenmarket opened on Union Square in 1976.

[138] In 1954, the number of overall vacancies grew from 110 to 124; Second Avenue Market alone had fifty-two vacancies, up from thirty-eight in 1953. Moore Street Market had thirteen vacancies in 1954 (DoM Annual Report 1954).

Vacancies were attributed to several factors. Population decline and demographic shifts meant some enclosed retail markets lost their traditional consumer base. For example, developers built residential towers designed for the middle classes in the neighborhood around the Second Avenue Market on Manhattan's Upper East Side. The neighborhood gentrified, becoming "relatively high income," and new arrivals did not shop at public markets. The 1956 Annual Report "anticipated" that the Second Avenue Market would soon close due to the "rapidly changing character of the neighborhood."[139]

The Department of Transportation began enforcing "stringent parking regulations" in areas around markets, driving down sales at the city's retail markets. Suburban customers, who once drove into the city to "stock up," were scared off by the $15 fines. Ticketing "adversely affected business at the Fulton Fish Market." At Washington Market in Chelsea, where tenants for seventy years were "slowly folding up," traffic and parking conditions hastened the market's decline (New York, *City Markets* 1951).

Paralleling its policies towards pushcart markets, the Department of Markets insisted that various administrative costs were not taken into account and took steps to bring operating costs down at the enclosed retail markets (DoM Annual Report 1955). They urged the enclosed markets closer to self-sustainability by reducing the numbers of inspectors and laborers assigned to markets.[140] Maintenance was poorly affected by "austerity budgeting" and there was "increasing vandalism to market buildings." DoM acknowledged that the enclosed markets were understaffed and that the number of watchmen was inadequate. Arrangements were

[139] The Second Avenue Market was closed on June 30, 1957. The property was transferred to the Real Estate Bureau of the Board of Estimate, and remaining merchants were given spaces in other city markets if desired (DoM Annual Report 1957).

[140] In 1959, the number of inspectors at Essex Street Market was decreased to four from six, and fourteen laborers did the work of seventeen. At Park Avenue, seven inspectors were reduced to five (DoM Annual Report 1958/59).

made for private garbage carting whereas before the Department of Sanitation picked up the trash. These "adjustments" were negotiated with the standholders and merchants' associations. Tenants took on more active roles in maintenance and overall management of the markets including lighting and painting (DoM Annual Report 1958/59).

Rents were raised for the first time in all enclosed retail markets, though increases were not expected to present "any undue hardship." Additional rate increases were planned for future (DoM Annual Report 1958). Also, fees per stand increased with the number of stands operated by a single merchant, suggesting that marketing methods had changed, and that at least some merchants had relatively more substantial stores within the enclosed markets (DoM Annual Report 1955).[141]

The following snapshots describe two of the enclosed retail markets in the 1950s, one that barely had a chance to establish itself, and one that had become recognized as the heart of a thriving West Indian and Caribbean neighborhood:

Harlem Market

The Harlem Market opened in 1955, the ninth and last of the city's enclosed public markets. The need for this market was recognized in the 1930s, but the start of World War II put an end to new construction (Bartlestone 2009).[142] After the war ended, "more glamorous

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[141] In 1955, the Department of Markets raised fees charged to merchants in the enclosed markets from $4.25/week for one stand and $6/week for 1.5 stands to $6 and $9 for the first and second stands; $7 and $10.50 for a third and fourth stand; and $10 and $15 for a fifth stand and more (AR 1955). The shift to larger stores within the markets has been corroborated by vendors working at Arthur Avenue and Moore Street Markets today, who describe how vendors began taking over neighboring stands in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

[142] New markets' construction came to an end in New York City when World War II began. An exception was Brooklyn Terminal Market, built to replace Wallabout Market, which was closed when the Federal government "reclaimed" the Brooklyn Navy Yards where the battleships Iowa and Missouri completed in 1942 (Bartlestone 2009; Brooklyn Navy Yard, official website, www.brooklynnavyyard.org).

projects got in the way." When funds were available for what would be the last enclosed market, the project was "passed by when it should have been pushed forward." After nearly fifteen years, public officials and Harlem civic groups had not ceased urging the city to get peddlers off the streets (New York, *Harlem Market* 1950).

It took five years of Board of Estimate proceedings before the market was built on Eighth Avenue between 143rd and 145th Streets. In 1952, New York's Commissioner of Public Works (not the Commissioner of Markets) announced plans to seek immediately appropriation for the "long-contemplated" Harlem Retail Market at 142nd Street and 8th Avenue.

Construction began in 1953. The city designated the Harlem Market for food products only, and received more applications than there were available spaces. Although the city no longer valued the enclosed retail markets and now represented them as under-performing revenue generators that failed as value-maximizing structures, there was still demand for what was essentially subsidized retail space in public retail markets. There was a waiting list of merchants eager to rent stalls; the twelve remaining peddlers in the pushcart market at the site were given priority (New York, *Plan Board* 1950; *Harlem's* 1955).[143] In the end, and contrary to its earlier designation, some permits were issued to vendors of non-food items (DoM Annual Report 1955).

Harlem Market opened on September 7, 1955 with "appropriate ceremonies." Comments made by Department officials suggested times had changed. At ceremonies for enclosed retail markets opened before the war, LaGuardia spoke about the elevation of peddlers to merchants, and the modernization of immigrant neighborhoods. Measurably less poetically, officials now talked about attracting "equal numbers of Negro [sic] and white merchants," a nod of acknowledgment to neighborhood residents. Consumers were assured

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[143]When the Harlem Market opened in 1955, the pushcart market at the site was officially closed (DoM Annual Report 1955).

that "uniformed Markets Department attendants" would be on hand to receive any complaints, and to enforce rules and assure compliance (New York, *Harlem's* 1955).

Figure 9.1: Harlem Market on opening day, September 7, 1955, as seen from Eighth Avenue. The neighborhood's middle class was fleeing, and its total population fell 57% between 1950 and 1990 (Beveridge 2008). (New York City Department of Records).

Despite initial demand by merchants, Harlem Market was "discontinued" on December 31, 1959 because of increasing vacancies and few interested individual permittees. The building was eventually leased to a private chain operator, Food Family.[144] Under the terms of the twenty-year lease, Food Family made improvements for $450,000, turning the market into one of the "most modern markets in the city" (DoM Annual Report).

Park Avenue Market

Park Avenue Market ("*La Marqueta*") was already recognized as a Caribbean space in the 1930s when the Public Works Administration Federal Writers Project compiled The Guide to

[144] The city signed a lease with Food Family on November 3, 1960, with scaled rent increasing from $30K to $48.75K over the life of the lease (DoM Annual Report 1960).

New York City. By the 1950s, the market was clearly established as a “public shopping site” catering to the more than 650,000 Puerto Ricans living in New York City. Deputy Commissioner of Markets Frances Foley Gannon cited the “City’s Park Avenue Market” as an “exciting and enlightening experience” where consumers could find “tropical fruits from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Honduras and the Dominican Republic” (Foley Gannon 1954). New York Times columnist Craig Claiborne directed readers’ attention to “one of the world’s most extensive markets specializing in Puerto Rican products.” Customers could purchase “unaccustomed” foods like *culantro* leaves, and *calabaza* squash. The market offered a “glimpse at a strange gastronomy.” One thousand tons of produce arrived each week from Honduras, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Florida. Complementing the selection found at *La Marqueta*, neighborhood bodegas carried “unusual tinned merchandise” including tamarind juice and papaya slices and other ingredients needed to prepare “an island feast” (Claiborne 1959). *Botanicas* sold herbs, amulets, statuary, candles, and vials of items used to cast spells like “bat’s blood” and “graveyard dust,” as well as voodoo dolls (Narvaez 1959).

Figure 9.2: Park Avenue Market, also known as “La Marqueta,” was a source for tropical produce, and a core of the Puerto Rican community in East Harlem (Hot Bread Kitchen website, ca. 1960).

A vendor at Park Avenue Market, Marcus Matza, a Turkish-born American, had been in business for forty years, selling vegetables from a cart to his primarily Jewish customers. Now he sold West Indian produce including coconuts, pumpkin, *chayotes*, *malanga* roots, and mangoes; plantains were his "most important commodity." Allowing that sugar cane is odd to "Yankees," he explained to reporters how various foods were used and prepared (Nickerson 1953; New York, *Old-World* 1968).

Park Avenue and Harlem Markets, though part of a network of public institutions designed for uniform purposes, were differentiated by their specific situations. Once the state began questioning the value of the enclosed retail markets, their differences emerged as the markets' defining characteristics. Local meanings, and inscriptions of space informed by everyday uses and the quite distinct neighborhoods where the markets were located came to the fore, and became grounds for defending the enclosed retail markets – just as they defended the pushcart markets – once their "official" functions were declared moribund.

Rallying for pushcarts

The struggle to save New York's public retail markets began with a victory scored in favor of the pushcarts and peddlers in 1962 when Markets Commissioner Albert S. Pacetta's plans to abolish Manhattan's three remaining pushcart markets collapsed (Grutzner 1962:32). Assembly members from adjoining districts joined Assemblyman Louis DeSalvo, who represented the West Village, to save this "bit of flavor of 'little old New York'." They urged the city government to show "consideration" for the "dwindling numbers of pushcart men" and their "importance to the neighborhood economy." Closing the market would lead to job losses. Older residents would have to walk greater distances in search of food (Bennett 1962:37).

Manhattan Borough President Edward R. Dudley announced that he was "'100 per cent in favor of keeping the pushcarts in Greenwich Village,'" and would oppose a resolution put forth by the Department of Markets to eliminate them.

One hundred supporters of the pushcarts met for a luncheon at the Limelight Restaurant; the luncheon was provided by pushcart vendors and local merchants and included a tour of the pushcart market on Bleecker Street in Greenwich Village (Lubasch 1962:43).[145]

Demonstrators gathered at City Hall to show "political and neighborhood support" for peddlers (Hewitt 1964). Village Independent Democrats member and future New York City Mayor Edward I. Koch said tourists from all over visited the Bleecker and Mott Street markets. Right-wing Young Americans for Freedom chairman [sic] of the Greenwich Village chapter, Rosemary McGrath, proclaimed, "Remove the Montmartre from Paris, explode the Palatine Hill in Rome, tear down the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco: It is the same as destroying the pushcarts that serve their neighborhoods and preserve the flavor of old New York." At the Board of Estimate hearing, more than twenty-five people spoke in support of the pushcarts; no one spoke against them. Commissioner Pacetta "sheepishly" withdrew his request from the Board of Estimate (Grutzner 1962).

[145] The pushcart market on Bleecker Street once stretched eleven blocks, with 120 peddlers. In 1962, there were only ten peddlers with thirteen carts along this strip filled with stores selling Italian specialties, many in business for thirty years and more (Hewitt 1964).

Figure 9.3: While supporters were rallying to save Manhattan's pushcart markets, Commissioner Pacetta, standing in his black coat and hat, visited the pushcart market at Saratoga and Prospect Avenues in Brooklyn, where he announced the market's closure (Roger Higgins, US Library of Congress, 1962).

The Department of Markets' conceded, "there is a strong nostalgic attachment on the part of many of our citizens for" the pushcart markets. They date back to the early days of this City's history and are a reminder of the change and growth that have occurred, "a vestige of a bygone era." Thirty years earlier more than sixty of "these colorful markets" existed in "limited income areas of the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan" catering to "mostly Jewish and Italian" people. The pushcarts reflected a continental atmosphere. In European cities "these are familiar scenes and reflect a common method of shopping" (DoM Annual Report 1963-64:43; 1967:24).

“Sloppy supermarkets” or “unique neighborhood institutions”?

On November 3, 1964, Commissioner Pacetta declared the enclosed retail markets had “outlived their usefulness as far as their original purpose” now that “very few of the original pushcarts” were still tenants. They were “nothing but a sloppy-looking bunch of supermarkets.”

Figure 9.4: In 1958, Park Avenue Market’s interior was not “sloppy” but its aisles of stalls couldn’t compare to supermarkets, with their chrome and glass cases, that had become the standard-bearer in food retailing (New York City Municipal Archives).

Vacancies were high (35% at First Avenue Market), and the city was subsidizing merchants who were not passing their savings onto customers, Pacetta contended (O’Kane 1964; Daley 1964). The city was losing money operating the markets as a whole. Reported income for 1963 was $577,738 and operating expenses were reported as $498,925, although the Commissioner claimed this did not take into account the Department of Markets’ administrative costs, amortization, or “tax loss resulting from public instead of private ownership.” Pacetta said he would recommend that merchants form cooperatives, or that merchants purchase and operate the markets (O’Kane 1964).

Merchants at the Essex Street Market wrote to the Commissioner, "accusing him of 'throwing mud and slop and undermining the public's confidence in our wares and prices'." A spokesman complained about a report sent by Pacetta to Mayor Wagner urging the Mayor to "get rid" of the city's seven remaining enclosed retail markets. The Essex Street merchants announced plans to approach the Mayor, appeal to City Council, and possibly present their "opinions to the public in newspaper advertising" (New York, *Assailed* 1964).

Public Advocates for the Markets

The public rose to defend the enclosed retail markets, as they had defended the pushcart markets two years earlier: the markets were essential community spaces where people could socialize, find bargains on bread and other products, operate small businesses and provide jobs in hard-pressed neighborhoods. In a *Letter to the Editor*, Trudy H. Schwartzseid wrote of cities like Rome, Paris, Naples, and Brussels that "take pride in their public markets. What is happening here?" she asked. Writing as "a citizen, a housewife, a resident of the Lower East Side, and a shopper at the Essex Street Market," she attributed recent "actions" to the Commissioner's "disregard" for his "clients." Products not found at grocery stores were available at the market, and prices, she argued, were comparable or lower. Essex Street supported "many a very small entrepreneur" who would otherwise depend on welfare. It was a sociable place. "In this our time of conformity, and lament and nostalgia for humanly richer times," the market was a "living, organic and most useful part of our community." She pleaded, don't "kill this institution" (Schwartzseid 1964:16).

Uptown in Harlem, Acting Manhattan Borough President Earl Brown spoke in support of the Park Avenue Market, and urged officials to "go slow." The city was spending $43 million a

year on welfare and the burden was growing. All possible should be done to "stretch the food-buying powers…[of] relief" including supporting city markets.[146] Bargains on "slightly stale bread" were available to those could not afford prime goods. The market was a "foreign oasis" where Spanish was as common as English, and some Yiddish was still spoken. There was "no cellophane packaging and…a good deal of refuse on the floor. But people [could] still squeeze a melon or taste a grape" (Daley 1964:41).

The Park Avenue Market was "a unique neighborhood institution," filled with "life, color and vitality," a busy place that sold "tropical foods" not found elsewhere. The market was important to the community, who saw it as theirs, not as a city institution. Although riots during the summer of 1964 were "directed at neighborhood businesses" to the west of the market, they did not infringe on the market. The market was "much more than a place for selling and buying" (Kirk *etal* 1964).[147]

In their *Letter to the Editor*, Kirk *etal* reminded the Commissioner of Markets that Federal antipoverty and employment programs and the Mayor's Antipoverty Council were geared towards stimulating employment in "ghettos." The market had 800 employees, and 300 permittees, with an additional 200 on Fridays and Saturdays. Eighty-five percent of the mostly black and Puerto Rican employees lived in the neighborhood. "It would seem that Commissioner Pacetta has not taken seriously the new national and city concerns, and is proceeding at cross-purposes to President Johnson and Mayor Wagner."

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[146] A survey cited by Acting Manhattan Borough President Earl Brown demonstrated that prices were 12% lower at Essex Street Market than at nearby chain supermarkets (Daley 1964:41).
[147] William Kirk, Headworker, Union Settlement, Community Planning Board No. 11; Preston R. Wilcox, Professor, Columbia University School of Social Work; and Mildred Zucker, Director of the James Weldon Johnson Community Center, Chairman [sic], East Harlem Council for Community Planning sent a sent a *Letter to the Editor* addressed to the Commissioner of Markets dated November 9, 1964.

Kirk *etal*'s findings were drawn from a study funded by a grant made by the Kaplan Fund to a partnership of two settlement houses (Union and James Weldon Johnson Community Center,) and the East Harlem Council for Community Planning. The study was conducted by "internationally known city planner" Albert Mayer.[148] Mayer drew up plans for the Park Avenue Market's upgrade and renovation, which were, in turn, received "enthusiastically" by the merchants' association and the Mayor's office. The Board of Estimate appropriated $180,000, and the merchants' association contributed $9,000 towards renovations.[149] Work began in early fall of 1964. The Park Avenue Market Association wrote to the Department of Markets asking for permission to operate the market as a cooperative (Kirk *etal* 1964; Daley 1964:41). Commissioner Pacetta did not acknowledge the study, or the subsequent renovations and merchants' request in his Annual Report of 1964.

A year later, in 1965, a band played, people danced, and children snacked on "free cake and fruit drinks" at the Park Avenue Market. Commissioner Pacetta cut the ribbon at the opening of the two plazas – "modern versions of the old market squares of Europe and Latin America" – separating market buildings. The plazas were intended to be a place to rest and meet up for "thousands of customers for whom *El Mercado* is the neighborhood supermarket." They were brightly lit at night, with television screens provided by the merchants association "for the entertainment of weary housewives resting between trips…to stalls" (Long 1965:29).

The struggle to save the enclosed retail markets did not end with the "victory" at Park Avenue Market. Appointed Commissioner of Markets in 1966, Samuel J. Kearing, "a young lawyer from Binghampton, NY," searched for "solutions" to the enclosed markets. Ideas

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[148] Among Albert Mayer's other plans was an east-west Main Street corridor in Harlem lined with housing projects and other buildings that would have intersected the Park Avenue Market (Zipp 2010:432).

[149] The Park Avenue Market Association was organized in 1958. In 1964, the Association paid for its own security force out of member dues (Daley 1964:41).

included renting the facilities to the peddlers, turning the markets into "private cooperatives," and selling the buildings to a private enterprise. Park Avenue Market, granted a five-year lease from the city[150], had already been "transformed" into a "self-managed" operation, which Commissioner Kearing said was "quite successful," but "the other markets had scant excuse for further existence" (Warren 1966:36). Returning to the streets with pushcarts was not an option: the city was not issuing any new permits, and merchants, as well as customers, had memories of the cold, and the lack of sanitation: "it was terrible" (Hofmann 1966:21).

In February of 1966, a new round of "experts" came to the defense of Park Avenue Market: Mrs. John Zuccotti (who was studying sociology at the New School for Social Research), and Mrs. Peter Tufo (who had majored in sociology at Briarcliff College).[151] The "two fashionably dressed young women from Manhattan" and Commissioner Kearing visited the Park Avenue Market one morning. They observed "housewives" and a "surprising number of men," mostly black and Puerto Rican, shopping, and exchanging "easy banter" while vendors visited with each other (Warren 1966:36).

Mrs. Zuccotti had lived in Caracas where her husband was an adviser to the Venezuelan government, and she "learned….how important the municipal markets were to the inhabitants in a social as well as a material sense." Zuccotti and Tufo offered to conduct a survey on a volunteer basis and over three days spoke to vendors and customers, concluding, "It's the most friendly place in New York." Their report emphasized the market's cleanliness, low prices (compared to supermarkets), and the availability of items not available elsewhere that appealed

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[150] The city leased the Park Avenue Market, with 500 stalls, to the merchants' association for $35,000 (Hofmann 1966:21).

[151] Mrs. John Zuccotti's husband John Zuccotti began serving on the New York Planning Commission in 1961, and was the Commission's chair under Mayor John Lindsay. After serving as first deputy mayor for Mayor Abe Beame, John Zuccotti became a "New York real estate power," and chairman of Brookfield Properties. Zuccotti is the namesake of Zuccotti Park, the birthplace of Occupy Wall Street (Colford 2006). Attempts to contact Zuccotti and learn more about the report prepared by his former wife and "Mrs. Peter Tufo" were unsuccessful.

to "residents of the numerous housing projects in the neighborhood" like pigs' snouts, ears, tails, octopus, and other "Puerto Rican foods." They were most impressed that shopping at the market was "a very personal and social affair." Commissioner Kearing agreed to "re-examine his attitude" and work out a similar arrangement for the second largest enclosed market at Essex Street, which Zuccotti and Tufo offered to survey as well.[152]

Nonetheless, Department of Markets notified the merchants' associations of the six markets on June 22, 1966 that "the operation of retail enclosed markets by this agency is no longer a logical or economical process." That summer, merchants at the Essex Street Market united in "a fighting front." They argued that public markets were where they earned a living, and where neighborhood residents bought affordable food. President of the merchants' association Jerry Cohen circulated a petition addressed to Mayor Lindsay: "We have found the prices for food and merchandise to be lower than in other areas of the city. We will be hurt if the Essex Street Market is closed." Department of Markets supervisor Jack Pilchick described the Essex Street Market as "cosmopolitan….you find varieties of fish here that you don't find elsewhere in the city." Business was conducted in English, Spanish, Italian, Yiddish and Chinese. The market was New York's *Les Halles Centrales*, he said. Angelita Ortiz, a "Puerto Rican housewife," confirmed the lower prices, and added, "I like the atmosphere – just like in San Juan" (Hofmann 1966:21).

The Essex Street Market's more than 300 merchants scheduled a vote to decide whether to lease the market from the city and operate as a co-op. The aim of the Department's "new approach," according to "a source close to the negotiations" between the city and the merchants, was to "encourage the merchants to modernize their methods, to attract more business" and "to give the city a return on its investment" (New York, *Vote Co-op* 1966). The

[152] Repeated efforts to contact the former Mrs. Peter Tufo and Mrs. John Zucotti were not successful, nor were efforts to find their reports on Park Avenue and Essex Street Markets.

Essex Street Market was turned over to the merchants on October 7, 1966; the ten-year lease went into effect on November 1, 1966.[153] The city planned to do the same with the other six markets (Dallos 1966:28).

Markets as symbols

Three decades after LaGuardia's campaign to contain pushcarts in the enclosed markets, both types of public retail markets became places where the old New York could be experienced, metrics for how things had changed. They also became places strongly associated with the racial and ethnic identities of their neighborhoods and their patrons.

Once represented as transformative institutions shaped by a Progressive state, New York's public retail markets became a kind of shorthand for local differences, a means by which politicians, tourists and citizens of the city could locate others. They were "colorful" and "ethnic," at "one and the same time…very much New York and very foreign" (Hewitt 1964; Van Gelder 1972). And while they defended the markets' unique qualities, not one "expert" wanted an enclosed market of their own – not in their neighborhoods, and not in place of a supermarket.

[153] The city initially offered an $85,000-a-year lease for Essex Street Market's 320 stands (Hoffman 1966). In the end, the ten-year lease signed by the Essex Street Market Merchants Association stipulated they would pay $34K year one; $41K year two; $46K year three; and so on until the final rent reached $50K (Dallos 1966:28).

Figure 9.5: Chris Catalano cleaning fish at the pushcart market at Hester and Mott Streets. In the 1960s, the market was a tourist attraction as well as a source of fresh food for local residents (Phyllis Twachtman, US Library of Congress, 1964).

Orchard Street, one of the last large pushcart markets, was busiest on Sundays when "suburban matrons…visiting seamen, and neighborhood Jews and Puerto Ricans" crowded the streets, searching for bargains. Merchants "hawk[ed]" in Spanish, English, Hebrew and Polish. "Morty, look," cried Anna Rubenstein of Montclair, New Jersey, "they tried to sell me the same thing [a girdle priced at $4.95] at Bonwit Teller for $10."

Many former Jewish residents of the Lower East Side had moved to Brooklyn; Puerto Ricans took their place (Grutzner 1949). Where there were once five Kosher butcher stores, only one remained: Israel's Kosher Meat Market at 170 Orchard Street.[154] Owner Louis Israel said the trade had changed. Women used to shop daily on their way home, and now came on Sunday when they could bring their husbands with them. "They're afraid," said Israel (New York, *Old-World* 1968).

The enclosed Essex Street Market was described as successor to the "historic Orchard Street pushcart market," catering to "the mixed ethnic population now focused in this area"

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[154] 170 Orchard Street is now home to *L'Epicerie Café Charbon*, a French bistro.

(DoM Annual Report 1967:22). At *La Marqueta* on Park Avenue, the big day was Saturday when "torrents of Puerto Ricans, Negroes and Caribbean gourmets flowed down the…aisles." "[S]ituated in Lower Harlem in the midst of the Latin-American segment of the City," *La Marqueta* was "the largest retail center of tropical fruits" (New York, *Old-World* 1968).

The Park Avenue Market, or, *La Marqueta*, had become a symbol of New York's Puerto Rican population, a tourist destination, and a campaign stop for politicians of all stripes. In 1971 Mayor Lindsay, and his "entourage" spent a day touring East Harlem, "chatting with drug addicts, shaking hands with storekeepers and drawing ooh and ahs from crowds." "*Qué lindo*" they called after him at *La Marqueta*, and offered him an amulet (Kaufman 1971:26).[155] A year later, Senator James L. Buckley's first extended tour of East Harlem included *La Marqueta*. He was "impressed and encouraged" by people "trying to help themselves" and used the opportunity to promote the Nixon administration's policies to "accelerate the individual up the ladder" by providing "seed money and technical help" The (New York, *Buckley* 1972).

The Penny Tour, founded and owned by Penelope Ruffin and her husband Claude, offered tours of "Harlem As It Is." Three times a week, buses brought international tourists from Germany, Sweden, and Japan, to areas like Sugar Hill, Strivers Row and the shopping district along 125th Street. The bus rolled past the Studio Museum and Muhammad's Temple of Islam on 116th Street to "Spanish Harlem's jampacked street market…signs all *en espagnol*." They visited *La Marqueta*, "the huge indoor food market" before continuing on the Orthodox synagogue of the Ethiopian Hebrews. (Tolkoff 1974).

By 1976, New York was facing bankruptcy, and *La Marqueta* was grim, buildings around it were crumbling, and residents were in dire need of housing and jobs. Senator Henry M. Jackson, rustling support for his bid in the Democratic Presidential primary spent an hour at "the

[155] John Lindsay was Mayor of New York City from 1966-1973. In 1971 he ran a brief and unsuccessful campaign for the Democratic Presidential nomination.

Puerto Rican market." Though a mariachi band played under a canopy at Lexington Avenue and 116th Street, crowds were sparse as Jackson "greeted the onlookers with a somewhat halting, '*Saludos, amigos*'" (Kneeland 1976:58). The next summer, a fire broke out in one of the market's buildings. The merchants' association pleaded for help; its future was uncertain (New York, *Market Burns* 1977).

Dismantling the Department of Markets

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Department of Markets new policy regimes "liberalized" areas where the city's lower-income, working class, immigrant and minority-race residents lived. State presence was limited to services rendered throughout the city, such as inspections and consumer buying guides. Investments designed to narrow the gap between rich and poor were withdrawn. Processes of suburbanization and de-industrialization catalyzed "white flight," and a population decline that resulted in higher concentrations of low income, minority race citizens (Larson 2003: 25). In the name of urban renewal, neighborhoods retail streets were destroyed, leaving dwindling numbers of consumers vulnerable to the few remaining grocers and other merchants who provided low quality and poor service.[156]

Networks of pushcarts and small grocers, butchers and bakers and enclosed retail markets once served these neighborhoods. Although the quality of foods available was often second best, consumers bargained, and moved on if the goods they sought were not available at prices they would pay. As the Department of Markets withdrew from the public retail markets and recalled the corps of inspectors who patrolled their aisles, reallocated resources and

[156] Urban renewal displaced hundreds of thousands of working class citizens including one hundred thousand African-Americans, demolishing tenements and other designated "slums," rupturing communities and their retail landscapes (Zipp 2010)

invested in infrastructure that supported the expansion of supermarkets and chain stores, it helped create unregulated monopolies in poor neighborhoods where second best goods were offered with no alternatives, and at premium prices. Consumer services were remodeled as consumer protection, and there was little acknowledgement of uneven retail geographies, and the new discourses did not promote the idea that consumers had the right to, or the power to, shape their retail landscapes.

In four decades, New York's municipal food policy had shifted from one that – albeit in highly regulated, authoritarian and disciplining ways – sought to unify citizens through modernized food networks and food practices, to a system that alienated the poor in part by assuring that their food practices were starkly differentiated from consumers with ready access to markets. The relative mobility offered to women of all classes based on a particular construction of housewives as embodiments of idealized behaviors, a construction that transcended class, evaporated. Race, ethnicity and class were no longer trumped by gender. Women virtually disappeared as subjects of Department of Markets, as the Department withdrew from programs that specifically served women. In New York City, and across the United States, "consumers" were reframed as citizens, one and all, so long as they had a dollar to spend.

Deputy Commissioner Frances Foley Gannon, who arguably shaped the Bureau of Consumer Services' policies and programs since her appointment in 1934 retired from the Department of Markets in 1963. Before she died in 1969 (New York, *Gannon* 1969), the Department was dismantled. After decades of consolidating power and control over urban food spaces, its fractured and partial geographies of authority rationalized dissolution. Its responsibilities were reassigned: property management and operations were turned over to Ports and Terminals. In 1968, the City consolidated the Department of Markets and its Weights

and Measures division with the Department of Licensing. Management and operation of the Department of Markets' properties including wholesale, terminal and enclosed retail market facilities was turned over to the Department of Ports and Terminals.[157]

The markets as institutions, as spaces produced by historically and geographically specific systems of governance, entered a new phase. Triple net leases ensured that the city had as little to do with the enclosed public markets as possible, laying full responsibility for their upkeep, operation and management on the merchants. Within a few years, New York City Economic Development Corporation took over control of the city's markets; they remain the responsibility of this public/private partnership today.

The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs was established in 1968. DCA's authority grew significantly with passage of New York City's landmark Consumer Protection Law in 1969, making it the first municipal agency of its kind in the country "ensuring a fair and vibrant marketplace" (Lichtenstein 1971:37). Former Miss America Bess Myerson was appointed Commissioner of Consumer Affairs (Lichtenstein 1971:37). The Department of Consumer Affairs took on a broad mantle, inspecting everything from the content of hamburgers to hair weaves. It protected consumer-citizens from fraud and short weight (Lichtenstein 1971:37). It did not promise transformation of its citizens. It did not empower New Yorkers to shape the market by teaching them to buy rationally, scientifically. No more rallying cries of "Good morning housewives!" that while simplistic, moralizing, and problematic, nonetheless acknowledged the

[157] In 1968, the Department of Markets still operated the markets at Arthur Avenue, Havemeyer, First Avenue, Thirteenth Avenue, and Moore Street. These markets were no longer self-sustaining "as they were required to be" except for Arthur Avenue, where 82% of the stalls and 60% of the bins were rented, compared to First Avenue where only 4% of the stalls and 6% of the bins were rented. Moore Street, Havemeyer, and Thirteenth Avenue indicated "willingness" to "go under self-management." Arthur Avenue resisted although they formed a corporation in 1968; First Avenue market was slated for closure (DoM Annual Report 1966). In 1986, Theater for the New City (founded in 1971) purchased and renovated the 30,000 sq/ft "underutilized" "former WPA," "concrete cavern" of a building at 155 First Avenue (Blau 1986; Gerard 1987).

power inherent in consumption. Foley Gannon, and the Department of Markets did impose middle class values on the working classes, but they never underestimated the power of consumers to shape the marketplace, and aimed to shape that power by informing millions of everyday transactions.

Most significantly, food and the distribution of food to New York City's populace was no longer the object of a dedicated municipal policy agency. After forty years of consolidation of state power over and through the city's public market system rationalized by the centrality of affordable, adequate and safe food to civil order, modernization and public health, food had become undifferentiated, just another commodity tracing a path across the urban landscape.

Chapter 10: Reforming New York City's enclosed public markets, 1968 to the Present

The Department of Markets was not dissolved in one step. In 1968, it was folded into the Department of Ports and Terminals.[158] According to an NYCEDC official, there were "lots of variations" in municipal management of the city's public markets until 1991 when the New York City Economic Development Corporation took over most of the Department of Ports and Terminals' portfolio of properties including wholesale markets, ship cargo facilities, revitalization of the East River waterfront, and the enclosed retail markets. The city continues to own market land and buildings; market status is regulated by a New York State law passed in 1923.

Tracking down records of the five retail markets that no longer exist was a frustrating, and illuminating, endeavor. Nearly every attempt proved a dead end. Even staff at NYCEDC asked me to share anything I found out about the years between 1968 and 1991. Apart from Essex Street and Park Avenue, data on individual markets was difficult to find even for years when the Department of Markets existed. After 1968, some markets disappeared from the public record, and from the city's landscape, indication of their debased status amidst municipal institutions. As management was passed from one city agency to the next, documents were lost or destroyed, explained an official at NYCEDC. Searches on ACRIS, New York City's automated city register information system, revealed instances of mortgages and deeds listed for the plots where an enclosed market once stood, but records do not include transfer from public to private ownership. What can be known was pieced together from the rare newspaper article, community websites, Google maps, blogs, and fieldwork:

[158] The NYC Department of Ports and Terminals was slated for elimination by Mayor Ed Koch in 1980; it became the Department of Ports, International Trade and Terminals, which was subsequently dissolved in 1991 (Gargan 1981).

Table 10.1: Status of New York City's Enclosed Retail Markets, 2012

Market	Borough	Management	Status
Park Avenue	Manhattan	NYCEDC	Open: Market occupies one of four original buildings; incubator kitchen opened in 2010 managed by Hot Bread Kitchen
Essex Street	Manhattan	NYCEDC	Open: occupies one of four original buildings. Stall 16 is a restaurant, The Essex; Stall 15 is Cuchifritos Art Gallery. Plans to move the market were stalled by community protest in 2011.
Arthur Avenue Market	Bronx	Arthur Avenue Merchants Association	Open: The anchor of Arthur Avenue's Italian retail district, the market, with its renovated façade, continues to draw crowds on holidays and weekends
Moore Street Market	Brooklyn	Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation	Open: NYCEDC helps market manager BEDC by paying the market's electricity and water bills. Recent renovations created additional stalls and an incubator/demonstration kitchen
First Avenue Market	Manhattan	n/a	Closed/Repurposed: Market has been occupied by Theater for a New City since 1986
Thirteenth Avenue Market	Brooklyn	n/a	Closed/Repurposed: Home to Friedman's Market, a discount produce vendor
Havemeyer Sanitary Market	Brooklyn	n/a	Closed/repurposed: The market building now houses a C-Town Supermarket.

Harlem Market	Manhattan	n/a	Demolished: Open from 1955-57, the market was destroyed when the area's grid was overlaid with public housing in the 1960s.
Second Avenue Market	Manhattan	n/a	Demolished: A large residential building occupies the space where the market once stood.

First Avenue Market was more than ninety percent vacant in 1968. It was slated for closure. In 1986, Theater for the New City purchased and renovated the 30,000 square foot "underutilized" "former WPA" "concrete cavern" of a building at 155 First Avenue (Blau 1986; Gerard 1987). The theater announced the renovation with great fanfare and a parade. The Theater continues to operate at the old market today.

The building that housed the **Thirteenth Street Market** at 3910 13th Avenue in Brooklyn is now home to Friedman's Market, "always a great deal." In the middle of a Borough Park commercial strip, the discount produce vendor serves a mostly Orthodox clientele. The market's original parapet is just visible behind the brightly covered awning.

Havemeyer Market in Brooklyn (124-28 Havemeyer Street between South 3rd and South 4th Streets) was closed in 1973, and converted into King Charles Discount Supermarket. In 1997, the building was converted into a C-Town Supermarket. The former market has undergone several renovations, and is still owned by New York City (southwilliamsburg project 2011).[159]

[159] Havemeyer Market, opened in 1941 at 12-28 Havemeyer Avenue, a corner lot, and was converted into a supermarket. Another market building, the Havemeyer Sanitary Market, stood at 165 Havemeyer Avenue. Photos of the latter have been featured in blog posts decrying a less-than aesthetically pleasing multi-family building constructed on its former site. Waterfront Preservation Alliance of Greenpoint and Williamsburg tracked down a photograph of the market, noting, "Mind you the old market was no architectural gem, but at least it served a public purpose." While that may be true, the Havemeyer Sanitary Market has been inaccurately described as one of the enclosed retail markets built by New York City to contain pushcarts.

Once located between 142nd and 143rd Streets on 8th Avenue (Frederick Douglass Boulevard), the **Harlem Market** is gone. The building was leased to Family First, a grocery store chain, in the late 1950s. It was demolished to make room for the Cornelius J. Drew – Alexander Hamilton Houses, a public housing complex completed in 1965 that covers more than seven acres between 141st and 144th Streets, and between Frederick Douglass and Adam Clayton Powell Boulevards.

The **Second Avenue market** between Seventy-third and Seventy Fourth Streets in Manhattan is also gone. Although some older buildings remain along the Avenue, a large residential apartment tower now occupies the stretch where the market once stood before it was closed in 1957.

New York City's enclosed markets were forced into self-management in the late 1960s, and the four that were not shut down and/or demolished formed cooperatives. Izzy Bernstein[160] organized the merchants at Arthur Avenue. Bernstein, an Auschwitz survivor, sold "ladies' bloomers." (His partner, Sol, sold "the other half of what women have to wear.") From the start, Arthur Avenue market blended "beautifully with the neighborhood." Although Izzy Bernstein is Jewish, and was "big in the Jewish mafia," he is credited with founding a market whose homogeneity and strong Italian identity is the key to its success, according to co-owners of Peter's Meat Market, Peter Servedio and Michael Rella.

Other cooperatives did not fare so well. The merchants at Moore Street Market, for example, failed to pay rent to their association. Rather than evicting tenants who fell behind, the association let the market fall into disrepair. Rather than specialize, the merchants at Moore

[160] Izzy Bernstein lives in Florida, and although I visited Arthur Avenue Market repeatedly, developing a good rapport with three merchants, promises to forward me Izzy's contact information have yielded nothing. Merchants are willing to chat, but seem reticent to take anything beyond a casual interaction.

Street duplicated what was for sale at the bodegas and in area supermarkets. Their customer based declined.

The four cases below, loosely spun and sometimes intertwined, illustrate the effects of decades of inconsistent state involvement, and very different results of self-management at Essex Street, Park Avenue, Arthur Avenue and Moore Street Markets. Some markets were targets of serial renovation, others survived by developing strong locally-based identities. Politicians at all levels of government have made the markets their cause at times, bringing much needed financial support, with strings attached.

Essex Street Market underwent a process of gentrification that did not alienate an older customer base, a balance that may be lost as the number of boutiques climbs and the Lower East Side continues to gentrify. The other three markets are each seeking ways to revitalize. Each is struggling to balance community needs with financial realities, as well as changing customer expectations, and state imaginations, of what a public market ought to be. Lacking any clear policy to guide and articulate state goals, the enclosed markets are being re-shaped by emerging processes, politics, and partnerships, sometimes empowered, and often powerless in face of expanding state intervention.

New York City Economic Development Corporation, a public-private partnership, is a leitmotif throughout these cases. While NYCEDC's mission is clearly stated on their website – "encourage economic growth in each of the five boroughs of New York City by strengthening the City's competitive position and facilitating investments that build capacity, generate prosperity and catalyze the economic vibrancy of City life as a whole" – it is not clear how they have interpreted this policy to guide development and management of the enclosed public markets, leaving merchants, and communities, vulnerable to their often opaque goals, and lack of accountability.

Essex Street

Merchants at the Essex Street market formed a cooperative in 1966, and signed a twenty-year lease with the city. When the lease came up in 1986, city officials did not renew with the Essex Street Retail Market Association. Instead, they solicited proposals from developers. City Councilwoman Miriam Friedlander had fended off earlier redevelopment plans arguing they were part of a "city policy of 'turning over properties to boutiqueniks and gentrifiers.'" The merchants, who now included Korean and Caribbean immigrants, feared higher rents and shorter leases. A spokesperson for the Department of Ports and Terminals assured them, "We are not trying to create something slick, or another Faneuil Hall"[161] (French 1986).

On December 21, 1989, the Board of Estimate authorized the city to enter into a triple-net lease with I.S.J. Management Corporation for the "renovation and operation" of Essex Street market, the result of a competitive bidding process. A thirty-year lease was signed in April 1990. Merchants were given month-to-month leases, and filed a court case seeking protection from the developer. They argued, "their businesses were part of a tradition that dates back to the days of the pushcart on the Lower East Side." They were unable to pay the rent offered to them by I.S.J. and were therefore being deprived of "their right to earn a living." In December of 1990 the Civil Court of New York ruled, "commercial tenants in public markets owned by the city did not have constitutionally protected property interest which entitled them to continue as tenants" (152 Misc.2d 13, 574 N.Y.S.2d 612).

[161] Faneuil Hall in Boston's historical center was renovated in the 1970s and became a shopping mall and food court, and a model for festival marketplaces nationally. The market's recent twenty-month renovation was completed in May 2012 and added a National Park Service visitors' center (Matos 2012).

NYCEDC took over management of the enclosed markets including Essex Street in 1992 when they discovered that I.S.J. Management had not invested any money, according to an agency official who asked not to be identified.[162] The market, now occupying only two of its four original buildings, had only a "scattering of tenants," and was in horrible shape. NYCEDC worked for several years to evict I.S.J. Management. From 1992 to 1996, NYCEDC's operating philosophy was to "stabilize the market." In all, NYCEDC invested about $1.5 million bringing Essex Street Market up to code, consolidating the market from two buildings into one, and making it more attractive. Demographics on the Lower East Side were changing as the neighborhood underwent gentrification (Smith 1992). Today merchants at Essex Street sell "fresh and affordable produce," and cater to a "new sector…interested in artisanal foods." Field visits suggest that various constituents – elderly Puerto Ricans, many on fixed incomes, and middle class singles and families, often white – patronize the market without tension, an explicit NYCEDC goal.

While Essex Street management would not tell me how much merchants pay per square foot, they assured me that rents are "significantly lower than surrounding stores." New vendors are chosen to complement existing offerings, and that does not mean the traditional tubers and vegetables used in Puerto Rican cuisine: "I'm not sure we are looking for a[nother] vendor for roots. There are other outlets for that." The website asks, "Interested in becoming a merchant? Are you interested in becoming one of the valued merchants at Essex Street Market? We are only considering applications for specialty goods and other niche food merchants." It was a major coup when *Pain d'Avignon*, rated among the top five producers of bread in New York City, opened an outlet.

[162] I was granted a phone interview with a high-ranking NYCEDC official who had been with the agency for years. On the call were the agency's press relations coordinator, and one other staff member. After talking for 45 minutes, I was asked to not identify anyone by name in my study, although I had explained my need for their signatures on release forms. I also spoke to NYCEDC officials informally at two open houses held at the Park Avenue Market and at the Essex Street Market on field visits.

Committed to supporting local production, NYCEDC works with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to strengthen linkages with farmers and producers from upstate. Anne Saxelby, owner of Saxelby Cheesemongers, sells only local cheeses, many made in the vicinity of the Hudson Valley. But, there are limits to how local a year-round market can be and still meet local demand: “It’s hard to grow plantains in New York.” Filling the market is a balancing act, and one that, at this point, works.

Figure 10.1: Anne Saxelby, owner of Saxelby Cheesemongers, at her stall in Essex Market. She sells cheeses from the northeast as well as local eggs and butter, a modern-day and upscale take on the egg-and-butter vendors of old (the dailymeal.com, 2010).

Market manager George Otero is very proud of the success of Essex Street Market. It is well lit, freshly paint, and very clean. It hums even at mid-day, filled with a hip lunchtime crowd, as well as older Puerto Rican women and younger artistic types buying vegetables and grocery staples. There are fishmongers and several butchers, including Heritage Meat Shop, purveyors of “pasture-raised heritage and rare breeds of livestock” (NYCEDC website). Heritage Meats took over space vacated by Jeffrey Ruhalter, a third-generation butcher and market fixture, whose father Allen was the president of the merchants’ association when he inherited the business from his father (French 1986). In addition to grocers such as Viva Fruits & Vegetables and Essex Farm, there is Shopsin’s General Store, once a fixture of Greenwich Village, and a public exhibition space, Cuchifritos Art Gallery. Essex Restaurant anchors the other end of the building;

the menu features moderately priced seasonal foods, oysters on the half shell and locally brewed beers. The restaurant caters to the neighborhood's newer, middle-class residents, but its small scale and unobtrusive entrance make it seem a natural extension of the already mixed-used market.

Essex Street Market's broad appeal was evident in 2011 when Community Board 3 passed guidelines in late January for city-run development of the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (Safronova and Alpert 2011). As part of the plans, NYCEDC proposed moving the market to a new location, one with room for three times as many vendors. Thousands of residents and vendors protested vehemently against the plan. Anne Saxelby started an online petition urging supporters to claim the market building as part of a shared Lower East Side "cultural patrimony…living history" (Hedlund 2011).

In May 2011, the Community Board 3 held a hearing at the University Settlement Community Center on Allen Street.[163] The cinder block room was packed, people squashing together to make room for additional folding chairs. Neighbors testified. A vendor of South Asian descent broke down while reading a short statement about his efforts to build a successful grocery business at the Essex Street Market, his realization of the American Dream. As they reached for Kleenexes, people were reminded that this "foodie mecca" was also a source of livelihood for many. Plans are on hold, and there has been no indication NYCEDC has made a decision one way or another. In the market, business continues as usual; this most recent reminder of the market's vulnerability appears to have been taken in stride.

[163] Community Board 3 has included the Essex Street Market on its agenda on numerous occasions since, most recently on May 22, 2012 (www.savetheessexstreetmarket.org).

Park Avenue

Park Avenue Market experienced its own cycles of hardship, and is waiting for a true turnaround. Shop owners abandoned businesses along Lexington Avenue during the 1970s, adversely affecting business at the market (Siegal 2000). By the 1980s, the market was in "serious decline" (Reyes 1996). Waves of Mexican immigrants, successors of the Puerto Rican and Italian immigrants who settled in East Harlem, were "unfamiliar with the market's traditions," and shopped instead at East Harlem's bodegas (Desantis 2010). Only a dozen of the original four hundred merchants remained in 1990. The city proposed an $8 million renovation to "inject new life into the market" and nearly double its square footage, creating space for a supermarket. The renovation process had started five years earlier, but a contract awarded to *La Marqueta* Development Associates was terminated due to "slow progress." Plans were supposed to turn *La Marqueta* "'into a Chinatown or Little Italy' that would draw customers from outside the community," and make it economically viable. Despite municipal government's enthusiasm, merchants' hopes were measured; previous attempts to revitalize the market were not realized, and now gentrification threatened to displace merchants, said Paul Diamant, spokesperson for the merchants (Gabarine 1990).

In 1994, Elba Gaffney opened a stall selling *pasteles* and other Puerto Rican specialties. She was the first new tenant since the renovation of four market buildings (no supermarket), and one of few since the markets' decline in the mid-1980s (R.K. 1994). The market failed to draw new customers. By 2000, the market had been reduced to a single building. NYCEDC announced that Best Farms Produce, operators of a successful produce business at the Essex Street Market would open an uptown branch in one third of the space. There would be holiday promotional events, and the East Harlem Chamber of Commerce was developing plans to "reinvigorate the market" and create something "unusual, like a tourist shopping area."

Merchant Louis “King of Bananas” Santana reminisced about how crowded the market was in its heyday in the 1950s and 60s, when “it could take the whole afternoon to push through the entire complex.” “There’s more business in a cemetery than there is here,’” Santana lamented. The King of Bananas was doubtful about the city’s promises, “’They come to the market from time to time and promise everything….But they never do anything” (Siegal 2000).

That doubt persists. I made sporadic visits to the Park Avenue market for nearly two years, beginning when NYCEDC issued a Request for Expressions of Interest in March 2009. Two open houses, both held on miserably cold rainy days, attracted a variety of people including a property scout for Whole Foods, an import-export dealer based in New Jersey, and representatives of a NYCHA tenant association. NYCEDC staff explained they were looking for proposals from private or not-for-profit entities with the means to make necessary renovations and upgrades, and an interest in managing the market, which would be leased “as is.”

NYCEDC did not express any intention of negotiating with the market’s six tenants, who, when asked, had no idea what was transpiring. Benny the Egg Man (aka Bernard Lifschultz) only knew that no new leases were being issued. Benny’s father was an egg man, and when Benny returned from serving in World War II in 1945, he took over the business. He diversified, and began selling cheese, and coconuts (Gelb and Skovmand 2000). Nowadays, he sells eggs and *bacalao* at his stand outfitted with a small television set and a double-door reach-in refrigerator.

Figure 10.2: Bernard (Benny) Lifshultz, "The Egg Man," has been at *La Marqueta* since 1945. There are few customers for his *bacalao* and eggs these days, and he has cut his hours (Graeme Mitchell, *New York Magazine*, 2010).

Although some proposals were submitted, none were chosen. Based on conversations with people attending the "open houses," very few had the means to invest in capital repairs, even if they had innovative ideas for revitalizing the market. In 2010, City Council appropriated $1.5 million for construction of an incubator kitchen at Park Avenue market. Jessamyn Nussbaum was selected to manage the incubator, which would provide a home for Hot Bread Kitchen, Nussbaum's non-profit organization that trains immigrant women to bake and operate a business.

In November 2010, I visited *La Marqueta*, again on a cold and rainy day. Three Parks Department workers were clearing leaves along the narrow sidewalk leading to the front doors. Their neon vests stuck out against the gray light. Pale purple flowers with yellow centers bloomed in the corner of a community garden across the street. In between the two remaining market buildings were four green dumpsters filled with construction debris. On the "plaza" part of the market two men in sweatshirts and down jackets were selling Christmas trees, although it didn't look as though they had any business. The market has glass doors like you would find on a

modern apartment building or an office building, very sterile. A large poster announced Hot Bread Kitchen; a smaller flyer promoted an urban landscaping business, which, it turned out, referred to the Christmas tree business and the new "flower shop" inside.

The market looks very clean, including the newly emptied front corner where an old pushcart is parked like sculpture. The place has the feel of new construction and it is very, very quiet. The Egg Man's stand near the front doors was empty, though the piles of *bacalao* stood on the counter without a sneeze-guard. I asked Bryant, a friendly looking black man with large glasses cleaning the grates of the stand next door if the Egg Man was still around. Who? The Egg Man, Bernard….? Oh, Benny. Yeah, his wife isn't doing well. He doesn't work here much. Carlos (referring to another "old timer" who also sells *bacalao*) is watching his stand for him.

I asked about the incubator, and Bryant said he couldn't be sure of anything, but called over a young guy, maybe Pakistani or Bangladeshi, who told me he was the construction supervisor. I showed him my business card and he seemed to think I was affiliated with the incubator. Cheerfully, and with some pride, he led me through the nearly finished space, which is large, with at least four production kitchens, a chocolate room, and classroom space with windows onto the market. He assured me that everything was almost ready, just needed a paint job and equipment installation. No more than two or three days. In any case, he told me with confidence, it would have to be ready by December 13th because Mayor Bloomberg was coming to visit. Thanking him for his tour, I looked around for Carlos, who was helping two forty-something Latinos, stocky, with dark hair cut close wearing dark blue work jackets who came to buy dried cod from Benny's stand. They stood around talking for half an hour. They were the only customers I saw during my nearly two-hour visit.

A sign announcing "Grand Opening – SpaHa Café" rested on a shabby chic white hutch in a newly decorated stall with pale pre-fab wood flooring. SpaHa, a European-style café and

catering business, first opened near the 116th Street subway station and serves croissants, quiches, and soups, emphasizing vegetarian and vegan options; the name, shorthand for Spanish Harlem, indicates attention to marking the gentrifying neighborhood. Their presence at *La Marqueta* was a way of expanding the brand.

Bryant introduced me to two Ghanaian women seated at the end of the aisle. One is very large, and was wearing layered sweaters, dark kerchief tied tightly around her head, and a black apron tied loosely high around her middle. The other, younger, with lighter skin and delicate features, wore jeans and had curlers under a brown and rust patterned scarf. Behind them, in a stall selling cheap wooden frames and other gifts, ribbons and some religious items were a man and woman, both Latino, who remained silent the whole time I was there.

The Ghanaian women, Grace and her niece, explained that most patrons of their dusty dry goods store are immigrants from Ghana and other West African countries; they have some Caribbean customers as well. Greek-American Aspasia, a short, slight woman with auburn hair joined us. She and her husband own an "urban landscaping" business, and rented space in the market while "reestablishing" themselves in Manhattan. When Grace asked how she makes the bright red velveteen ribbon bows adorning the wreaths she sells, Aspasia answered, "with my own two hands. I make them while I'm watching television." From her stall she watched "her team" selling Christmas trees, and cackled, "they don't know I can see them."

I asked the three women if new vendors were moving in. They brightened up, talking about Breezy Hill Orchards, a Greenmarket anchor, that sells apples, and cider, and apple, pecan, and sweet potato pies. And, Aspasia added, "What they're telling us is a Mexican vegetable stand, whatever that is supposed to mean." I asked, does EDC do any promoting to get more people into the market? She laughed, shaking her head, "My business is third generation. I take care of myself." Finally, I asked about the incubator. Would it help draw new

business to the market? All three ladies scoffed, “We’ll believe it when we see it.” The grand opening dates kept changing. Aspasia was told September; Grace heard early November.

Arthur Avenue

Two blocks north of Arthur Avenue Market is War Memorial Park where old Italian men play chess well into the fall, and Italian women sit at the tables, talking, their shopping bags piled at their feet. Latino kids, many of them wearing Catholic school uniforms, play in this park, their parents watching as they chase each other around the sandboxes and race up and down the slide. Afternoons, there are often one or two African American women, home health aides perhaps, sitting with an elderly man or woman.

One block north of the market is the boundary of Little Italy. Pastry shops and butchers line the street. Shuckers at outdoor counters sell clams and oysters by the half dozen. The entrance to Teitel Brothers is nearly blocked by displays of canned artichoke hearts, olive oil and flat tins of sardines in tomato sauce.

Until recently, it was easy to miss the entrance to the old market; it was badly marked, and dark. In 2011, the market’s façade was replaced with a light brick, Italianate front, and a gold-lettered sign.

Figure 10.3: The new market façade (rendering of plans) is more ornate than the original WPA era design. The interior retains its shoddy and worn appearance despite its polished exterior – at least until another round of renovations (2010).

In the summer a vendor scoops out Italian ices next to the door. The front of the Arthur Avenue Market is empty, except on Saturdays when the cigar rollers sit at tables in full view of customers. At the right of the entrance is a long pastry counter half-filled with garish and fatigued looking cookies. The café's seating area has green industrial carpeting. The television, mounted high above mismatched café tables and chairs, plays without sound; often the channel is turned to a European soccer match. The market is half-filled, with crowded aisles and thoroughly non-descript stores. There is a pleasant funk of aged cheeses and anchovies, vats of olives in brine. The tang of fresh blood greets customers at Peter's Meat Market, which does brisk business in house-made sausages and display sides of lamb and suckling pig along with tripe, steaks and roasts. The butcher-block tables are deeply worn; they've been sanded down three times and will be at least three more before they're done.

I never saw fewer than four men working at the Meat Market, all Latino, overseen by Peter Servedio or his cousin Mike Rella, who also cut meat while they serve customers. Peter, a tall strong-looking man in his early sixties with some gray in his short black hair, has a slight accent. He has worked at the market for forty-eight years; his mother apprenticed him to the original owner when his family emigrated from Italy and he started by sweeping floors. Co-owner Mike is Peter's nephew, his "older sister's kid," he explains, she is the first of eight, he the last. Mike was also apprenticed to the butcher a few years after emigrating. Peter and Mike bought the business in 1970 and recently expanded when the butcher next to their shop closed. The other butcher used to sell offal, which people from "over there" ate, they knew how to prepare it. Peter could have let someone else take it over, he said, but that would have been competition.

More than once Peter recounted how "Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia" built the markets as "shelter" for the pushcarts. Many peddlers were servicemen, returning from the war (veterans got preference). When the Arthur Avenue Corporation was created in 1968 there were thirty vendors; most had stands that were smaller than the stores in market today. When it all started, Peter smiled, the stands were small and one guy would sell onions, another would sell tomatoes, then apples. They could make a living doing just that? They could earn a living. "Eventually, one guy took over for the next as they left, selling, then, onions and tomatoes. There used to be a fish guy. He couldn't make it. And now, we have one produce guy."

Not easily reached by public transportation, how does Arthur Avenue survive? Europeans come from "over there. They land here, they shop, they spend the day on Arthur Avenue." The Italians, "they've all moved out. They're in Long Island, in Westchester. I live in Westchester," said Peter. But they come back, with deep pockets and appetites to match (Meyers 2009; Sidman and Osterhout 2012).[164]

The weeks leading up to Christmas as the busiest time of year, Peter pointed to the "take-a-ticket machine." The market is open on Sundays in December. "This time of year, they buy – gesturing 'big bags' – they gotta have everything Italian."[165]

[164] A survey conducted by the Belmont Business Improvement District in 2011 confirmed that consumers along Arthur Avenue tended to live outside the neighborhood, and had significantly higher average incomes than local residents (Anand 2011).
[165] People also return because Peter's Meat Market sells quality products; they were voted "Best Butcher of New York" by the Daily News in January 2012 (Sidman and Osterhout 2012).

Figure 10.4: Fresh house-made sausages, baby lamb, specialty cuts like tripe and pigs' trotters keep loyal customers coming back to Peter's Meat Market, especially during the busy December holiday season (Audant 2011).

Arthur Avenue market survives due to a very loyal customer based for whom the market represents heritage, identity. It is the heart of the district. And, the Corporation runs a very tight ship. The vendors all work together. "Other markets have janitors, they have staff. They see a box in the middle of the aisle, they let someone else…pick it up." The vendors take turns cleaning the basement and taking out the trash. "We just don't ask." And if a new merchant wanted to rent space in the market? "Yeah, they'd have to be ready to do what needs to be done. No one else is going to do it." It was also implied by all I talked to that while most of the employees at the market are no longer Italian, any new owner accepted into the Corporation would be.

David Greco, President of the Arthur Avenue Corporation is a big, solid looking man in with clear light colored eyes in a worn denim chambray shirt and jeans. He and his father, Michele, own and operate Mike's Deli. Michele was one of the original vendors, started in 1940 (or 1947, depending on the audience), and still comes to the market every morning. The crew consists of six or seven Latinos, one Latina, Ana Lia, and an older sharp-tongued woman who works the phone. The last time I visited, a worker was struggling to lift a four-foot long, 125-pound provolone off the hook it hangs from. David told him to stop and get the bull to help him.

A minute later, two guys were carrying this enormous cheese on their shoulders. “The Bull,” it turns out, is someone’s nickname.

If Peter and Mike are reserved, David is outspoken. He “respects” NYCEDC though he doesn’t think they are taking care of their resources. He kept repeating, “this is a city building,” indignant that city property has been allowed to deteriorate. The city’s lack of interest is “disrespectful” and shows no understanding that, in his view, the market holds Arthur Avenue together. “They call us the jewel, the jewel of the markets, and they treat us like this? They don’t do any promotion, they don’t do any marketing for us. They are killing me. It’s killing us. I’m not afraid to say it…I am angry.”

In his eyes, when the city has intervened, they made things worse. Izzy Bernstein never wanted air conditioning because he was “afraid of the Con Ed bill.” When Izzy retired, the merchants “priced out” air conditioning and the city installed three “gigantic units.” The first, David pointed above his head, is designed for 25,000 square feet. The whole market is only 13,000 sq/ft. “The Con Ed bill? It used to be $1,000/month. Now, with the a/c on, it’s $10,000 a month.”

David is a minor celebrity in the food world, and has appeared on Food Network shows hosted by Paula Dean, Bobby Flay and Emeril Lagasse. Nonetheless, he has struggled to find support for his “vision” for the market. He wants to “loft” the market, “take up the lights, the ceilings, and open it up….a green roof where they could grow tomatoes, and basil to sell here.” The Botanical Garden, a few blocks away, could be a partner in this venture. “If this were Brooklyn, they would be all over this.” A “new direction” would challenge stereotypes of what Italians, and what an Italian market should be, and “stereotypes” are preventing the city from renovating the market. His vision is shared by Frank Franz, President of the Belmont BID, who

would like to see more private investment, and more city funding, to help turn this stripe of Arthur Avenue into the "Soho of the Bronx" (Anand 2011).

In 2003, David started work on a grant that eventually awarded Arthur Avenue $250,000 for renovations. The design, by Papadatos Partnership, incorporates an "agora" motif "recalling ancient Greek and Roman markets." The exterior was completely renovated, retaining historic design elements. Additionally, there were plans to outfit stalls with flexible modular displays, "enhanced" public and gathering areas, and upgraded lighting, electrical, heating and cooling systems, and plumbing (eOculus *Little Italy* 2010; Weiss 2010).

Greco is bitter. He says some vendors suspect that he's getting money from the city to be President of their Corporation, that he's cutting deals and enriching himself. He laughed ruefully, "I cut garbage in half. In this neighborhood, I could have easily doubled my carting costs and taken a kick-back." He credits politicians New York State Assemblyman Peter Rivera and US Congressman José E. Serrano for securing the grant. It rankles him that Mario Batali opened a multi-million dollar place downtown (Eataly) and "they are all so thankful, are all over him…what about us? These places downtown the city is promoting, putting money into, they sell cheese for $18 a quarter pound. I sell cheese for $18 a pound. Who are these people, these elite they are selling to? These aren't markets for the people."

Moore Street

Moore Street Market in Williamsburg, Brooklyn is struggling to be a market for the people. It has attracted the support of local politicians, and with that support, funding for capital improvements. The market has been "saved," but market manager Brooklyn Economic

Development Corporation has not been able to reconcile merchant interests with "revitalization" efforts.

I first visited the Moore Street Market in spring 2008 as part of a team of researchers assembled by Dr. Setha Low of Public Space Research Group. PSRG was subcontracted by Project for Public Spaces, who was contracted by US Representative Nydia Velazquez to create a revitalization plan that "didn't just keep the market open, but would make it sustainable, vital, and vibrant," explained Kelly Williams of PPS. Since 2008, when the Report was completed (Low et al 2008), I have returned to the market periodically, and have been in regular contact with BEDC President, Joan Bartolomeo, whose views on Moore Street veer from optimistism to despair.

The L-shaped, concrete block building is located along what was once a heavily trafficked commercial hub. Merchants hung their wares on curtains and laid out them out on the street. It was so crowded in the 1940s and 50s, one man reminisced, that it would take three minutes to cross Moore Street. Talking about the market in its heyday, people brighten, describing crowded aisles, and the rows of produce stacked high in narrow stalls. Merchants typically sold a single item: "Back then, if you sold something, the guy next to you wouldn't sell it. If one stand sold tomatoes, he would sell tomatoes, and plum tomatoes, and the next guy would sell grapes, and the next guy apples."[166]

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[166] This specialization was typical of the enclosed markets, confirmed in articles and numerous interviews. Today, this kind of specialization isn't possible. While margins on food have always been low, food costs in relation to other household expenditures dropped dramatically by the 1960s; merchants can't survive on small margins of a shrinking share of household dollars. Diversity assures merchants a greater share of a consumers' food budget. Many produce vendors at the enclosed markets today have relatively large stores and sell processed, shelf-stable and/or prepared foods in addition to fruits and vegetables; these value-added goods earn them a greater return.

Consistent with municipal goals, low rents at Moore Street translated into low prices: "Back then, you could walk in here with five dollars in your pocket and you had to walk all around to spend it. A twenty-pound bag of potatoes…guess how much! Twenty cents! One cent for a pound of potatoes; tomatoes, they were just 7 cents a pound, apples for 5 cents a pound."

During the 1950s, the vendors were Jewish, Italian, Irish and Polish, reflecting the neighborhood's demographics. Of the Jews and the Puerto Ricans, they "all lived nicely together," said Manuel (Manny) Rivera, owner of La Marketa Music Center, "they respected each other." Neighborhood demographics changed, and one wave of immigrants succeeded the next. Manny continued, "the Puerto Ricans all came, and we don't like to eat apples. We don't eat grapes. We eat rice, and beans and the *malanga*—the foods of our culture. So when he don't [sic] sell the apples, he sells his stand to the Puerto Rican guy who sets it up. He sells rice and beans."

In 1961, the city announced plans to build Lindsay Park, a Mitchell-Lama project whose first stage would include 1,921 co-ops intended to be middle-income housing. The new construction displaced a 16-square block area of 189 "run-down buildings" housing 1,300 families and 300 businesses. The neighborhood around the Moore Street Market was described as "rich in tradition, but poor in almost every other way" (Fried 1961). By the 1960s, the neighborhood had a significant Puerto Rican population, though some older merchants hung on until the 1970s. A butcher located on Moore Street across from the market said his colleague learned his trade at the market: "He used to work at the market in his *yoot*, in the late sixties, early seventies. He worked for an Italian…Tomaselli." A woman who moved into one of the newly constructed public housing projects in 1962 remembers the "Red Market," a nickname African Americans still use to refer to the Moore Street Market, and the Jewish and Irish

merchants who sold “the foods that black people eat—collard greens, other greens, sweet potatoes, yams.”

In most people’s perceptions, the market—and the neighborhood—changed during the 1970s and 1980s. Some blame the public housing; the City turned the neighborhood into a “dumping ground,” and turned their back on the problems caused by a convergence of poverty and underdevelopment. The market, like the streets surrounding it, fell into disrepair. There is one record of an effort to improve market conditions: in 1995, the architectural firm of Hirsch/Danois won a bid from NYCEDC to upgrade the market. The market was described as the place to buy produce from South America, “edible roots of every description.” Plans included adding bright graphics, “dropped-canopy ceilings” and relocating the coolers, previously “scattered casually about the floor,” to the basement.

In March 2007, New York City Economic Development Corporation announced that market would close on June 15, 2007 to make way for affordable housing. The vendors were not given prior notice of NYCEDC’s plans, and NYCEDC did not contact Community Board 1, which it was obliged to do by law. Reacting to the news, NY State Senator Martin Dilan described the market as a “haven for Latin culture” adding, “I won’t stand by and watch as the institutions that define our heritage are taken away.”

The press represented the market as an underdog fighting an impersonal municipal administration intent on destroying a neighborhood cultural and social institution: “The 70-year old Moore St. market [sic] was always more than just a place to do business,” wrote David Gonzalez for the New York Times. It is “part of the fabric of Williamsburg life, with periodic cultural events and tiny shops and stalls that hearken back to the days before glitzy shopping malls and sterile big-box stores” (Gonzalez 2007).

Figure 10.5: The Moore Street Market serves as a gathering space for the local Puerto Rican community. Most stores specialize in products geared towards their tastes (realdeal.com, 2007.

In 2008, pressure from other politicians including New York City Council Member Diana Reyna, U.S. Representative Nydia Velazquez, and New York State Assembly Member Vito Lopez, combined with a surge of community support for the Moore Street Market, resulted in a stay of execution. Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation signed a lease to take over management of the market.

BEDC has benefited from ongoing support of politicians, although it is also a source of tensions, requiring a balance of egos and agendas. Joan Bartolomeo, founder and director of BEDC, explained, “After we sort of made peace with [New York City Council Member] Diana Reyna and she realized we weren’t just there to muscle out St. Nick’s (the previous market managers favored by Reyna), she became very supportive and she put in another half a million capital dollars for the current year.” Representative Nydia Velazquez, who described the market as a “legacy project,” submitted a $400,000 earmark, for a total of almost $1.1 million for capital improvement. Joan knows she must succeed; “if it fails, if we fail, we’ll be vilified.”

Joan realizes that she is fortunate to have rather stable, or entrenched, politicians rallying behind the market. Reyna was reelected for her second term in 2007. And “Velazquez, if

she wants, could be Congresswoman for life." Importantly, Velazquez's commitment continued after her initial "save." Kelly Williams, Senior Associate at PPS, remembers, "she made it to every event….You can tell she made it very important."

In addition to negotiating around political agendas, BEDC has faced serious financial difficulties. When Joan signed the triple-net least with NYCEDC,[167] taking responsibility for the market's management, operations and physical plant. She was not fully aware of the extent of work that needed to be done. The market building is in poor shape. NYCEDC provided an initial "subsidy" of $200,000, and walked away. Three years later, NYCEDC took over the electrical and water bills, and stopped charging BEDC any rent for running the market. Nonetheless, the rents paid by vendors remain very low, and breaking even will continue being a challenge.

Accustomed to self-management, the merchants did not take well to BEDC. The first year, "the inmates ran the prison." BEDC staff discovered that one merchant was running an ice business and drawing on city water. The basement was being used to store "household stuff." BEDC enforced the rules: one storage unit per stall, and offered to rent additional stalls for $50/month. The merchants "screamed about this." BEDC strives to have "a good working relationship" with the vendors, and market management is an exercise in diplomacy and patience.

Joan looks at the market as multifaceted project. "It's local entrepreneurship, largely women and minority vendors, it's preserving local retail and local institutions, it's…the antidote to gentrification…not that I think gentrification in itself is a terrible thing." Taking on Moore Street was "a way of preserving an institution within a community." Deciding how the market will best serve the community is a challenge, as it will need to serve a purpose beyond "an ag

[167] BEDC's lease is with New York City Department of Small Business Services, although NYCEDC holds the properties. "It's totally confusing," said Joan Bartolomeo, and explains some of her initial difficulties conceptualizing the scope of responsibilities she took on as market manager.

market." It will be a "gathering place," a place where, "if you want to find out what's going on in the neighborhood that's where you go."

Merchants are slow to adopt new marketing strategies. The vast majority of customers at the Moore Street Market are senior Puerto Rican men and women, who use the market for day-to-day social interactions. For the senior Puerto Rican men in particular, buying food seems to be a flimsy pretext for the socializing that takes place among the vendors and customers. Merchants, too, are often seen strolling around, chatting with friends. They are not reaching out to customers, drawing people in. "You don't see Ruben [Tirado, owner of Abby's Fresh Food and Meat Market] cutting up a pineapple to give to people; you see a banana with flies on it."

Figure 10.6: Merchandise at Abby's Food Market is piled high; pots and household goods hang from hooks overhead. To attract new customers, merchants may have to pay more attention to marketing strategies (Audant 2011).

Joan has hope. "I think there's potential for it to become kind of a foodie place….I don't ever think it'll be like Essex Street, but I think it can draw you know, a two to three mile radius." She is aware of Moore Street's limits: "if you want root vegetables, this is your place, but, if you want something seasonal? Like, strawberries. Strawberries are in season and no one in that place is selling strawberries." The merchants, she suspects, get their produce "second-hand.

They're not going to Hunts Point, they're buying off a truck from the broker, three or four days from Hunts Point Market."

Merchants outside the market think the market needs to "modernize." A middle-aged Puerto Rican business owner on Moore Street explained that the market is important because of its historical significance, and because, "if it's done right, it should draw people to this area. The old timers, who think they know what they're doing, are wrong. They need to…add refrigeration, add those misters like in high-end grocery stores to keep the produce crisp and fresh." They should add organics: "People, they want those organics these days. It's easy to add; give them what they want." Residents see potential in the market. A community organizer from adjacent Bushwick said of Moore Street, "the place is dirty, it smells bad, never has anything in it." But, she did say she would shop at the market if it looked like the Essex Street market. Betty Cooney, Director of the Graham Avenue BID that includes Moore Street, remarked, "the market has the possibility of 'bridging the gap' between the hipsters, who are living in the industrial areas" and those living in public housing.

There are many issues to overcome. Joan admires the vendors at Arthur Avenue Market, "they take turns cleaning the bathrooms, they don't turn the air conditioning on in the summer…see, my guys don't pay for any of this, so they want it cool in the summer and warm in the winter." Moore Street is heavily dependent on the rent subsidy but she suspects some merchants do quite well. "They drive nice cars, they all own more than one house, these are cash businesses, they all pay [the rent] with money orders…I like money orders, they don't bounce," laughing.

BEDC arranged a field trip for the merchants to visit Essex Street Market, and their new "fish guy" used to work with the fishmonger at Essex. The "the EDC crew at Essex" has been very helpful, "they're really good guys….Like when we couldn't get the a/c to kick in this year. We

said, could you come in and take a look, rather than calling the HVAC guys, and they spent a long time looking at the air conditioning…we ended up calling the HVAC guys anyway."

When I interviewed Kelly Williams about PPS's involvement with Moore Street Market, she expressed compassion for Joan Bartolomeo and BEDC who, in 2009, were planning the "one-year birthday party of their lease…although I don't know why they're celebrating." In her view, the enormous amount of work to be done "can only happen with some serious investment from the capital standpoint and the operations standpoint and from the management standpoint." She is critical of the city's lack of support for the market, echoing David Greco at Arthur Avenue, but without the bitterness. BEDC, according to Kelly, should not be "out there by themselves finding money for that market. It's a city market whether they like it or not. If the city wants to talk about food access, then they shouldn't be ignoring what they have which is right in front of their face." Echoing observations as I made my tours of the enclosed markets, Kelly added, "*La Marqueta* is getting a lot of attention because it's a totally clean slate…Moore Street is messy, unsolvable, and it wouldn't take millions and millions and millions of dollars, but it would take some sustained support over the next five years." Moore Street "can't be Essex Street," but it could be "a nice model of a very local public market….New York doesn't necessarily need one fancy public market; it's going to need a network of community public markets like it had in the past ….Flushing needs its market, and Elmhurst needs its market."

The city needs public markets to serve working class communities, not fancy markets, but places that can serve as hubs of community social, cultural, and economic activity. The neighborhoods where the remaining enclosed retail markets are located remain working class, with relatively low household incomes, and relatively high rates of poverty. Even the gentrifying Lower East Side, home of the Essex Street Market, has large swaths of residents who struggle financially. With sustained state support and thoughtful planning, these public institutions

could once again serve as New York's publics to their fullest potential (See Appendix E: Maps of New York City's Enclosed Public Retails Markets, 2010).

Market Updates

NYCEDC is investing in efforts to revitalize the enclosed retail markets, and in doing so, is reconsolidating control of the markets in multiple ways. Their website announces, "We're working hard to modernize the City's infrastructure and improve quality of life in the neighborhoods," lists projects by borough. A tab was created for "NYC Markets: Your neighborhood marketplace." In the 1930s, NYCEDC explains, the streets were "overflowing with pushcarts" and Mayor LaGuardia eased "congestion" by building the enclosed markets, "each with its own local flavor and a wide variety of items. " That LaGuardia built the markets to Americanize "local flavor" is glossed over. This representation of the past is especially telling as NYCEDC is quite actively shaping the revived forms and functions of the markets today, renovating "local color" as well as physical plant, reinscribing the markets as public goods for our time.

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and New York City Economic Development Corporation President Seth Pinsky held a ceremony at *La Marqueta* in Harlem on January 4, 2011, announcing the opening of a $1.5 million incubator kitchen, paid for with Council funds and overseen by NYCEDC (NYCEDC press release; Quinn 2010:35). The incubator is part of a larger plan to "reactivate the historic *La Marqueta*." Numerous politicians spoke at the grand opening about creating job opportunities for "foreign-born women" to "monetize their culinary skills." The incubator encourages applicants from throughout the city, guiding new entrepreneurs through product and business plan development, marketing, and distribution.

"We are excited to embark in the next step of our organization's growth in partnership with the City Council and the Economic Development Corporation to help promising food businesses thrive and grow," said Jessamyn Waldman, CEO of Hot Bread Kitchen (Quinn 2011). Mayor LaGuardia transformed peddlers into merchants. These days, economic development is more sophisticated, turning immigrant women into entrepreneurs producing "value-added" goods, creating jobs, and expanding the city's food industry.

Incubators are a very popular form of public subsidy these days, consistent with discourses about food as an economic engine that can grow jobs, and expand the tax base. Moore Street Market is a next site of a publicly funded incubator kitchen. In December 2010, a $450,000 grant from US Department of Housing and Urban Development was released to US Representative Nydia Velazquez. The money went towards much-needed capital repairs at the Moore Street Market and the installation of a small incubator kitchen now leased to wholesale baker. After City Council committed an additional $500,000, NYCEDC provided an architect, contractor, and managed construction. The newly designed market space has three additional small stalls and several kiosks that could accommodate seasonal and temporary merchants. The challenge is attracting and keeping new vendors. The incubator will be expanded to include two smaller spaces and an open kitchen for production and demonstrations. The incubator provides Moore Street Market with an additional revenue stream while providing subsidized space to entrepreneurs. Investments in incubators are reshaping the enclosed markets, aligning them with prevailing discourses.

The lack of a comprehensive city policy to guide the development and operation of a public market infrastructure has created challenges for each of New York City's remaining enclosed retail markets. Without a city agency where property management is coordinated with policies guiding food distribution, economic development, environmental sustainability, and

public health, the markets are forced to lobby for support at multiple scales of government, and are subject to the caprices of politicians, including Council members and the NYCEDC. While merchants rarely make the connection between running small businesses in a tough, competitive economy and broader policy goals of improving food access and helping small-scale entrepreneurs, they are aware of their precarious and often contradictory position as tenants of public markets whose operation and management is opaque and un-democratic, and largely unaccountable, until angry publics rise to defend the markets as important and valued public institutions. Patchwork solutions and collective actions have "saved" markets multiple times, but a municipal market policy would sustain the markets, and help them, in turn, sustain the communities, local and far-flung, they serve.

Chapter 11: Futures of food/policy in New York City

New York City is experiencing what can justly be described as a boom of public demand for state intervention in its food system. The crises are multiple: food deserts, rising rates of obesity and diabetes, pink slime in school food, a preponderance of fast food in low-income neighborhoods, growing demand at food pantries and soup kitchens. The constituents are many – parents, public health officials, economic development agents, community activists. Though alliances exist between these diverse groups, nothing is fixed, in large part because there is no municipal food policy. "New York, like most other US cities, lacks a comprehensive food system plan….Every stage in the food system, from production to residuals management, is addressed by at least one city agency, typically with input from various stakeholders" (Cohen 2010).

The political, economic, cultural and social contexts of today's as-yet culminated "boom" of state intervention are significantly different from the 1930s, and 1960s.[168] Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's administration has pushed through a far-reaching yet deeply fragmented bundle of policies and programs. Politicians jockeying for a 2013 run for the Mayor's office propose comprehensive views of what a food policy plan, or regime, might look like, but there is no consensus yet as to what kind of powers – regulatory and otherwise – and what

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[168] A real game changer, and obstacle sometimes to collective action around food, is the very low cost of food in relation to other household expenses. Food was once the single largest category of household spending. During the 1930s, New Yorkers spent an average of more than thirty-six percent of each dollar on food. Until the 1950s, food commanded at least one third of the average household dollar. Not until 1960 did food expenditures drop below one third of total household spending, and both food's and housing's shares decreased as discretionary spending rose. By the 1970s, food represented only about a quarter of all household expenditures in New York and across the U.S., and today hovers below fifteen percent. Industrialization, mass production, regional specialization, agricultural subsidization, amongst other processes drove the price of food down, arguably by off-setting costs we are starting to account for now (See Appendix B: Average Food Spending US and New York City).

kinds of spaces will be consolidated under municipal control. Some programs and policies incorporate strong social justice messages and attack systemic inequities as forms of environmental racism. Others, like the FRESH program, sponsored by a broad coalition including City Council, members of Congress and a grocery workers' union, that provides significant subsidies to grocery chains that locate in areas identified as food deserts, are more top-down and prescriptive.

Competing visions of a municipal food policy

Mayor Bloomberg appointed Benjamin Thomases, a recent graduate of Columbia Business School to be the city's first "Food Policy Coordinator." The Mayor created the position in late 2006 as part of an "anti-poverty" plan, and at the urging of City Council Speaker Christine Quinn (Cardwell 2010). Thomases was responsible for creating a task force and acting as a "lever" on agencies, and reported to Linda Gibbs, deputy mayor for Health and Human Services (Columbia News 2007). While the move was cheered by some, others felt that having Thomases report to the deputy mayor of HHS limited his role to "counting calories," emphasizing public health issues, and neglecting the significant role of food in the local and regional economy (Cardwell 2010). Thomases left abruptly in late 2010 and joined Wildcat Services Corporation, a non-profit that helps difficult-to-place populations transition into the workforce. Kim Kessler, a former lawyer and "avid" volunteer at a Brooklyn school garden program, was appointed in 2011, and like her predecessor, has since kept a low profile coordinating the efforts of various City agencies to increase access to healthy food for low-income New Yorkers, promote food security, and improve the sustainability of the city's food system (IACP Food Policy Panel, 2012).

Bloomberg has been criticized for viewing food issues too narrowly, focusing on public health concerns and not addressing broader economic and structural issues. Campaigns to eliminate trans-fats, and posting calories were well received, and demonstrated the influence a metropolitan market has on industry, and the ability of a state to shape eating behaviors. However, Bloomberg did not include food in his initial PlanNYC 2030, a report released in 2007 that outlines ten key goals for "the city's sustainable future."[169]

NYCEDC's management of the enclosed retail markets was based on cost-benefit analyses, until individual enclosed markets attracted the attention of politicians who brought financial support, and gleaned political credit. Only recently has NYCEDC[170] reversed its policy and, in partnership with Speaker Quinn, Queens Economic Development Corporation, and other private and public entities, began promoting the enclosed retail markets as public amenities.

These gaps in Bloomberg's policies underscore why piecemeal efforts require a Food Policy Coordinator. It also represents an opportunity for mayoral hopefuls to step in and present their own visions of the future of food for New York City:

Council Speaker Quinn and Manhattan Borough President Stringer have each formed food policy teams. They have each issued reports that lay out comprehensive plans for a municipal food policy that addresses every step from farm (whether upstate or Brooklyn) to table. Stringer's office has spent time talking to, and working with, constituents in East Harlem, and is expanding its work to Washington Heights and the Lower East Side. Staff at Stringer's

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[169] PlanNYC 2030 was amended in 2011 and a two-page section was added about food. Food, according to the plan, "represents a unique planning challenge" because the food chain depends largely on private infrastructure, and is shaped by millions of individual tastes. Nonetheless, municipal government will continue to make "concerted efforts" to intervene, particularly where food intersects with other aspects of PlanNYC 2030 such as the environment, the economy, and public health. The plan's perspective fragments food and food policy rather than using food as a core from which to develop policies.

[170] NYCEDC is a private-public partnership that works very closely with the Mayor's office. The Mayor appoints the President of NYCEDC.

office explained, “What distinguishes us is that we start with the community piece. That’s connected to the fact that we feel very strongly across all issues…integration of the community partners that the community be the guiding voice.” The role of the state is to be the community’s “ally, their bully pulpit, we need to leverage resources.” Stringer’s food policy team focuses on public health and healthy eating. They are working with “DoE [sic] kids who are eleven years old who are already 250 pounds….the food they are eating is literally killing them.” They emphasize practical solutions, like a Veggie Van that would bring produce from a wholesale farmers’ market directly to senior centers and public housing projects. Markets are good, but “we can also bring food to people!” Stringer’s *FoodNYC: A Blueprint for a Sustainable Food System* (2010) has been praised as creative and open-minded.

Figure 11.1: Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and Council Speaker Christine Quinn are both likely running for mayor in 2013. In 2010, Stringer released FoodNYC and Quinn released FoodWorks, reports detailing proposal for a municipal food policy. If either is implemented, it would be the first comprehensive food policy for New York City in more than fifty years.

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn rolled out *FoodWorks: A Vision to Improve NYC’s Food System* (2010) at two events, and cited the report at numerous press conferences. The

kick-off event was a sedate affair held in a crowded room at the New School in December 2009. The second event, in November 2010, held at Food & Finance High School, was more like a rock concert. Like the kick-off, every constituent of the food policy world in New York City was in attendance. After passing through the metal detectors, we were handed tickets before entering the amphitheater. Upbeat pop boomed on loudspeakers. On the stage were large props – a table set for two, a barrel-shaped composting drum, an enormous Hobart mixer, etc – representing five stages of a food system: agricultural production, processing, distribution, consumption, and post-consumption. Aides bearing clipboards and wielding Blackberries paced up and down the aisles. After two adrenaline-pumped introductions, Speaker Quinn appeared on the stage and delivered a forty-five minute address laying out goals, strategies and proposals imbued with discourses dominating talk about food policy in New York today: sustainability, economic opportunity, improving public health by improving food environments, and a "systems approach" that seeks to fix crises holistically. It's a seductive vision, one delivered in broad strokes with little specific legislation and measured – or politic – ambitions amidst it fifty-nine points. At the end of the feel-good event, the audience rose in ovation, and filed out the door. Quinn, like Stringer, has seized an opportunity to make food a signature issue. Many publics are demanding intervention, and food is a policy domain waiting to be shaped by a winning vision.

Where are public markets in these visions for the city's future? Quinn's report (2010:22) calls for more state support of farmers' markets, ensuring continued growth, and expansion of the EBT program, and acceptance of WIC benefits to broaden the markets' "customer base." She calls for construction of a "commercial kitchen incubator for start-ups," like the one funded by City Council at *La Marqueta* (Ibid 35). The enclosed retail markets, "underutilized for years," are a "lost opportunity" for small retailers and processors. They should be revitalized, Quinn says, as "launching pads" for small businesses (Ibid 36). In general, *FoodWorks* promotes and builds on

policies currently in place like FRESH and Green Carts that use zoning laws to incentivize supermarkets and pushcarts, respectively, to locate in "food deserts" – communities with limited access to fresh, healthy food. Geographies of this crisis of supply correlate closely to maps of adult obesity (Ibid 50, 53); Quinn's solution is to create greater access to fresh produce and other "healthy" foods. By mitigating unhealthy environments, the presumption is that unhealthy bodies will become healthy bodies. In spaces created by private investment – and public tax abatements, in the case of FRESH – the state will regulate, and correct, citizen behaviors through expanded benefit programs, nutrition classes, and educational programs in the schools. Private investments are being deployed as spaces of governance; public markets are re-imagined as spaces to grow free enterprise.

Stringer's *FoodNYC* combines big concepts ("Regional Food Production") with more pointed goals, like calling on Mayor Bloomberg to ban the sale of bottled water on all city properties and in all city facilities (2010: 29). Stringer's plan calls for increasing "the number and type of retail food outlets that deviate from the traditional grocery store model by identifying spaces for use as 'alternative' food markets" (Ibid 18). He proposes legislation requiring city agencies to identify "vacant and underused spaces, buildings, and lots" to house farmers' markets, and indoor retail markets. His report points out that while FRESH has the financial potential to add more than two hundred supermarkets, physical requirements will likely limit the program to fifteen stores.[171] The Green Cart Program is also limited by size and location restraints. As demonstration of the city's commitment to "long-term viability" of outdoor markets, Stringer calls for construction of permanent infrastructure including electrical outlets,

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[171] Stores that benefit from FRESH incentives must be at least 6,000 square feet. There are additional requirements such as 30% of floor space must be dedicated to perishable goods including dairy, meat, poultry, and produce; and at least 500 square feet must be dedicated to fresh produce (www.nyc.gov).

and signs. However, outdoor markets are not the panacea: 84% close during the winter, and lack of on-site storage facilities limits the range of products sold.

FoodNYC advocates for the development of new enclosed retail markets. Not as a means of containing pushcarts, or as a way of disciplining immigrant behaviors, but as way to revitalize vacant properties, create a means of collecting revenue for "non-contributing" properties, and benefit neighborhoods by "providing jobs…and removing blight" (Stringer 2010: 18-19). Rescripting the work public enclosed markets could do, *FoodNYC* describes the markets as a form of guerilla institution to fill gaps, fix market failures, and deliver public good. Stringer's proposals to create more markets, like the rest of his report, acknowledges the uneven geographies of New York City's food landscapes without reinscribing food deserts, and areas with high rates of obesity and diabetes as the sole targets for state intervention. Rather, he represents the entire city as a space that could benefit from new, more creative food policies.

Finally, in a return to recommendations made in the early twentieth century as public demand for state intervention rose, and competing solutions to the city's food crises were being aired, Stringer's report concludes with a call to create a "Department of Food and Markets to coordinate and lead systematic reform of the City's food and agricultural policies and programs." Without central oversight and coordination, the good work achieved thus far in New York is vulnerable to "leadership changes, departmental culture, budgetary constraints, and competing policy aims" (Ibid 34). There is a strong historical argument for this proposal, and a civic, or democratic, one as well: creation of a Department would help ensure that as power continues to consolidate around food, and the spaces through which it flows in New York City, there is a site of authority, and accountability. Articulating a municipal food policy would give citizens something to debate, to ask questions about, and to evaluate, contest. Food is central to

our lives in New York City, and neglecting to treat it as such perpetuates inequities, and wastes opportunities.

For consumers, citizens, and vendors, entrepreneurs with dreams of opening a stall at one of the enclosed retail markets – such as Two Girls & Two Pups, a bakery owned by two Latinas opening at the Moore Street Market in August 2012 – creating a Department of Food and Markets would assure a point of contact with municipal government. Presently, initiatives and policies that regulate food distribution, production and consumption are implemented and enforced variously by the Departments of Health, Parks, Education and Transportation, Small Business Services, NYCEDC, GrowNYC, and more.

Lack of a comprehensive food policy makes it challenging for citizens and politicians to speak and act in a coordinated manner to identify goals, and develop solutions. A more comprehensive policy, could, for example, benefit vendors if the enclosed markets and other public markets were recognized as distributors of local food in addition to being economic engines. Subsidies, loans, or tax abatements could be provided to establish businesses in underserved neighborhoods, supplementing the current dependence on supermarket chains to mitigate food deserts.

Growing lettuces and other fresh produce on the roofs of Hunts' Point Terminal Market reduces the carbon footprint of our food. It also creates a demand for training and employment, and provides a source of fresh, local produce at a potentially lower cost than produce grown further upstate, making it accessible to a new class of consumer. All of this can happen without a coordinating agency, but it takes work to connect the dots, and to sustain partnerships. Establishing a Department of Food and Markets would give New York City once again a means of

addressing contemporary food crises, and a platform for proactive policies to produce an urban food landscape for the modern city we need to become.

Market Diversification

As conversations and debates take place about what a municipal food policy might look like in the future, there is an undeniable surge of activity around food taking place and space throughout New York City, expressed in part by the establishment of new forms of public markets. Questions remain about how a new food policy regime will intersect with, formalize, co-opt, or otherwise engage with, emerging geographies of public markets, many of which are establishing new norms for what a public market might be. This chapter ends with a look at examples of new markets, and considers who they serve, and how they are challenging and reinforcing dominant discourses today about affordable, adequate and safe food.

Public markets were once specifically designated for New York's poorest residents; they were used to discipline immigrant behaviors and Americanize vendors and customers. They were also a source of lower priced goods, and an important channel for second grade goods. Today, some public markets continue to serve as policy solutions that target the working classes. In areas identified as food deserts, for example, farmers markets are introduced as sources of healthy foods and information about healthy food habits in low-income, underserved neighborhoods.

New York's public markets have ceased being identified as a primarily working class form of food retailing, however, and are viewed instead as a best practice found in middle class neighborhoods that can be used to fix the food landscape in low and moderate income neighborhoods. Public markets are recognized as distribution sites for local, seasonal, and "value-added" foods, and as important links between regional farmers and city residents that

strengthen the local "food shed." Public markets are represented as "economic engines" where entrepreneurs can kick start their careers in food manufacturing. They are public amenities often cited in real estate listings. Like the arrival of Starbucks, a Greenmarket can indicate that a neighborhood has reached a tipping point.

As the enclosed retail markets were rapidly declining due to government withdrawal and decreasing patronage, the first Greenmarket opened at Union Square in 1976, establishing a new paradigm for New York City public markets. Greenmarkets began to open in other areas of the city, in middle class residential neighborhoods like the Upper West Side (1983, assorted),[172] Tribeca (1981), and Carroll Gardens (2007); prime public spaces like Grand Army Plaza (1989), Rockefeller Plaza (2002), and the New York Botanical Garden (2009); and iconic New York sites like Dag Hammarskjold (United Nations) Plaza (2000), and Columbia University (2001). Today there are more than fifty Greenmarkets. The state supports the growth of Greenmarkets (and other farmers' markets), which are managed by GrowNYC, a public-private partnership housed in the Mayor's office.

There are other market operators such as Maritza Owens, of Harvest Home Farmers' Market, whose mission is to open markets in low-income neighborhoods. Owens' organization is founded on the principle that "all members of our society, irrespective of their socio-economic status, should have access to good quality produce" (Official HHFM website). HHFM operates over twenty markets in the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan. Community Markets, founded by Miriam Haas, manages the process of setting up markets: "from site selection to vendor mix to promotional programs, we do everything we can to create a farmers' market that's as distinct as the community it serves" (CM website). Community Markets operates at

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[172] The Upper West Side has several Greenmarkets: 79th St. and Columbus Ave. (1983); 97th St. and Columbus Ave. (1994); 66th St. and Columbus Ave., Tucker Square (2003); and Columbus Circle, at 59th St., where a market opened in 1994 and closed in 1995 (GrowNYC, direct communication).

locations throughout New York City, Westchester County (north of New York City), and Long Island (See Appendix F: Map of New York City's Farmers' Markets).

The growing demand for farmers' markets and a growing level of expertise and record of success among non-Greenmarket operators suggests there is room for multiple models of open air markets that collectively address a real need, and appetite for, fresh, local produce and the experience of shopping at a public market among consumers of all classes, races and ethnicities.

Private/public markets

Increasingly, new public markets are private, and private/public entrepreneurial ventures. Communities, market managers, and individuals negotiate with the Department of Parks for permission to set up a market. DeKalb Market, a "community destination," was built out of shipping containers on an empty lot in Downtown Brooklyn while developers waited to begin construction (Fabricant 2011; dekalbmarket.com). Father Jim O'Shea and his youth organization, Re-Connect, operate a farmers market at the Woodhull Medical Center in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, delivering fresh produce to an underserved population, and helping young men develop entrepreneurial skills. Markets may partner with City Council and install EBT machines that allow patrons to use food stamps and state funded programs like Youth Bucks and Healthy Bucks that provide low-income citizens with coupons with which to shop at outdoor markets. Historical narratives ground some of New York's newest markets:

Hester Street Fair was founded by Su Chin Pak in 2010 on land owned by the Seward Park Co-op, a "quiet, tree-lined walkway between Seward Park and the Essex Street basketball

courts" on the Lower East Side.[173] Designed to "celebrate the neighborhood's culture and history," and Hester Street Fair is designed as a "hub" for street peddlers selling vintage clothing, jewelry, "curated local goods," and food from "the area's more popular eateries." Hester Street Fair drew twelve thousand people on its opening day, and has a Facebook page (Ma 2010; Hedlund 2010). Its website promotes coming attractions such as "celebrity stylist" Aimee Song's pop-up shop, and Gefilteria, purveyors of "sustainable gefilte fish, borscht, and more."

On a late Saturday afternoon in June 2012, the Fair was dormant; many of the vendors had packed up and gone home. Amidst the forty stalls arranged in three rows intersected by two aisles were wilted organic vegetables, a purveyor of artisanal iced teas (including a delicious sour cherry version), and the owner of Brooklyn Dark, a small-batch chocolatier who lives in Brighton Beach and produces in Colorado. Prices were high ($4.50 for a dozen eggs; $7 for a bar of chocolate), well above the reach of the many low-income residents who live on the ever-gentrifying Lower East Side.

[173] Like the city's Greenmarkets, Hester Street Fair is a seasonal market, open from May to November, on Saturdays from 10am to 6pm.

Figure 11.2: A metal arch welcomes visitors to Hester Street Fair. One disappointed patron commented, “this isn’t a place to shop; it’s a place to stroll through on your way to brunch” (Audant, 2012).

Robert LaValva is the founder of New Amsterdam Market, a non-profit organization on a mission to create a public market “for our time.” Among LaValva’s goals is incubating “a new business sector” – purveyors who source from farmers, foragers, and producers who are “good stewards of our land and waters.” Founded in 2007, the market is located on South Street between Beekman Street and Peck Slip, facing the historic Fulton Fish Market, a “precious public asset owned by the people of New York.” A map on the New Amsterdam Market website indicates nearby markets built in 1642, 1907, 1939, and locates the new market as inheritor of a civic lineage.

LaValva built support for this project by lobbying city officials, creating a board filled with chefs, CEOs, and a spokesperson for Mayor Bloomberg. He got a shout-out in Speaker Quinn’s 2010 *FoodWorks* report. This list of supporters includes politicians from every level of government, and many experts in the food/food policy circles including Alice Waters, Marion

Nestle, Mario Batali and Christine Quinn.[174] The market is a highly developed concept. Its website proclaims:

"…as is true of public markets, New Amsterdam Market will be accessible to all, striving to diminish the economic, social, and educational impediments to sound nutrition."

"The democratic and cultural vitality of public markets has long made this civic institution worthy of municipal and philanthropic support."

New Amsterdam Market solicits donations, and runs several fundraisers every year; it is open on Sundays from 11am to 4pm, although LaValva aims to turn it into a year-round, retail and wholesale "emporia." Purveyors range from a seaweed forager from Maine to Brooklyn-based makers of Mexican sweets based on local, seasonal fruits. Foodie favorites like Saxelby Cheesemongers where cheese prices often exceed $20/pound and Mast Brothers Chocolate, whose small batch chocolate bars sell for $8, appear on occasion. These artisanal producers/vendors sell goods that are too expensive for low-income consumers, a very real challenge to LaValva's vision. In conversations as early as 2005, he minimized price as a barrier to his goals of access "to all." Nonetheless, in November 2010, the market received EBT terminals, making it possible for patrons to use food stamps. Contradictions abound, not all resolved just by taking place in a single space.

Middle class appetites for public markets of all types continue to grow, and New York's publics celebrate when new markets sprout in public spaces. Questions remain, among them whether examples of working class markets might emerge alongside these bourgeois sites? Would there be the kind of civic support for such a site? Could a lower income community support new forms of public markets? Might this be a form of public activism, a collective response to the multiple food crises we are facing today? Should public markets – in theory,

open to all – be viewed as a form of gentrification, a means of seizing public spaces for particular classes, and the exclusion of others? As new policies are shaped, is there flexibility and foresight to take account of creativity on the ground, and to let market forces guide the development of a municipal food policy? How might a Department of Food and Markets for the twenty-first century institutionalize public markets as spaces through which, and in which, to advance a public agenda?

Chapter 12: Findings, contributions and conclusions

Framing public markets as public institutions, and productions of public policy and political processes, provided a lens through which to examine New York City's enclosed retail markets as dynamic, contested spaces. By focusing on intersections of economic, social, cultural and political forces over time and space, I traced how the markets' relative position on the urban landscape shifted as ideas about government's role in regulating food distribution; the state's responsibility for its citizens; definitions of good food; the place of food in public space; and the value of public markets as sources of local food, as places to access "adequate, affordable and safe" food, as economic engines, and as indicators of community well-being emerged, and receded. Looking closely at policies that led to the construction of, and regulation of New York's markets was an opportunity to explore constructions of the city's publics and processes by which they were represented as subjects of their state. This perspective held the enclosed public markets in tension with the political, economic, cultural and social contexts within which they were situated. This approach is a departure from acritical and ahistorical discourses about public markets that dominate media representations, and, I would argue, popular imaginations.

Public markets have fed cities and imaginations for centuries. Emile Zola's (1915) descriptions of *Les Halles*, aisles overflowing with carrots, cabbages, chickens, rabbits, fresh cheeses and eggs, conjure up images of markets throughout the world. There is magic in public markets. They are a measure of civic life, whether the bustling stalls of New York's Fulton Street in the nineteenth century where customers slurped freshly shucked oysters, strolling past butchers breaking down carcasses (DeVoe 1867), or Port-au-Prince's Iron Market, whose recent

$12 million renovation was funded by an Irish business man who recognized its symbolic power in a country demolished by an earthquake in January 2010 (Bhatia 2011).

This symbolic aspect, this power of public markets as rituals, as ideals, as places inscribed with narratives of history and culture, and their legitimizing capacities as public spaces often obscures struggles over productions and reproductions of public markets, my primary interest in this study. I examined how public markets intersect with state policies, and the achievement of municipal goals. How have their forms and functions been deployed as strategies of government? When and where has the state been vested in its public markets? Thompson's (1997) study of *Les Halles* during Haussmann's reign demonstrates the class and gender "work" done by regulation of Paris' central market. In Berlin, consolidating municipal control of trade from the hinterlands coincided with weighing the needs of various constituents. These processes converged in the construction of a public market that reflected Berlin's aspirations to be a world-class metropolis (Leighninger 1996).

Although a study of New York's public markets could well be situated in the present, I was interested in what had happened in the past, particularly since the past as a cobbled collection of competing stories is being used to rationalize policies today. I set out to explore how food and food policy had been framed in New York during another time when "the public" demanded that the state intervene in these matters. Horowitz et al (2004) proposes a model for conceptualizing state intervention in a city's food system as a cycle, expanding the question to include not only when does a state intervene, but when does a state withdraw. Their model provides a structure within which I could undertake an historical study. The cyclical nature of their model balanced with attention to historical and geographical specificity also provides a way of conceptualizing what we are experiencing today: although the types of spaces through

which policy is being implemented have changed, the dynamics, or mechanics, of Horowitz et al's model move attention from the spaces of intervention to the processes that produce and deploy demand for regulation.

To further situate the study, I drew on histories of consumption and retailing in the United States in the twentieth century. Studies of public markets, both historical and contemporary, provided additional perspectives on how public markets are deployed by governments across time and space, and how the state's view of public markets often clashes with daily use by patrons and consumers whose everyday lives shape the public markets from the ground up.

Did this approach work? Was it an appropriate way of investigating New York City's public markets? From a technical perspective, given the available sources and the data that could be produced from those sources, yes. Did research findings support Horowitz et al's theory of state intervention in municipal food supply? Yes, and yes, by expanding their theory in several ways:

Data support the representation of the creation and dismantling of New York City's Department of Markets, and the related productions and reproductions of the enclosed public markets as a boom and bust of public demand for state intervention in response to what was identified as a crisis of food supply. The subsequent dissolution of the Department of Markets and its public retail market system dovetailed with the establishment of the Department of Consumer Protection in 1968, in response to growing public demand for intervention in what was perceived to be a crisis of food safety.

Yes, data support Horowitz etal's model by expanding it. Foucault's concept of governmentality includes more than government and its administrative functions; it is a set of

diverse apparatuses, or discursive strategies, including institutions, architectural forms, regulations, laws, science, and philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions that constitute a response to specific crises or problems. This resonates with Horowitz et al and their attention to dynamic and contested convergences of forces. However, their model does not address difference, and processes of differentiation that (re-)produce publics, or subjects of governmentality, by drawing lines between those included and excluded from society, or what Foucault called biopolitics (2003: 243-45). Gender, race, and ethnicity were, and continue to be, deployed as ways of designating some citizens as targets of state policies, and others as embodiments of the state's ideal citizens. Class, itself a production of complex social relations, was key to understanding when food related issues become crises, and when "public demand," an under-examined force in Horowitz et al, leads to state intervention.

Based on research findings, Horowitz etal's model of state intervention as a cycle of expanding and contracting consumer demands can be refined: Whereas Horowitz et al identify consumer demand as the agent, the force that "spurs" booms of state intervention and regulation of the markets, research suggests it is middle class consumers' demand that determines the form and targets of state intervention. For example, during the first half of the twentieth century, middle class demands for fair prices, and adequate and affordable supplies of safe food coincided with working class demands. Public policy responded to this crisis of supply by developing and implementing a battery of policy solutions ranging from consumer education to enclosed public markets.

In the 1950s and 60s, the GI Bill helped the middle classes achieve prosperity. Suburbanization led to growing residential segregation, and Cold War discourses demonized unions and collective actions. Median spending on food decreased with industrialization of

agriculture and other technological changes. Middle class "conception of the 'public good' correspondingly narrowed" (Cohen 2003: 228). Allegiance dissipated as bourgeois interests diverged from working class concerns. Subsequently, what registered as public demand for state intervention in food distribution due to a crisis of safety were middle class fears about the contents of processed foods; the working classes continued to face a crisis of supply.[175]

Intersecting class, and materializing class as well as other axes of difference, is space. Horowitz et al provided a useful model for investigating when the state intervenes. Where the state intervenes, and what kinds of geographies are produced by public policies and political processes, is neglected by their model, and was at the core of this study. This study contributes to the field of geography, and other studies that take space seriously, by taking steps to close gaps between geographic research about food regulation and studies of public markets. It examined how policy regimes in one city, New York, intersect with a particular type of urban space and inform the shape of food distribution and consumption, and how these processes, in turn, reinforce and challenge differences among citizens along axes of race, gender and class.

Findings suggest a politics of location that points to systemic differentiation of working class consumers from their middle class peers, and a rationalization of top-down policy solutions that include the surveillance, disciplining, and disempowerment of low-income citizens as a way of "democratizing" access to affordable, adequate and safe food. It suggests that, historically, low-income consumers have been subjected to policies that radically re-shape their food retailing landscapes without consideration of why conditions on the ground exist and persist, and without considering how past policies contributed to existing problems. It points to the

[175] Attention paid to "food scares" today, and related emphasis on consumer choice and individual action as solutions can also be linked to the dominance of middle class demand for market-based responses that don't address fundamental flaws in government regulation of our food systems (Freidberg 2004; Guthman 2003; see also Jackson 2010).

power of food retailing landscapes to communicate to consumers about their relative worth in a society.

Developing a robust politics of location about food retailing in New York City would necessarily include a more complete investigation of the private retail sector in concert with this investigation of the public retail sector. This study took steps in this direction by expanding the purview of histories of consumption to include public markets in addition to other retail forms like shopping malls, grocery stores and supermarkets. The rise of supermarkets in the early decades of the twentieth century informed geographies of public markets in New York City; recent policies enacted in New York City and elsewhere use supermarkets as solutions to food crises. Today, farmers' markets and other forms of public markets are strategies used by the state to mitigate limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables in food deserts, a landscape form created by the dominance of large-scale private food retailers and a lack of public policies regulating private sector expansion and consolidation in decades past (Larsen and Gilliland 2008; Walker et al 2010). It is important to view all forms of retailing as always partially inscribed by the state, and not create absolute divides between public and private.

Additional next steps for this study include comparative studies of other cities in the United States to investigate how other municipal governments/systems of governance responded, and respond, to food crises. Likewise, the New York City case could be compared to examples from major European cities where food crises of supply sparked collective public action during the early twentieth century, and examine how discursive shifts intersected the locations of public markets and state intervention in food more broadly, including any subsequent periods of state withdrawal.

Of greater immediate interest, this study points to gaps in the study of food deserts. Working class, immigrant neighborhoods were once filled with pushcarts, public retail markets and independent grocers; today, neighborhoods with similar demographics are "food deserts." While definitions of food deserts, and policies to mitigate food deserts, abound, processes of "food desertification" have not been sufficiently explored. This study touched on contributing factors and described some of their effects. Guthman (2011) identifies the logics of late-stage capitalism as a contributing factor, and examines the effects of food deserts on people's lives; Block's extensive research seeks to refine definitions and geographies of food deserts as a way of developing policies to improve food access among low-income residents (2006; 2008). Like Deutsch's history of the emergence and evolution of supermarkets in Chicago (2010), a sedimented study of a discrete area of New York City could shed light on what happened in relation to public policies and other forces that produced these topographic features that are targets of state intervention today. Food deserts are "market failures" facilitated by state withdrawal, a parallel production to the enclosed public markets, which were a solution to what was considered a surplus of retail food outlets of a particular kind.

Today, demand, and support for, state intervention in food distribution at the municipal scale emerges from diverse publics of all classes. Could this boom of demand for state intervention, and the emergence of a new food regime in New York City, produce landscapes that are more truly democratizing and less differentiating than food retailing landscapes of the past century? Though the Department of Markets universalized consumption through its Bureau of Consumer Services in the 1930s, consolidation of control over and through geographies of public retail markets identified working class neighborhoods as different from the middle class neighborhoods served by chain grocers and supermarkets. After World War II, when the state and the private sector withdrew investments from the cities, suburban supermarkets presented

middle class shoppers with an air-conditioned bounty, and urban residents made do with post-date milk at corner stores, and a dilapidated system of public retail markets all but abandoned by the neo-liberal state.

Some politicians and activists challenge familiar approaches that define and prescribe from above, advocating for policies that empower rather than patronize. However, many state measures continue to reinforce existing social relations. In broad strokes, an increasingly diverse food landscape presents the middle classes with a multitude of choices, a series of philosophical, moral and personal decisions about what foods to consume. These choices are intimately linked to who they are and the world they (want to) live in. Lower-income citizens face a plethora of fast foods and dearth of fresh produce. The poorest are often undernourished and over-nourished. Want and surplus are coincident. These diagnoses provide maps for food policies that target market failures like food deserts. Legislation creates incentives for sweeping, top-down measures to alter food retailing landscapes in lower income neighborhoods.

Relaxed regulations allow citizens (often middle class) to raise chickens in back yards and keep hives on their roofs. Public, and other, markets are promoted as a means of distributing local and artisanal, and no longer "cheap," foods. The enclosed public markets are being re-invented as "incubators" for emerging entrepreneurs. Today, whether public market or *la marqueta*, they are held up as examples of state commitment to, and investment in, New York's food system, their forms and functions re-imagined once again as public amenities designed to deliver public good.

Crowds gathered when Mayor LaGuardia celebrated the grand openings of enclosed markets in Brooklyn, the Bronx and in Manhattan. Thousands craned their necks to watch as he talked about fair prices, and the elevation of vendors to merchants. There were democratizing

promises in those concrete buildings, and in the state's stance on behalf of its citizens, even if many pushcart vendors were forced to give up their way of life, and many were against containment. These promises were only ever unevenly inscribed.

Today, discourses of justice, and sustainability intersect debates about food and the city we live in. These and other discourses weigh in on landscapes of diabetes and obesity, of farmers' markets, of fast food outlets and school gardens and urban farms, of cooperatives, and CSA's, of Green Carts. Among the challenges will be remaining aware of tendencies to register public demand as it is framed by the middle classes. Overcoming this privilege will take any number of forms. Public markets as public institutions could be deployed by the state, and by its citizens – consumers and vendors alike – to do some of this work. Already the installation of EBT's at many of the city's Greenmarkets has made it possible for people to use food stamps to purchase seasonal produce and to participate in what has become an iconic New York act of (public) consumption. In a small but not insignificant way, boundaries are confronted. Markets outside the Greenmarket system broaden geographies and definitions of farmers markets, creating additional points of access to residents of working class neighborhoods. The meaning of public markets is made more fluid, and – perhaps – more democratic, as more consumers are able to weigh in.[176]

The Mayor of Belo Horizonte, Brazil's fourth largest city, 2.5 million, went several steps further, and used its public markets to help realize municipality's declaration that food was a right of citizenship: merchants bid on the most lucrative spots at markets in the city's choicest public spaces and agree to sell about twenty items at prices set by the state, about two-thirds of market price. The rest of their goods they sell at whatever price the market can bear. The

[176] See John McPhee's 1978 article about the Union Square Greenmarket "Giving Good Weight."

central locations of these thirty-four public markets bring rich and poor together (Lappé 2010).[177] Luis Ignacio (Lula) da Silva, leftist union leader elected President of Brazil in 2003, made food a basic human right, establishing a policy called Zero Hunger strategy, multiple strategies/urban farming, subsidies (Vaisman 2012).

As a new food policy regime takes shape and shapes space in New York, its geographies, emplacements, and embodiments have the potential to radically shape relations of citizens to their food, and through their food, to one another, in supermarkets and bodegas, public markets and *las marquetas*. Even if the results are less-than radical, there is ample recognition of the power of food as an economic engine, as a component of our environment, as part of biopolitics, as an element of public health, as a right of citizenship, to harness it as a force for change. Let us take inspiration from the City of Belo Horizonte in Brazil, and "act within the principle that the status of a citizen surpasses that of a mere consumer." Food is politics. Let it elevate us all.

[177] Zero Hunger depends on a web of strategies – cash transfers, urban farming; has morphed into Bolsa Familia. Belo Horizonte also operates five government-run cafeterias where a hot meal can be purchased for two reais ($1.10). The restaurants serve three meals a day, five days a week. Originally intended for the poor, now college students, workers, nurses, police, and homeless sit side by side, 13,000 meals a day (Vaisman 2012).

Appendix A: Glossary of Market Types

Definitions provided below refer to market types discussed in this study of New York City, and is not intended to be a comprehensive list. Market types are categorized as public or private, and although this bifurcation is overly simplistic, it is appropriate given the context of the study.

Public Market Types

- **Retail** – a market for the sale of goods directly to the public. There are many categories of retail markets, such as:

    - Enclosed – a network of nine markets built in New York City as a means of containing pushcart markets and moving public retail markets from the streets indoors where running water and refrigeration assured better standards of sanitation and quality. Eight markets were built between 1936 and 1942; Harlem Market was built in 1955. Today, four enclosed markets remain: Essex Street, Arthur Avenue, Park Avenue, and Moore Street.

    - Farmers (retail) – markets, often out-of-doors and in public space, where local farmers, fishers, and producers can sell their products directly to the public.

    - Greenmarket – a category of farmers markets operated by GrowNYC, a private-public entity that operates out of the Mayor's Office. Greenmarkets require that only farmers and producers sell at the markets they manage, and that all goods, including ingredients used in processed foods, come from the local region.

    - Pushcart (also know as Open Air) – a market made up of pushcarts lined up side by side on the edge of a city street, often both sides to insure maximum concentration of peddlers. Peddlers sold a wide variety of produce, fish, prepared foods such as roasted corn, meat, notions, and dishes. Pushcart/Open Air markets were initially informal; New York City's Department of Markets designated market streets in the 1920s.

    - Stoopline – on "market streets" (streets designated for pushcart markets), stoopline stalls were permitted so long as they did not extend more than three feet from "any premises," and were no more than seven feet tall (LOCAL LAW 65OF 1992, Int. No. 484). Merchants could sell produce, candy, tobacco products, ice cream, flowers, and shoe shines from stoopline stalls.

- **Wholesale** – a market for the sale of produce, meat and other goods to retailers such as grocers, restaurants, bakers, hotels, peddlers. Types of wholesale markets include:

  - Farmers (wholesale) – markets where farmers can sell directly to retailers. In New York City, farmers markets at the Bronx and Brooklyn Terminal Markets were primarily wholesale markets.

  - Terminal – a central site, usually in a metropolitan area and often on the city periphery, where agricultural goods are assembled, traded and distributed. Terminal markets are often wholesale markets, although many have sections that also cater to retail trade. New York City's Hunts Point Produce Market and Tsukiji in Tokyo are examples of terminal markets.

- **Private Market Types**
  - Grocery – a retail food store where groceries (foodstuffs including canned, processed and packaged goods, and household items) are sold. Clerks once gathered items for consumers standing at the counter. By the 1910s, self-serve groceries gained popularity. Also called grocer's stores and grocery stores. Groceries that sell fruits and vegetables are called greengrocers or produce markets. Full-service or consolidated grocers sell produce, as well as meat, fish and baked goods.

  - Chain grocery – a retail food store owned and/or controlled by a single company. Chains generally share a name, distribution chains, and benefits derived from economies of scale. Chains took off at the turn of the twentieth century, and grew rapidly in the 1920s throughout the United States. Chains quickly dominated the retail food trade in New York City's middle class neighborhoods.

  - Supermarkets – a consolidated, self-serve, large-scale model of food retailing that emerged in the 1930s. With their bare-bones décor and bazaar-like atmosphere, supermarkets brought bakers, butchers, produce vendors and more under a single roof, offering low prices in exchange for a no frills shopping experience. In the 1950s and 60s, supermarkets were redesigned as gleaming, high-tech emporia with aisles of refrigerated cases displaying America's post-war bounty. Supermarkets are now the standard bearer for retail food distribution in the United States. By adding services such as pharmacies, bank branches and prepared foods, supermarkets are meeting consumers' desires for one-stop shopping.

Appendix B: Average Food Spending US and New York City

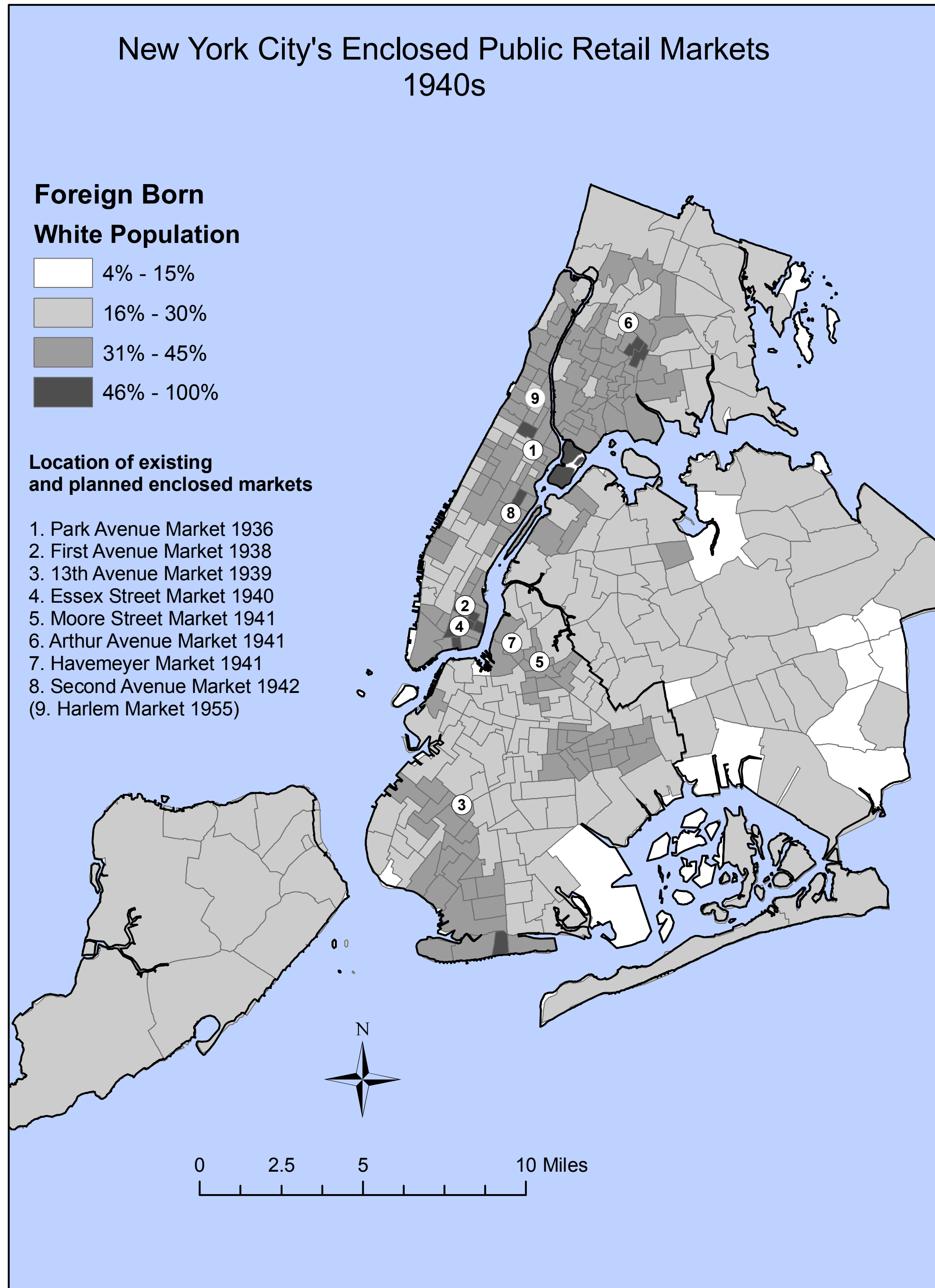
Year	Avg Food Spending US	Avg Housing Spending US	Avg Food Spending NYC	Avg Housing Spending NYC
1901	42.5%	23.3%	43.7%	23.5%
1918-19	38.2%	23.3%	42%	21.6%
1934-36	33.6%	32%	36.4%	32%
1950*	29.7%	27.2%	33.4%	28.3%
1960**	**24.3%**	**29.5%**	**28.1%**	**30.8%**
1972-73	19.3%	30.8%	21.1%	34.1%
1984-85	15%	30.4%	16.4%	31.1%
1996-97	13.8%	32.1%	15.4%	37%
2002-03	13.1%	32.8%	13.9%	37.6%

Notes: United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, *100 Years of U.S. Consumer Spending*

* In 1950, on average in the US, "Other" (31.6%) surpassed both Food and Housing. In New York City, "Other" was third (26.1%)

** 1960 was the first year when Housing was a greater share of household expenses than Food across the US and in NYC, and Other was #1. Housing was #2 in the US on average and #1 in New York City. Food was #3 in the US on average and in NYC. Food has remained #3 since.

Appendix C: Map of New York City's Enclosed Public Retails Markets, 1940s



Notes: US Census, 1940; NYC Department of Markets

Appendix D: Total* Farmers' Markets Licenses and Truckloads of Produce

Year	# Farmers' Licenses	# truckloads	% decline receipts**
1950	824		
1951	743		8.5%
1952	650		15% ***
1953	597	****	
1954	n/a		
1955	498		
1956	438	15,570	
1957	n/a		
1958	343	13,000	
1959	288	11,389	
1960	275	9,626	

Notes: NYC Department of Markets Annual Reports 1950 - 1960

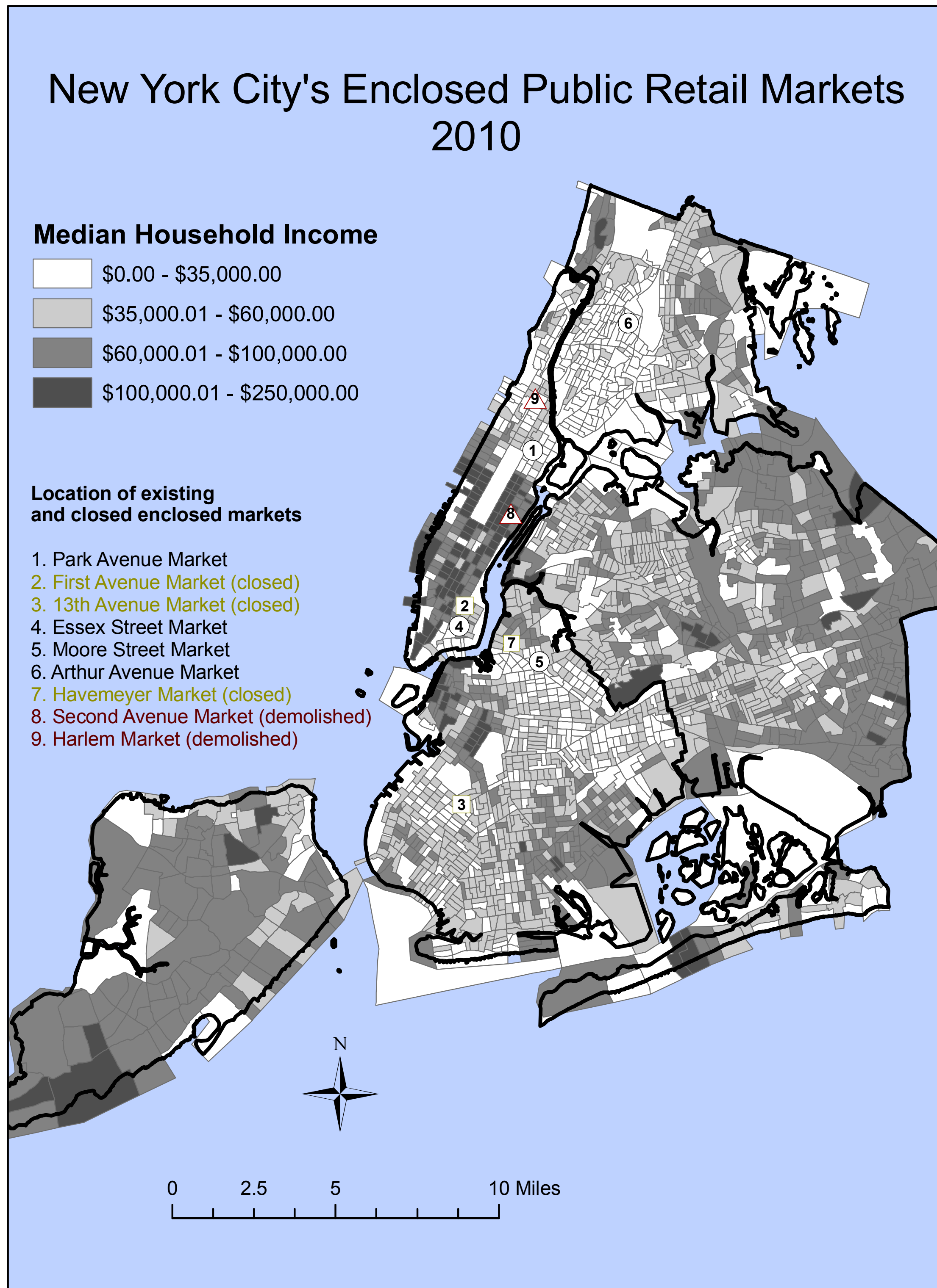
* Farmers' markets were located at the Bronx and Brooklyn Terminal Markets; the Bronx consistently had a greater share of farmers.

** Receipts declined "steadily" from 1936 to 1952 (DoM Annual Report 1952:24).

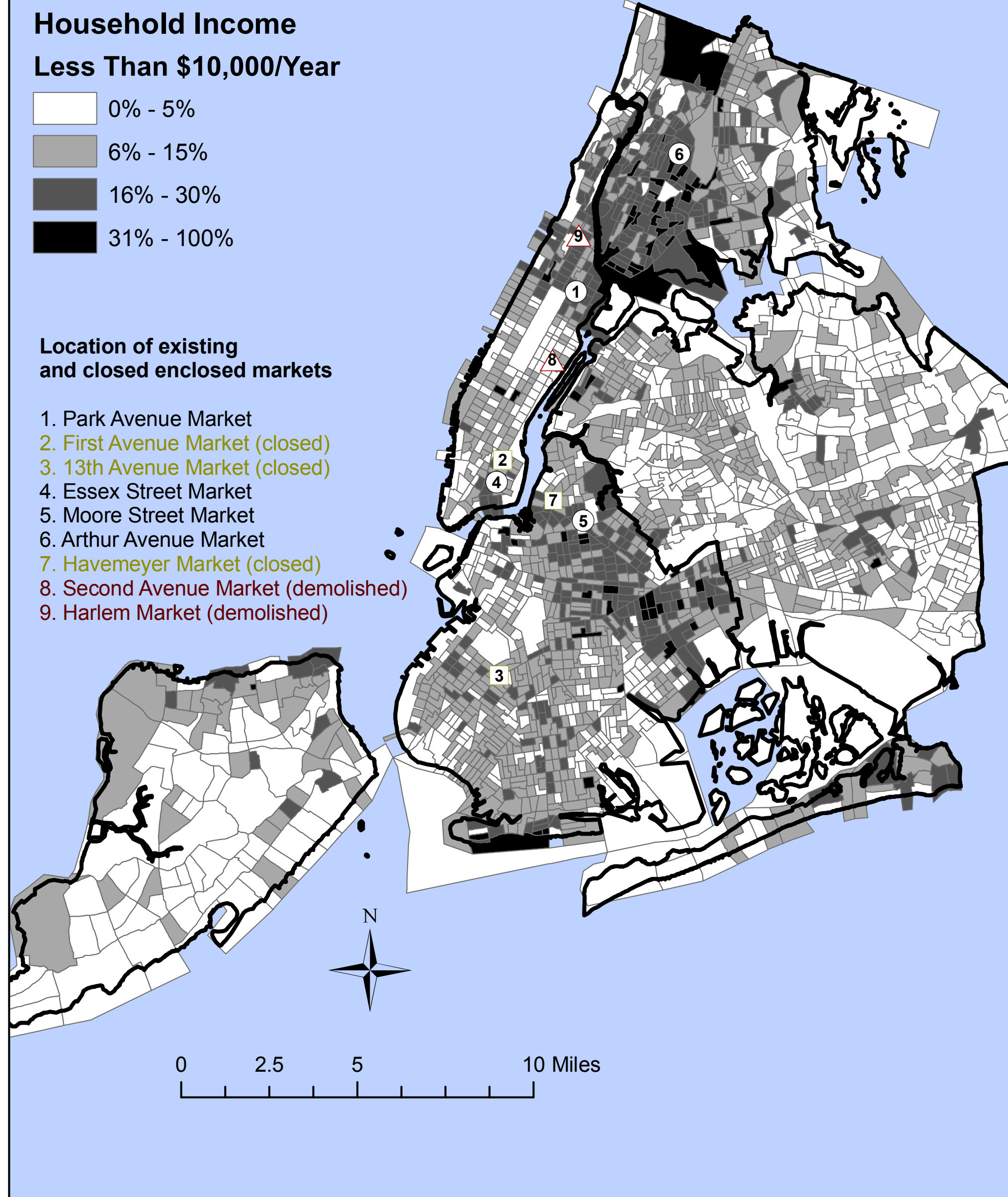
*** Bad harvest due to late spring and continued strong market for land.

**** Number of truckloads increased. NYC Department of Markets decided not to consolidate Bronx and Brooklyn farmers' markets.

Appendix E: Maps of New York City's Enclosed Public Markets, 2010



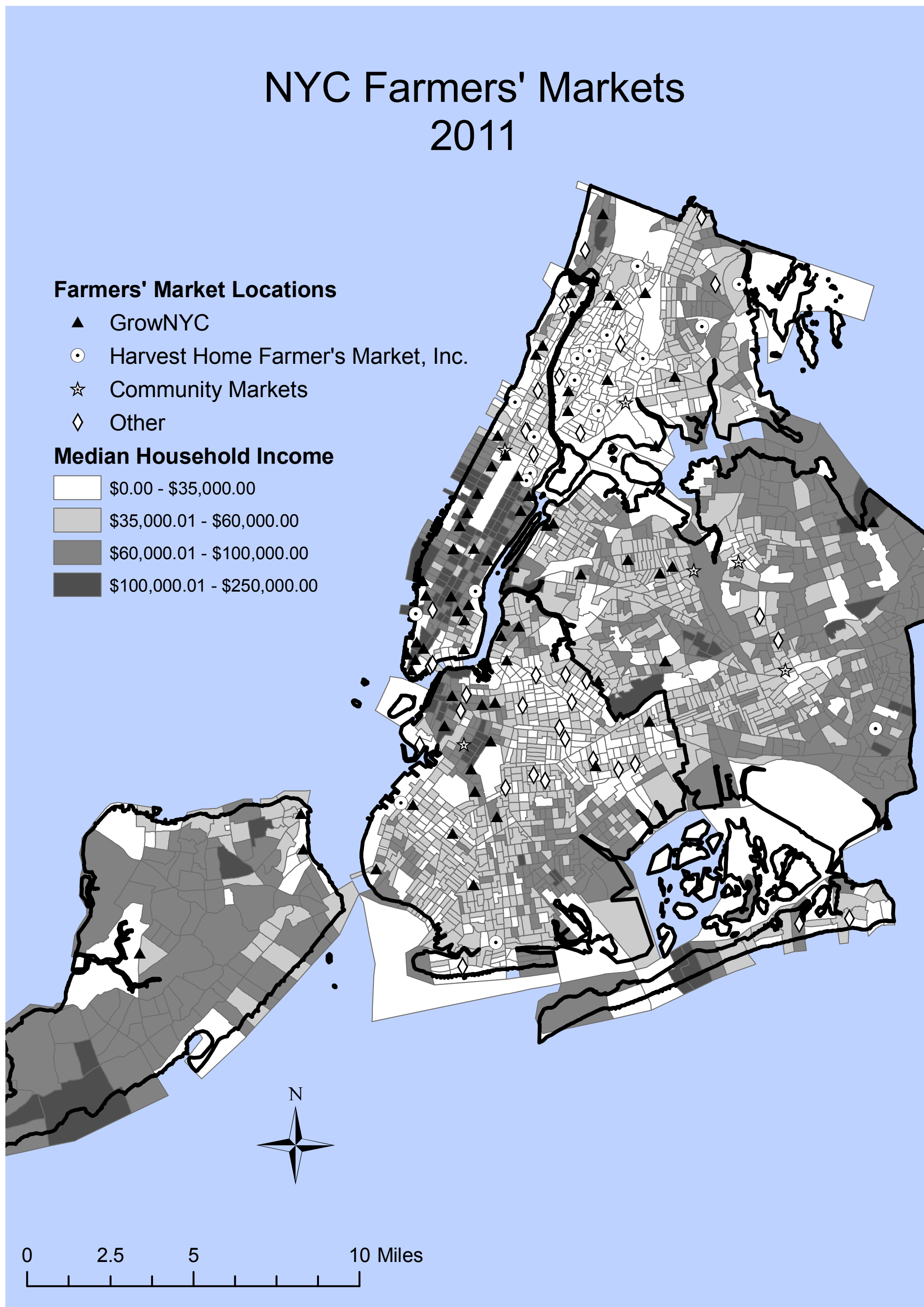
Notes: US Census Bureau, 2010; NYC Department of Markets.



Notes: US Census Bureau, 2010; NYC Department of Markets.

These two maps illustrate how, nearly eighty years after the first enclosed retail market was built, the neighborhoods where the surviving four markets are located remain areas with low household incomes. Areas where markets were either demolished or converted to other use have fared only slightly better.

Appendix F: Map of New York City's Farmers' Markets, 2011



Notes: Grow NYC (official website and personal correspondence, 2010); Community Markets (official website); Harvest Home Farmers' Markets (official website); US Census Bureau, 2010.

This map of the city's farmers' markets shows the distribution of Greenmarkets, Community Markets (CM), Harvest Home Farmers' Markets (HHFM), and independently operated markets, such as the farmers' market at Graham Avenue in South Williamsburg operated by the Graham Avenue Business Improvement District. In relation to average household income, Greenmarkets have the lions' share of markets in well-to-do neighborhoods, while HHFM has filled gaps in lower-income neighborhoods, particularly in Harlem and the Bronx.

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