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**Placemaking by Immigrant Communities:
A Case Study of Austin-Area Flea Markets**

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by

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Report

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Austin
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning

**The University of Texas at Austin
August, 2015**

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this report to my uncle Francisco Amezcua, who for the past 20 years has been able create and sustain community at El Faro Swap-Meet in South Central Los Angeles.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my gratitude to all the hard working families that make up the Austin-area flea markets, who accepted me in their space and shared their stories. I'd like to also thank my partner for his constant support, as well as my friends who have persistently been there for me and made sure this report came to term. I love you all. Lastly I'd like to thank my readers for their ongoing support and advice.

Abstract

Placemaking by Immigrant Communities: A Case Study of Austin-Area Flea Markets

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2015

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Using participatory observation and engaging in several informal interviews during a course of five months this study examines how Latinos placemake in three Austin open air markets, as well as how city management is currently impacting them. The study consist of three sections: a literature review of placemaking and its community benefits focusing on how markets have been spaces that incubate Latinos opportunity, an analysis of how Austin city management is currently impacting them, and an overview of potential strategies that Austin can apply to support markets. The findings reveal that like many markets across the nation these three markets play a vital role in the lives of Latino immigrants providing a space vital to their survival as newcomers for social interaction, as well as providing space for entrepreneurship. Studying how Latinos use public spaces in Austin is essential and integral in supporting the growing population.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Placemaking is an approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. This approach enhances community assets in order to promote the creation and maintenance of enlivened public spaces. These spaces serve to help health, happiness, and wellbeing flourish (Project for Public Places, 2003). The term “placemaking” as we now know it can be traced back to the influential works of urban intellectuals, such as Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch and William Whyte. Beginning in the 1960’s, these placemaking advocates adopted and encouraged a new way of understanding the mechanics of city design by placing focus on the formation of livable communities, rather than previous tenets of urban planning that were primarily occupied with efficiency and aesthetic (Project for Public Places, 2003).

Community members are paramount to the process of placemaking, particularly because they are able to articulate and collectively decide the parameters and utility of spaces. People are the sole metric by which value is attributed and inscribed to spaces. Thus, placemaking is social act that people enact daily. Placemaking evolves into a lived process in which it not only improves public spaces, but can also “spark public discourse, create beauty and delight, engender civic pride, connect neighborhoods, support community health and safety, grow social justice, catalyze economic development, promote environmental sustainability, and of course nurture an authentic ‘sense of place’” (Silberberg et al., 2013). Although, for many, placemaking goes beyond creating a safe, enjoyable space to socialize and build community. Placemaking, particularly for low-income, underrepresented groups, is a

form of survival. Public spaces are created to facilitate social and economic exchanges, however, these spaces can also serve areas in which culture is practiced and preserved.

This report will first provide an overview of placemaking and its community benefits. This overview will be anchored by a comprehensive literature review of how the practice of placemaking has been unique to the immigrant Latino experience, with a primary focus on how markets have been successful spaces in which Latino placemaking can thrive. Expanding upon this literature review, my research will then illuminate how Latino immigrants enact placemaking in three Austin, Texas flea markets, coupled with an analysis of how the City of Austin is currently interacting with these flea markets, particularly in regards to the legalities surrounding the city code.

The data gathered is derived by deploying the participatory observation method. This method includes informal interviews with market vendors and flea market patrons over the course of a five month period. The report will also be partially anecdotal due to the fact that my analysis is conducted through the lens of my upbringing in a predominantly Latino community in California where I frequently attended flea markets. The purpose of this research is to shed light on the importance of preserving open air markets in metropolitan areas, due to their importance in serving as a platform in which disenfranchised sectors of the population can autonomously create and maintain fruitful and impactful spaces for cultural and

community development. With the Latino population rising in Austin, it is vital that the city recognizes and preserves these rich and vibrant spaces of opportunity.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 PLACEMAKING

Placemaking has been and will be defined interdisciplinary by far-reaching threads that encompass philosophy, geography, architecture, cultural anthropology, and environmental psychology within an indeterminate matrix. Broadly defined, “place” refers to “territorialized local communities, collective memories associated with territory, claims of authenticity by local actors, phenomenological associations with locals and social relationships among people in territorial communities” (Rios, Vazquez, & Miranda, 2012). Placemaking goes beyond the built form and is rather focused on the process of making a place and developing a deep connection to it. Lynne Manzo and Patrick Devine-Wright call this emotional bond between people and their physical surrounding “place attachment” (2014). They conclude that the connections between people and “place” are a powerful aspect of human life that inform our sense of identity, create meaning to our lives, and facilitate, as well as influence action” (2014). The level of attachment is different and unique to each individual, as well as dependent on the space.

A big advocate organization for placemaking has been Project for Public Places a nonprofit planning, design, and educational organization who have successfully combined theory and practice in projects across the nation. They define placemaking as a “people-centered approach to planning design and management of public places” (Project for Public Places, 2003). They view placemaking as a facilitator of creative patterns of activities and connections that define a place and support its ongoing

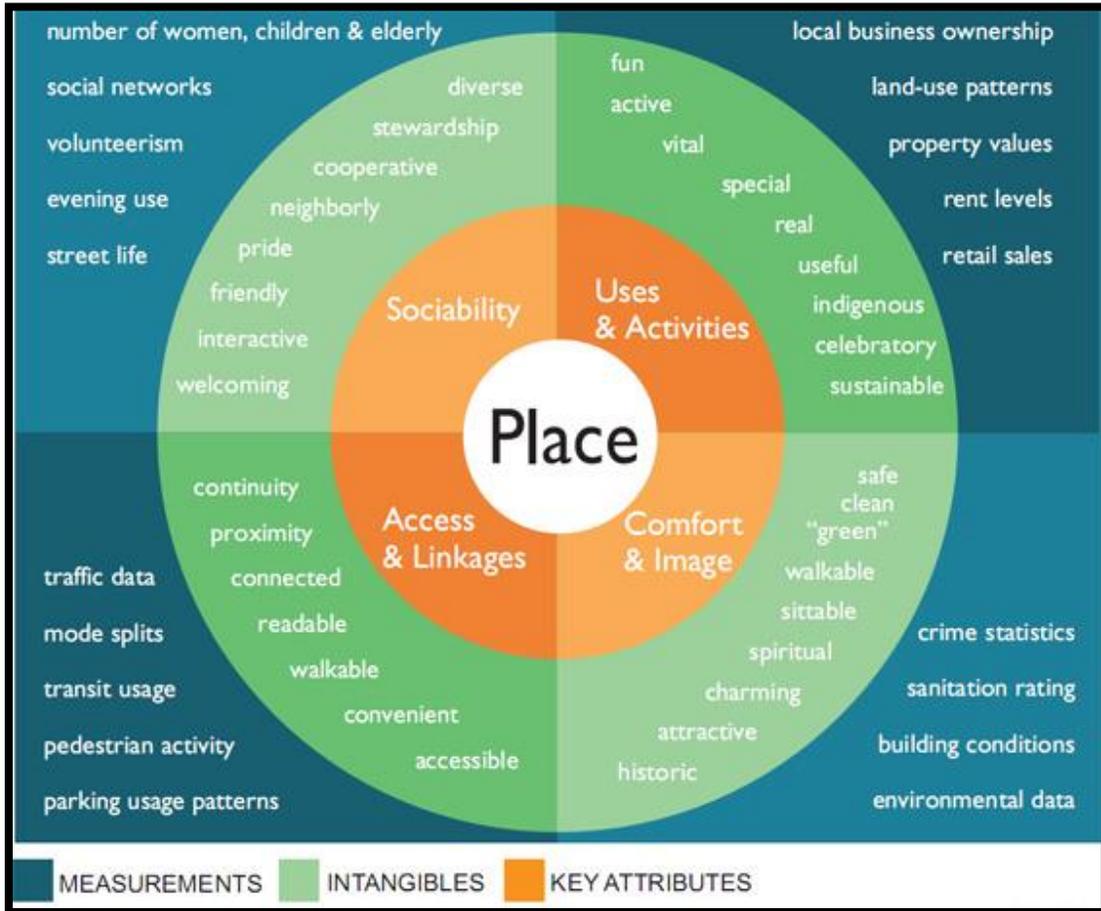
evolution. They agree that placemaking is the way in which “people collectively and intentionally shape the world” (Project for Public Places, 2003).

Placemaking can occur anywhere with very little actual planning going into it, and may be created through simple features. For example a table at a park can be transformed from merely serving as furniture where occasionally park visitors may rest for a few moments to a space where friendships mature and are sustained through the weekly ritual of meeting in that particular space. Furthermore, placemaking helps alleviate communities of an array of issues regarding crime, under-investment in youth, community identity and economic opportunities, and democracy building to name a few. Through the creation of place, people can come together in a neutral environment where collaboration can occur. The unique thing about placemaking is that it is not a one size fits all, each place is unique through the unique people and activities that live in them.

Project for Project Places created a diagram to demonstrate the layers that help to create a great place (Image 1). They agree that place is created through four major components sociability, uses and activities, comfort and image, as well as access and linkages. Each of these elements has tangible outcomes that is measured through an assortment of data. Tangible results include fun, usefulness, pride, diversity, accessible, spiritual, sustainable and celebrated just to name a few. The data used to support the aforementioned tangible outcomes can be the percentage of local business ownership, land use patterns, number and diversity of people in the space,

social networks built, traffic and pedestrian data, and crime conditions to name a few (Project for Public Places, n.d.).

Image 1. What Makes a Great Place? Diagram (Project for Public Places).



Project for Public Places also outlined eleven elements for successful placemaking in places such as streets, plazas, parks and other places that exist for public use.

1. The community is the expert- This is by far the most important element because people are the ones who occupy and sustain the place.

2. Create a place, not a design- Physical elements may be introduced to facilitate a welcoming and comfortable environment, but they are not necessary to creating a place. A planner or architect may design the most beautiful and efficient park but if people do not enjoy it or visit, then it will just be a beautiful park. The goal is to create a place that people want to sustain their presence and constant participation.
3. Look for partners- Partners may be important for success as they may offer support and support and may benefit a wider range of people through programming that can attract people who are not yet as attached or attracted to the place.
4. You can see a lot by just observing- By observing space we can continue evaluating it and improving it.
5. Have a vision- This “vision” should be unique to space and community needs and goals.
6. Start with the petunias: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper- Although money can create a place placemaking can be simple and implemented in an inexpensive and short time.
7. Triangulate- This refers to creating a space in which all elements speak and complement each other.
8. They always say “it can’t be done”- This infers to narrow-mindedness that there is only one way to create place, when in fact placemaking is natural and organic and can be different for different people and different groups.

9. Form supports function- Input from the community and helping partners can inform changes needed to 'the form' continued the success of a place.
10. Money is not the issue- Whatever money is invested in creating space the ultimate outcome is seen in the level of benefits.
11. You are never finished- Like everything in life the only thing constant is change. Transformation should be informed by the needs, desires of the people who maintain space.

(Project for Public Spaces, 2007)

Unfortunately, not all spaces have the elements from the diagram or list but regardless are still great places. Particularly this is true for many low-income communities who through civil rights movements have had to carve out spaces that support their needs due to lack of public spaces. Through the creation of space, many have been able to express their frustrations and desires and have helped reshape communities as well as social change. Dolores Hayden stated that place carries power and that "power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizen memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory- remains untapped for most working people neighborhoods in most American cities and for most ethnic history and most women's history" (1997).

2.2 MARKETS AS PLACEMAKERS

Public markets have long served as civic centers, serving a vital part of daily life and commerce across the nation and valued as remedies for the social and

economic deterioration of urban centers (Tangires, 2003). Historically, before the big box stores, markets provided towns with goods and services that helped support local economies. With the expansion of metropolitan areas and technology there has been less dependence on public markets. Project for Public Places stated that “ever since freezer and preservatives freed us from the need to shop at food markets on a daily basis, the focus has shifted entirely to convenience, resulting in the proliferation of supermarkets and box stores... causing a disconnection from the natural cycle of everyday life” (n.d).

Nonetheless, markets have survived the decades, particularly in low-income communities. Helen Tangires stated that “despite the nineteenth-century collision between the ethos of the moral economy and the manifestation of a capitalist markets economy... markets have proved their resilience and adaptability” (2003). Markets have in fact have been growing in 1946 there were just 499 markets in the US, this number rose to 2,863 by 2000, and then shot up to 8,144 by 2013 (Project for Public Places, n.d.). Nationally there has been a push for affordable entrepreneurial hubs, discounted products, and gathering space for multiple activities. This intense rise in public markets can be a sign that people enjoy various uses in space and that they enjoy it more when it’s constructed and kept up by the community. According to the National Flea market Association today there is over 1,100 flea markets providing opportunities to approximately 2.25 million vendors. It is estimated that markets conduct over \$30 billion in sales annually and are visited by over 150 million customers each year. Public markets, according to a 1996 Project Public places report,

are needed because they effectively address some of the vexing problems of cities like the need to reinvigorate urban shopping districts and make inviting and safe spaces, as well as support small-scale economic activity. Markets create spaces for economic and community development, which is arguably a dire need for many low-income communities.

Furthermore, public markets create synergy for addressing community issues. Open markets help build local economies by providing local cottage industries opportunities to do business that attribute to economic equity (Morales, 2009; Project for Public Places, 2003). Markets, especially flea markets offer affordable shopping for low-income persons by providing a mix of products tuned to local needs (Goodno, 2005; Morales, 2009; Project for Public Places, 2003). Social integration is also fostered as markets have a diversity of elements that attract diverse people. Markets promote arts and culture by offering a platform for local artists to showcase as well as experience at an affordable price. Markets also are a reflection of what is unique and best about the area. For immigrants in particular markets are a place where social, economic integration is supported (Project for Public Spaces, 2003). Markets often offer a space where public health and nutrition activities can occur and are often the only time low-income or immigrant populations can get free or affordable health screening. Markets also promote green space preservation and are beneficial particularly in urban areas as they give existing infrastructure a second use. Wisconsin Urban and Regional Planning professor Alfonso Morales concludes that markets have vast amenities that attracts neighborhood resident because they

contribute to the quality of life, sociability, and support local economic and community development (2009).

Morales also states that public markets are once again becoming essential parts of urban social, political, and economic landscapes because of their reciprocal relationship with place and community design, and their role in incubating new businesses, promoting the expansion of existing business, and facilitating income-earning opportunities (2009). For many families, flea markets present economic alternatives as they provide consumers cheap goods, as well as offer supplement income for vendors. For many families earning below the national average and with limited purchasing power, flea markets are a place where bartering and negotiating are possible, and their income can be stretched.

Markets also serve as economic hubs for entrepreneurs with limited resources or limited opportunities. The typical startup capital for a flea market booth is relatively small with minimal risk; in a survey of eight markets across the nation Project for Public Places found that 83.1% of vendors financed their start-up cost from their savings. They concluded that public market vending may well have the lowest barriers to entry of any employment to low-income people (Project for Public Places, 2003). Markets offer small, affordable spaces that are economically easy to maintain due to their low rents and minimal maintenance. These incubators help small business grow; some to the point where they can offer jobs, and expand. Open markets are also a strategic place for small entrepreneurs with limited capital because they benefit from the drawing power that the market as a whole has.

Individual vendors may not be able to attract many customers alone, but by being among a larger group they benefit from the larger pool of clients. For many vendors, the options of running a full-time business are not possible but because the markets occur on weekends it offers flexibility to manage multiple jobs. Vending is of particular importance for those who have unstable, temporary or low wage jobs. Markets also provide the flexibility and opportunity for women to enter the workforce, particularly for women who have children because they can take their children with them. It also presents many teens with their first job opportunities.

Project for Public Places in association with Partners for Livable Communities conducted a six-month search to explore how public markets mainly serving low-income ethnically diverse communities improve social integration, and create environments for upward mobility and individual empowerment. They also found that markets typically are a family affair and that many of the markets examined were places to hang out for the buyers. Finally, they concluded that the main reason people chose to go to public markets was due to the environment of the place and the people. In a survey that asked what benefits markets brought to the community, 28% said that it brought people together, followed by affordability and products.

2.3 LATINOS, MARKETS AND PLACEMAKING

Placemaking for Latinos, as stated by Carla Irazabal Director of Latin Lab and Professor of Urban Planning at Columbia University has been heavily dependent on politics of immigration, urban renewal, institutionalized racism and poverty (Irazabal

& Farhat, 2008). Irazabal outlined the challenges that Latinos have faced in their struggle for spatial identity, cultural recognition, and economic integration. Her research observed three time periods; pre-world war (1900-1945), post-war (1945-1990), and contemporary (1990-2000's). She found that in early decades segregation, gerrymandering and institutionalized discrimination were prevalent barriers Latinos faced. In the post-war era, Latinos continued to suffer some of the consequences of the previous period and were confronted with the effects of suburbanization, the social criminalization of poverty, de-industrialization and, urban renewal. She concluded that in the last decade Latinos continued to deal with decades of discrimination and still faced challenges of social exclusion, gentrification and a deficiency of services (Irazabal & Farhat, 2008). Nonetheless, Latinos and other underrepresented groups who face similar constraints have successfully created space. Thus placemaking more than being a natural human behavior has been a form of resistance.

Michael Rios, Professor of Human Ecology the University of California Davis, critiques the conceptualization of "place" as being viewed by professionals as purely a setting where a particular social activity occurs, or reduced to contextual or vernacular approaches that draw from phenomenological understanding which end up fetishizing place (Rios, Vazquez, & Miranda, 2012). A place also involves the act of place dwellers that often resist top down and expert place making discourse (Rios et al., 2012). Ultimately Rios argues for a trialectic of placemaking practice that gives equal emphasis to space, action and identity.

Rios also shares three type of spaces where Latinos make group claims in the city are adaptive, assertive and negotiative spaces (Rios, 2009). Adaptive spaces are places that can be reuse, these can include vacant buildings or underutilized spaces like parking lots. Assertive spaces are intentional acts of creating space and reflect the conscious construction of culture. Chicano Park in San Diego California, which was contested by the neighborhood after it was in danger of redevelopment is an example of an assertive space. Finally, negotiated spaces are where a cultural interchange is encouraged, ultimately a space that help bridge differences. In the example of adaptive spaces, Latinos adapt the urban fabric to produce placemaking, such as opening a flea market in an abandoned lot. Magdalena Barros-Nock researched how San Joaquin Valley swap meets are socioeconomic alternatives for Mexican immigrants. She concluded that swap meets are used as a place to form networks, to circulate information, to reminisce a bit of home, and to have fun (2009). Researchers for years have concluded that Latinos/Hispanic are a booming population and thus are having a profound impact on the built environment. Mainly immigrants in the United States are incorporating their unique identities into the fabric of the city, "Immigrants are, in fact, remaking cities and suburbs all across the U.S., where much of the physical impact is informal, the result of marginal and small investment by immigrant entrepreneurs" (James Goodno, 2005).

Chapter 3: Austin Case Study

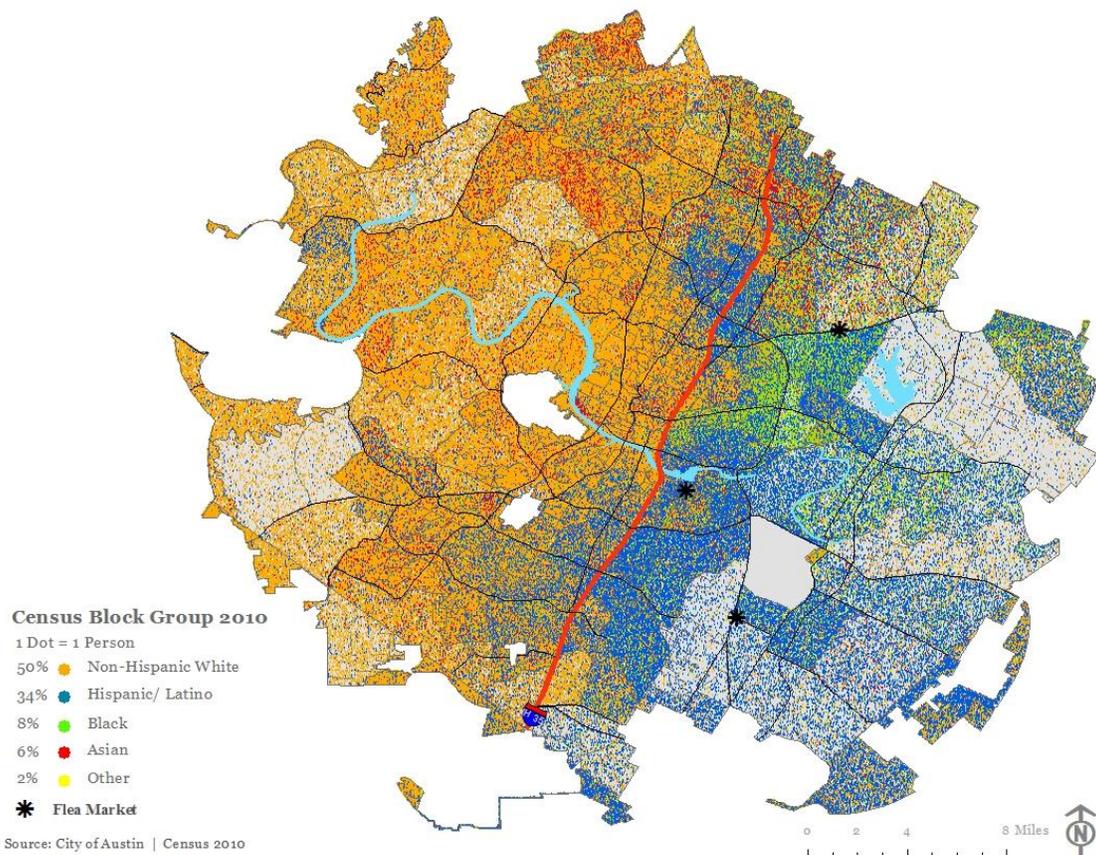
3.1 CONTEXT

The city of Austin, Texas has recently absorbed a dramatic increase in population, with a growth rate of 2.7% between 2013 and 2014 (City of Austin). From 2003 to 2013, Austin experienced a 37% increase in population growth (US Census, 2013), making it one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation. The Latino population in the Austin metropolitan area has increased by 64% over the past ten years, a remarkable figure when compared to the non-Hispanic population increase of 28% in Austin (US Census, 2013). The city's demographics are approximately 50% White, 34% Latino, 8% Black, 6% Asian and 2% other (with "other" including American Indian, Alaskan Native, Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander). The 2008-2012 American Community census reported that about 152,638 of people who live in Austin are foreign-born, with 116,598 not having US citizenship. In 2012, the estimated total Austin population reported was 842,592 (Census, 2012), making the foreign-born non-citizen population approximately 13.8% of the total population. This percentage is relatively conservative given the inconsistencies and under-reporting of the undocumented population.

Austin is a highly segregated city with the majority of the White population residing in West Austin, Latinos communities traditionally living in East Austin, a growing Black population living in Northeast East and a large Asian population living in the Northwest area of Austin (Map 1). Segregation in Austin is by no means new. The city has a long history of institutionalized segregation dating back to the 1928

Comprehensive Plan, which directly impacted the relocation of city's people of color population. Today, informal segregation in Austin has continued due to socioeconomic conditions, particularly due to the lack of housing affordability and multi-family zoning in areas like West Austin. The areas in north Austin have the largest concentration of Latinos (more than 60% in some block groups), particularly in the Rundberg area. The areas in southeast Austin near the intersection of I-35 and Ben White also have large Latino block group concentration. These are some of the poorest neighborhoods in the city.

Map 1. Austin Population Density by Race/ Ethnicity

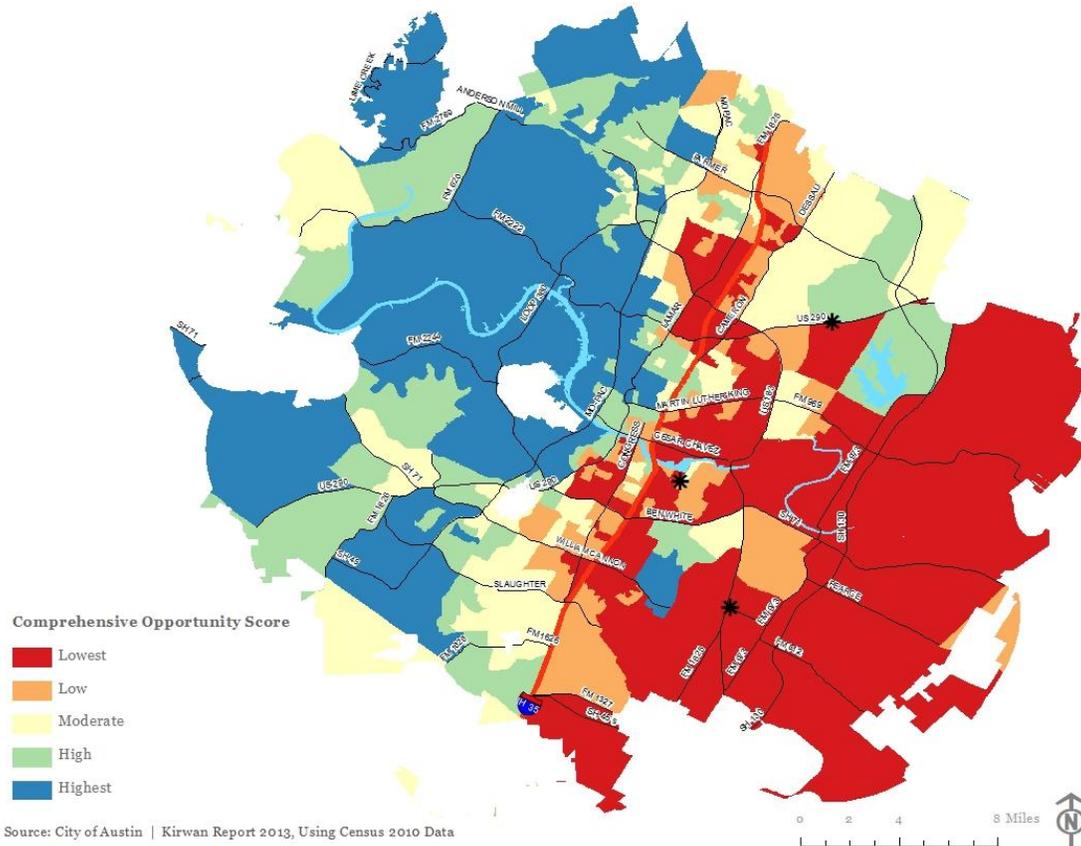


3.2 LATINO ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

Access to opportunity in Austin was last measured in 2013 by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. The report used three indicators: education, economy, and housing & environment. These indicators included twenty-two variables that were suggestive of calculating “opportunity.” Within their analysis opportunity was defined as “environmental conditions or resources that are conducive to healthier, vibrant communities and are more likely to be conducive to helping residents in a community succeed” (Fernandez, 2014).

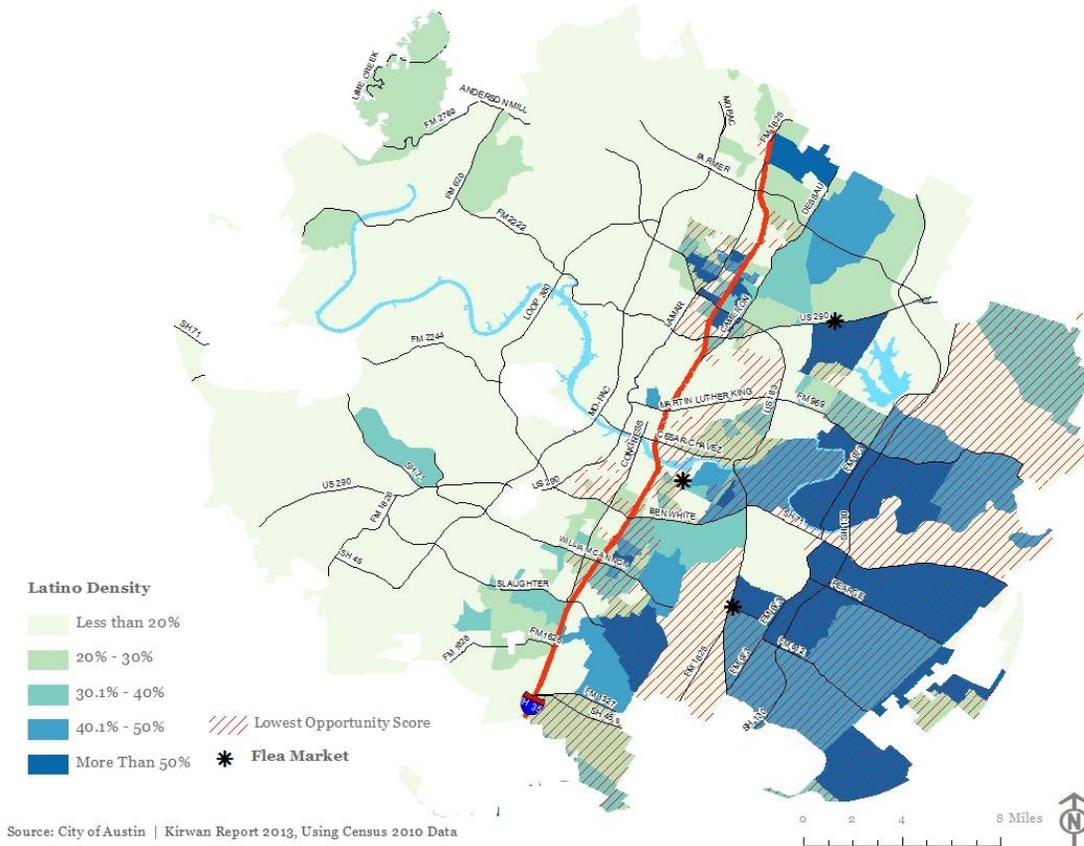
Some of the variables that helped evaluate opportunity included housing vacancy rates, homeownership rates, median income, poverty, race, access to food, jobs, and transit. The areas classified as “high opportunity” were mostly found to be concentrated in West Austin. Most of the central core of the city was identified as a mix of high and low opportunity areas. The vast majority of the “low opportunity” areas were by and large concentrated in East Austin (Map 2). The lowest opportunities typically followed patterns of minority concentrations, except the Asian population which was found to be within moderate to high opportunity areas.

Map 2. Austin Comprehensive Opportunity Score, Kirwan Institute



The map shows a clear connection between neighborhood access to opportunities and racial/ethnic distribution. When comparing the areas with the lowest opportunity scores with the Latino population density map, these boundaries are almost identical. About 49% of Latinos live in areas with the lowest opportunity score (Map 3). There are very few block groups that fall within the lowest opportunity areas that have less than 20% Latinos.

Map 3. Latino Population Density Overlaid with Lowest Opportunity Score



By using the indicator of access to opportunity as a barometer for social and economic equity, we can gain a deeper understanding of which spaces in the city are neglected and underutilized. Rooting this assessment with both historical and contemporary context is important, primarily due to the multiplicity of intersecting community issues that occur simultaneously, both publicly and covertly, within these spaces. All three flea market sites are located in areas or are adjacent to areas that have a very low opportunity index score. Assessing areas that have been classified as

lacking opportunities can help contextualize the reasons and motivations for residents as they endeavor to activate spaces that incite new opportunities.

Chapter 4: Methodology

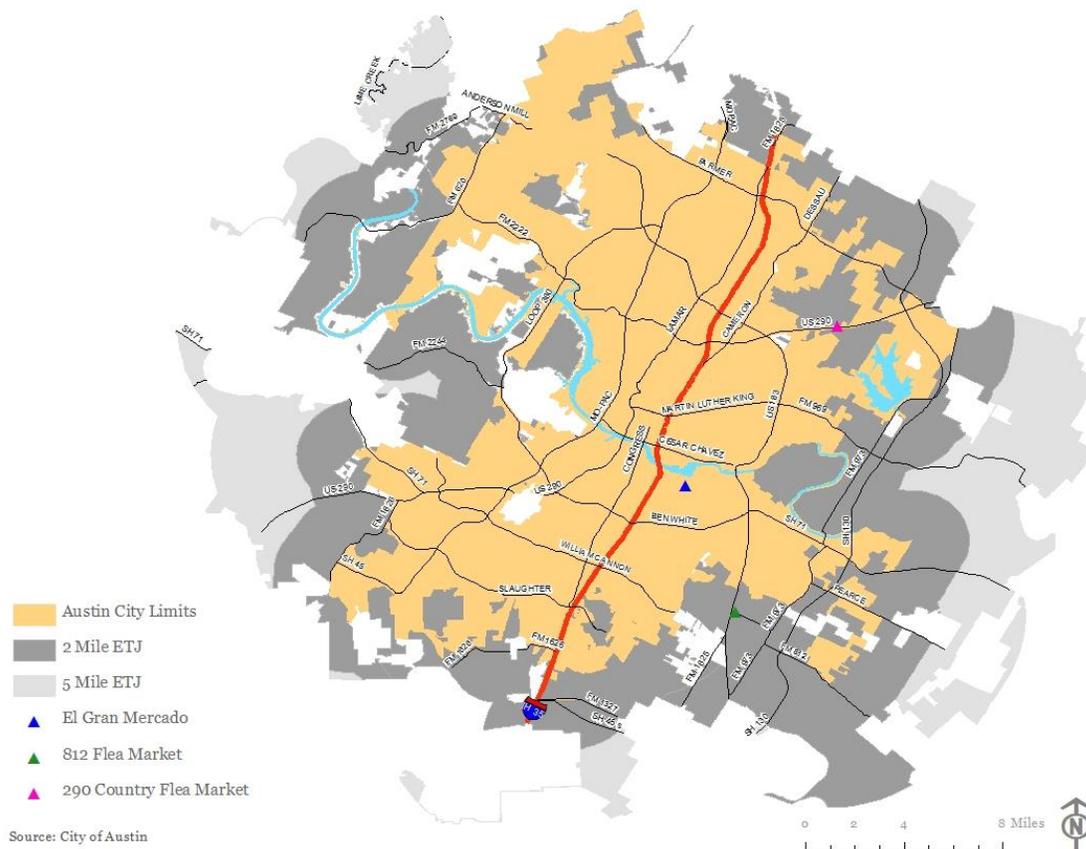
The flea markets were chosen based on criteria that would be selective of spaces where Latino placemaking is modeled. Only outdoor semi-informal flea markets within high Latino density areas were analyzed.

The following criteria was used for selection:

1. Within a mile radius of a block group with 50% or above Hispanic/Latino population.
2. Verbally known as flea markets (versus Farmers Market, Artisanal Market).
3. Predominantly Spanish language, both in spoken word and signage.
4. Having 50 or more booths, to ensure diversity in vendors and customers.
5. Food and/or Entertainment. This criteria aimed at ensuring that people would be prone to linger.

Based on the selective criteria, a total of four flea- markets were identified. One was omitted due to its small size, short time of service and lack of food vendors. Austin County Flea Market, El Gran Mercado Flea Market, and 812 Airport Market were the three flea markets chosen (Map 4), each with a unique location and history.

Map 4. Flea Market Sites



Participatory observation was conducted at the three markets over the course of five months. Since the markets only function on the weekends each was visited at least four Saturdays and four Sundays. Each observation varied by date and time of day; some observations were during the morning while others in the afternoon or evenings; each lasting between 3-5 hours each. Field notes were collected on the markets built environment, functionality and activities after each visit and photographs were taken when permitted. Most of the quantitative data was gathered

as a participant of the market and several informal conversations with vendors and clients. No personal or identifiable information was collected.

Participatory observation was chosen as the method for analysis because it “provides ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities” (Schmuck, 1997). Participant observation can be used to help answer descriptive research questions, to build theory, or to generate or test hypotheses as well as be used as a way to increase the validity of the study, as observations may help the researcher have a better understanding of the context and phenomenon under study (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002 As Cited in Barbara B. Kawulich, 2005). Validity is stronger with the use of additional strategies used with observation, such as interviewing, document analysis, or surveys, questionnaires, or other more quantitative methods (Kawulich, 2005); because of time constraints no formal surveys, structured interviews or questionnaires were implemented. Most importantly participatory observation was applied as a method to:

“...help identify and guide relationships with informants; help the researcher get the feel for how things are organized and prioritized, how people interrelate, and what are the cultural parameters...[as well] to show the researcher what the cultural members deem to be important in manners, leadership, politics, social interaction, as well as, help the researcher become known to the cultural members, thereby easing facilitation of the research process; and provide the researcher

with a source of questions to be addressed with participants”
(Kawulich, 2005).

An advantage in building relationships and emerging into the market culture was possible because of my Spanish language skills and as a long time participant in similar markets in the Los Angeles region for more than 25 years, and likewise that experience also informs the research.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Austin Flea Markets

The following section will analyze the three markets; outlining their history, form and function, placing a focus on the process of placemaking and how it is enacted. Each market is in a unique stage. The first, 812 Market is relatively young, operating for less than ten years and located at the peripheries of the city. The second, El Gran Mercado Flea Market is going through a location transition as it is located at the heart of the redevelopment of a long time Latino community. The third and final market analyzed, Austin Country 290 Flea Market, is believed to be the oldest market in Austin with more than 20 years in business. Latinos are the majority of visitors for all three markets and Spanish is the predominant language. All have food vendors, but only two are foods that reflect Latino cuisine. All have entertainment of some sort; two have a specific area with a stage while one does not have live entertainment but plays music through a speaker system, disk jockeyed by a vendor.

5.1 THE 812 FLEA MARKET

The first flea market explored is located at the crossroads of Highway 183 and FM 812 road. It is in the Austin Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The ETJ is the unincorporated land within five miles of Austin's boundary that is not within the city limits or ETJ of another city. It is the territory where Austin alone is authorized to annex land, but services such as public safety, road maintenance, and parks are provided by the County or special districts. No City taxes get collected from the ETJ and residents in Austin's ETJ may vote on City referenda which impact ETJ residents

(City of Austin). The property where the market sits is described as “special purpose” (Loopnet.com) and is 52 acres, of which about ten acres is the market. The surrounding developments include the abandoned historical Longhorn Speedway Track, residential units, and a handful of small commercial business; mostly Latino-owned or oriented.

The 812 Market, also known as La Pulga, Tianguis or Swapmeet has 726 stalls, most measuring 10 feet wide by 20 feet deep. It operates only on Saturday 8-4pm and Sunday 9-6pm, with free entrance Saturdays and a one dollar charge for Sunday; children under 48 inches are always free. They also have a ten dollar pet fee. The market according to several long-term vendors was established in 2008, but it began informally years before. As the owner told the story, it began as an opportunity to make a profit off his unoccupied land as well as help street vendors avoid harassment by authorities. He recalled constantly seeing street vendors along Highway 183 being removed by cops, so he approached several with a proposal to let them set up on the front part of his property for free; so long they did not exceed 20 vendors for which he would have to begin charging \$20 per weekend. It was an immediate success, through word of mouth and self-organizing there were over 20 vendors. Many chose this new location because it offered a safe space to do business without fear of being removed. As the demand for space increased the owner cleared the rear section of the property to make room for additional vendors. This relationship proved symbiotic as it was an opportunity for the owner to make a profit off his vacant land and provide protection from persecution for the vendors at a reasonable price.

What began as an impromptu vendor location has now evolved into a formal business venture. In the past nine years, 812 Market has more than doubled its size, as well as the numbers of vendors and visitors. They now have a formal website, as well as a commercial that occasionally airs on the local Spanish language channel. The 812 Market's website reported that every weekend more than 8,000 customers attend (these statistics were published in 2013). From my empirical research, a conservative estimate would be 14,000 customers per weekend, with higher traffic on Sundays. The process of the expansion thus far has been divided into four phases. Phase one was the original 20 vendors who set-up on the front portion of the property and a 12 x 12 office. The second phase; during 2009-2010, was the expansion of 100 booths running along a dry creek. The third phase, during 2011-2012, included the construction of a new office, fencing that marked the boundaries of the market, gravel to mitigate mud for pedestrian traffic, and a performance stage (Image 2 & 3). The fourth phase in 2013 and 2014 required the construction of a storm-water drainage system and pedestrian bridge; per request by county officials, as well as planned parking spaces. The latest phase is focused on adding more booths, which will require the construction of a paved road for emergency response as required by the County.

Image 2. 812-Market Early Development



Image 3. 812 Market Visitors Enjoying Music



The price to be a vendor has also changed. The first vendors were charged \$10 a day, now they are charged \$18 for Saturday, \$25 for Sunday and discounted to \$35 if they pay for both days; there are also additional fees for usage of water; \$5 per day and, electricity; \$7 per day. These prices do not apply to food vendors who have to pay \$350 per weekend. This price secures their place in the food court and includes utilities. The market layout has a very organic feel with a robust tree canopy; in fact many of the booths have trees in the middle of them. Many vendors take advantage of the trees and don't bother to invest in canopies.

Contrary to other markets that typically have multiple uses; usually a parking lot; historically a drive-in, this market has no secondary use. Having just one use allows for vendors to become "permanent" and have the opportunity of constructing semi-permanent structures. The semi-permanent structures benefit vendors as they don't have to toil over setting up canopies each time they vend. Another advantage is that it allows vendors to express themselves through props that reflect their business' culture and identity (Image 4 & 5). The permanency of booths is limited to semi-permanent structures only, since the site has not been approved by the county to have permanent buildings. Thus, most of the booths are on a semi-permanent structure spectrum and can easily be brought down if needed. The majority of booths are canopy structures, which are either handmade with 2'x4' beams and tarps; or a pop up canopy that can be bought at any big box store. Some of the booths have built-in raised floors or have carpets to avoid having their merchandise directly on the

gravel. Some booths though, are not booths at all; a few repurposed bungalows or motor homes serve as hair and beauty salons.

Image 4. 812 Market Imported Products



Image 5. 812 Market Booth Business Logo



The most significant structural change that vendors created at the market is the installation of a seven-foot altar of the Virgin Mary (Image 6). This permanent structural change is likely the one thing that joins all the vendors and visitors together as they can't help but notice her as they walk by. One vendor recounted their journey of getting the altar there. The story goes that a couple of vendors gathered and after chatting about what they felt was missing at the market concluded that a religious relic would be nice, particularly the Virgin Mary. For many vendors, she represents hope, and many attribute their success to her. The vendors organized themselves and chose a representative to approach the owner for permission. Many were afraid that the owner would deny their permission for installation because he is Christian, and many thought it might offend him to have her on his property. No details were shared on how they formally asked, but the informant recalls that the manager who is a child of a vendor and long-time market resident was influential in advocating for the vendors' request. Ultimately the owner did not oppose the installation.

Today the Virgin Mary altar stands as the ultimate physical change to the space reflecting the identity and cultural beliefs of its inhabitants. This religious relic has been the epicenter for continual community development within the market. Last year on December 12th the vendors organized the first official peregrination; a typical Latino procession in honor of a saint; an event in honor of Virgin Mary's day. The vendors brought in Aztec dancers, a mariachi band and displayed the Virgin Mary thru every aisle of the market. The Virgin Mary is an example of the relationship between the built environment and the social practices that occur and reveal

intentional and unintentional effects, she began as a project for the vendors but evolved to serve both the vendor and the customer. Today the altar door stays open and often people who visit light a candle, say a prayer and leave a donation that is used to maintain the altar and fund the following year's celebration.

Image 6. 812 Market Commissioned Altar



The activities that people do at the market go beyond shopping. From my observation, most people go there not just for products, but more so for the experience. Early in the day, especially on Sunday mornings there are large numbers of people having breakfast (Image 7). In total, there are five main food vendors; as well as vendors that sell fruit, corn on the cob and other typical Mexican appetizers and desserts. The energy in the food court is lively and relaxing at the same time. Patrons casually run into neighbors and co-workers and join each other for breakfast or a drink. In general there is a strong sense of comfort. The vendors have a strong community network, in the mornings during set up vendors go or send their children to buy breakfast from the food court, or the food court vendors send helpers to the booths for last minute ingredients like: nopales (cacti), eggs and other vegetables.

Image 7. 812 Market Taqueria Stand



In the afternoons, patrons are entertained by local bands that play Mexican narrative folk songs that bring people to their feet. During intermission, there is a master of ceremonies running raffles for adults and children. The prizes are merchandise donated by vendors in exchange for a promotion. The competitions are the most fun and exciting event at the market as it brings everyone's attention to the stage and brings laughter throughout. The competitions vary from testing knowledge of soccer teams, the states of Mexico, important national dates, dancing and having regalia from their home country like coins, key chains, etc. The activities and atmosphere are nostalgic for many who are far from their home.

The following are the stories of a few vendors and patrons of the 812 Market: all interviews were informal, so the topics vary, and although each interview is unique to the individual they serve an example of broader themes that are commonly shared such as development of a support network, feeling of belonging or reminiscing of homelands, economic development and collective efficacy.

One of the earlier chats I had was with a vendor who sold beautiful roses, and fresh herbs alongside her young daughter. The demand this vendor has encountered for her product is so successful that she and her family drive more than four hours to get to the market. She drives this far because "se vende mucho" (it sells a lot) inferring to a high demand of her herbs and vegetable plants. Her family only sells plants during the spring and summer time when they are available and highly sought out by customers. She happily announced that her visits might soon be less frequent since

she's made business connections that allow her to serve as a small distributor back home. Her story is an example of dependence on the market, although not year round the profits she makes during the months of April through August are so significant that she is willing to drive over four hours. This is an example of one of the many economic survival skills migrants develop, and markets help support.

On a Friday morning during my field observations I stopped to speak to a father and son setting up their canopy. His family is new to the market; they have been selling women's shoes for three months. They found out about the market through a friend of his wife. He proudly said that his wife has always been good at business, "Desde su pueblo le gusta vender" (since she was in her hometown she enjoys selling), and she is the reason they ventured out. After a couple of weeks of being part-time vendors, they have decided to become permanent. The canopy he was building with his son will be their permanent structure from now on. He enjoys the Market because it reminds him of his hometown in Mexico. The trees, smells and the activities that happen at the market make him happy and for the time that he's there "hasta se me olvida que es Tejas" (he even forgets this is Texas). He hopes that with some success at the market he can supplement his income, especially now that his hours at work have been cut. Another one of his goals is to get his children to join him in selling; not because he needs their help, but because he feels this place will help them understand what Mexico is like without actually travelling there. Beyond an economic venture, the market serves many as a place to reminisce about their home

country. For many people this is of great value because they don't have the funds or privileges to visit their home.

The owner of a taqueria specializing in goat tacos also allowed me the time from his busy day to chat. He is also native to Mexico, who migrated more than 15 years ago in hopes like many migrants to earn money to build himself a house in his hometown. His plans changed when he got married and had children; which is the reason they decided to stay. He has been at the market for about nine months as a permanent vendor. He stated that before starting the food truck business he knew nothing about selling or serving food. The reason he landed there was through word of mouth, and since his mother in law had previous experience selling food he and his wife decided to invest and build a partnership among the three. Today the mother-in-law has an 'aguas frescas' (fresh fruit water) stand at the front of the booth while he and his wife run the food truck. His biggest complaint was that he didn't have enough time for his children since he's always working. But at times he brings them in to help as well as spend time with him. Furthermore, it has been difficult maintaining his business because it takes a lot of work and energy. During the week, he works in construction while his wife stays at home to care for their children, after work he and his wife prepare for the weekend. He also mentioned that starting up the business required a lot of investment; they had to buy big coolers to make ice, coolers to keep the meat fresh and other supplies to renovate the food truck. On the positive side, he reports building many friendships and a strong sense of community among his vending neighbors. The investment has also paid off as it supplements his income

when he doesn't get jobs in construction. During an early Saturday morning chat with him our conversation continuously paused as other vendors approached him to say good morning or dropped by to buy breakfast. One of the people that stopped to say hello was his goat supplier. His story is one of mutual support and one of the many ways markets prove to be great spaces for networking.

I was also able to chat with a vendor that has been at the market since the age of sixteen. He started as his father's assistant and within a few years his father left him in charge of the booth so he could sell at another market across town. He continued to be in charge of the booth while also having other side jobs within the market; one was picking up trash at the parking lot after hours; eventually, the owner offered him a position as the manager. His ability to serve as the interpreter and to a certain degree an advocate for other vendors, gained him the position. Today he has his own booth selling airbrush t-shirts, as well as having the responsibility of managing the market, vendors, staff, and the weekly inventory. He is a vital part of the market as he understands the culture of the vendors and can advocate for them.

5.2 EL GRAN MERCADO FLEA MARKET

El Grand Mercado, located in the East Riverside neighborhood, southeast of downtown on the corner of Pleasant Valley and Elmont Drive. The property is four acres which include an indoor mini-mall consisting of 15 small businesses and approximately 200 marked spaces for booths located in the parking lot. The property

originally was the Aquarius 4 Theater; opened in 1973 by Trans Texas Theatres (Image 8). The theater closed in 1996 and was repurposed as El Gran Mercado mini-mall. A long time vendor stated that the beginning of the flea market was in 2004. The market started off in the front part of the property with the permission of the owner. Soon after, the city requested he organize the vendors in the back parking lot. The amount of vendors fluctuate between 170 and 190 vendors; unlike the other two markets this one is accessible from all sides, thus no entrance or parking fees are required. It operates Saturday and Sunday between 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and the cost for vendors is \$20 for either day, but vendors selling food pay \$40 per day- No water or electricity is provided. Like all other markets the requirements for selling is to have a city vending permit and tax ID.

Image 8. El Gran Mercado: Aquarius Theater 1974



There are about 15-20 food vendors ranging from selling traditional regional Mexican, Salvadorian and Honduran meals to fresh fruit and traditional Mexican candy (Image 9). Most vendors sell used items, with clothing being a top pick; new clothing, work boots, imported produce are also highly visible. No concrete estimate

can be derived over the amount of customers that attend because they are not counted through entrances sold or parking fees as are the other two markets, but from my several observations I would say that in a span between noon-5pm there were a minimum of 400 customers. Many of the customers visit the market with family or friends. From my observation, there were very few single shoppers. Many customers congregate around the multiple food and fruit vendors (Image 10). This activity seems to be a family activity or one that is done with friends as well.

Image 9. El Gran Mercado: Traditional Mexican Candy Booth



Image 10. El Gran Mercado: Young Girl Helping the Family



Since vendors need to setup and breakdown their canopies daily, they do not have much opportunity to personalize their booths. Although they cannot embellish their businesses, they are very conscious of how their merchandise is set up. For example many who are in the business of selling cell phone accessories, set up in a typical manner of a cell phone store, with linear racks to display their goods; some even have glass display counters for their prime merchandise. Food vendors who have food trucks also set up in a manner to create a hospitable environment. Vendors set up the truck at the end of the stall to allow the canopy to serve as shade for seating. The tables are arranged in two or three rows each having up to three tables, so people eat next to strangers; facilitating and encouraging interaction (Image 11). Many times I ate lunch there, sitting next to complete strangers asking for the salt and sauces to be passed down the table. The food vendors provide excellent service; they have waiters (from what I gathered mostly family members) that come to each table to take your order; thus offering a restaurant feel to the space. Unlike the other two markets that host live music, this one does not, but they do have music playing from the vendor who sells musical equipment, giving the entire area a more relaxed and lively feel. Vendors appear to have positive relationships with one another as well; at the end of the day vendors help each other load merchandise to their trucks and some mingle with their neighbors after packing up.

Image 11. El Gran Mercado Vendors Provide a Restaurant Atmosphere



In 2014, the property went through a rezoning process and was changed from commercial to mixed-use, based on the East Riverside Master Plan to redevelop the Riverside corridor. As a result, the owners of El Gran Mercado decided to sell. The new owners ready to redevelop the site gave vendors a notice to vacate the property on March 11th, vendors were told they had until early May to make adjustments. During the week that the owner gave vendors the notice to evacuate, many informal gatherings occurred among the concerned vendors. During one of my observations, I observed a small group of mostly men gathered around a table in one of the vendor's booth. Later on that day I spoke to one of those vendors and he said the conversation

was among friends sharing their feelings about the market closing and thinking of strategies to move their canopies and equipment next door. On another occasion, I began having a conversation with a vendor about her experience and her plans for the future after the market closed; during this conversation three other vendors joined. The conversations circled around theories each had on why the owner sold, and fears of “not making it” in the other market. Many were not surprised that the owner decided to sell, they pointed out that in a way they felt it coming, due to the mass redevelopment that East Riverside is currently going through. These moments show the importance of the market, so much so that vendors are willing to organize around common issues.

Three vendors in particular provided me with a rich understanding of the market’s role, both economically and socially, within the realm of placemaking and opportunity creation as well as how the current redevelopment plans are affecting their ability to sustain this valuable space. The first was a young mother of two views the flea market as her opportunity towards independence. Vending at the market is a full-time job for her, during the week she shops for her merchandise and if able picks up a few hours cleaning houses. Her business allows her to care for her children during the week saving her money on childcare. She concludes that although the vending business is not always great and at times she makes very little profit it is still much better than working in a low-wage position where there is no flexibility or personal growth.

On a Friday afternoon I made a stop at the market to speak to a few vendors who were preparing for the weekend. One person I spoke to was the employee of a vendor. He shared with me that he works with many vendors breaking down and setting up the large canopies, needed for the food vendors. He said he mostly works with vendors who have small children because they lack help to set up the heavy canopies that on average are about 15 by 30 feet wide. The particular canopy he was taking down when we spoke belonged to a food vendor who only had young daughters and a wife. Having to set up canopies has created around 20-25 jobs, mostly going to men who are between jobs. Vendors pay \$20-50 dollars per canopy to be set up and broke down daily.

The last people I spoke to was a family who vended together. A week after being notified of the plan to redevelop the market space, most vendors moved next door. Only a few vendors remained at the original site, among them a family of five. This family comprised of grandparents, a single mother and two children have been vending in the same spot for more than two years. While the children go to school the mother and grandparents travel to Houston to restock merchandise; they sell a bit of everything; used clothing, shoes, traditional Mexican candy and whatever fruit is in season; right now cold coconuts and corn are on sale. To them moving next door was a huge gamble because they didn't know how long the new site would be open before they too decided to redevelop. Since the owner of the original market site gave them until May 15th to leave they decided to wait it out. Between then and May 15th they looked for other markets around the area to see which would be the best fit for them.

Primarily they wished to find a market that had the potential to stay open at least two to three years. They also wanted to stay in the neighborhood since they have a loyal clientele. For them, their decision was very important since vending is their only source of income.

Although many of the vendors are in a vulnerable situation most were hopeful for the opportunity to start fresh in the new market. As one vendor said “Every day we are faced with challenges, but we can’t stop and dwell on them, we have to continue working hard; that’s what we came here to do” (here meaning the United States).

5.3 AUSTIN COUNTRY 290 FLEA MARKET

The last site explored is the Austin Country Market. Located northeast from downtown off highway 290, the colloquial name created by vendors and clients is the “290 Flea Market.” The market is the most established of the three markets analyzed in this research and, with over 145 acres, it claims to be Austin’s oldest and largest flea market (Austin Country Market Website). According to the Travis County appraiser's website, the oldest recorded building improvement dates back to 1980. The market’s vendor booths were originally assembled in eight rows, six-sided polygon with two additional inner rows (Image 12). However, currently there are only five rows left due to a fire that occurred in the summer of 2009. This fire destroyed 40% of the market’s booths and, according to an interview with a ten-year participant of the market, the market has not been able to return back to its original

capacity. Since the fire, a new 150' x 60' tent has been established in order to provide additional space to vendors. The vendor spaces are the traditional 8' x 10', however, unlike the other two markets, this market's infrastructure is permanent and does not require vendors to have their own canopies, although some do utilize canopies in order to provide additional shelter for their services (Image 13).

Image 12. 290 Country Market: Aerial Image of Original Structure

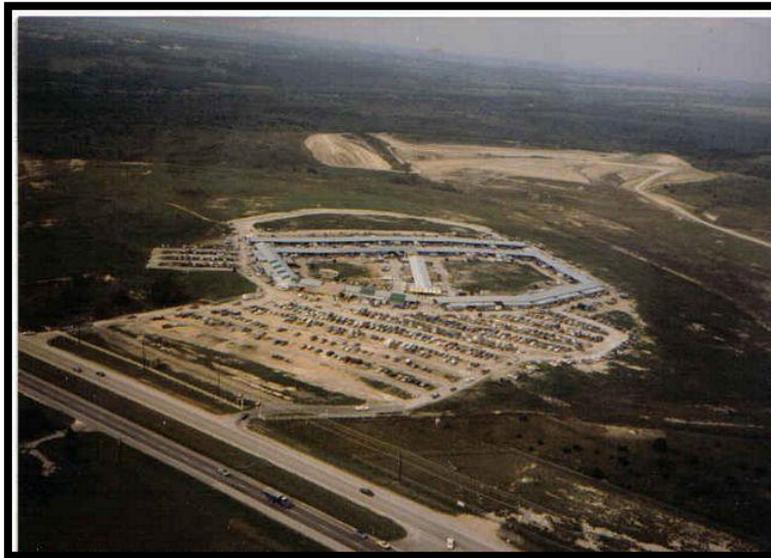


Image 13. 290 Country Market: Barn Type Infrastructure

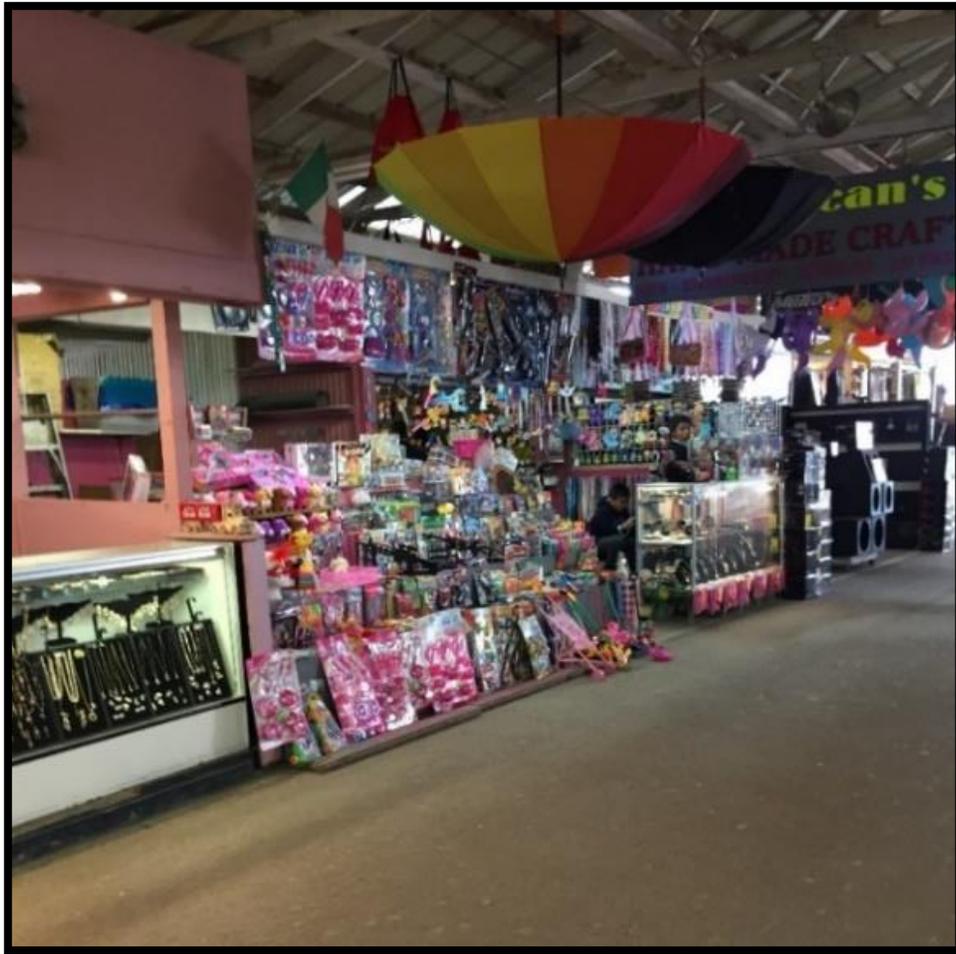


This market, like the others researched, is very family-oriented, with multiple vendors offering items that appeal to all ages. There are more families walking and shopping than congregating in a specific place, with the exception of the stage area where musicians play live music on Sundays. This market is also the most diverse in its racial and ethnic composition, but Latinos are still the dominant population at the market. Unlike the other two markets, this market has more vendors selling new items. Because the market is saturated with new items, it now only accepts vendors who sell antique or used items. Many of the booths are set up like a typical store with display shelves and a unique façade. This grants vendors the opportunity to personalize their booths (Image 14).

Of the three markets, this one is by far the most organized in regards to its managerial oversight. The market has an office that is operated by approximately 40-

50 employees who solely deal with vendor operations. The owners employ a large staff that oversees and manages seven small food vending locations and one large food court.

Image 14. 290 Country Market: Booth Façade



Like the other two markets, this market embodies a strong network of collaboration and support between the vendors. During one of my visits, I arrived at 6am to observe the process of the market setting up. I witnessed many vendors and the staff having coffee with one another in the main food court. I interviewed one of these employees who stated that this was a typical day at the market - people come straight to the food court, pick up coffee, chat with one another and then head down to their booths to start their day. While I was speaking with this individual, I noticed that most people, particularly the veteran vendors, know each other very intimately and sometimes use nicknames to greet one another. This act reveals a very close-knit community, where people feel comfortable and connected and have achieved a certain level of closeness that extends beyond a courteous "good morning." Another vendor I spoke to echoed the same sentiments. He too enjoy the connectedness of the community they have helped foster and he stated that he looked forward to working at the market on the weekends because the environment is so relaxed and supportive. The market helps encourage this feeling of camaraderie with a yearly vendor appreciation party on Halloween that is exclusively devoted for the vendors and their families.

Three vendors in particular provided me with a rich understanding of the market's role, both economically and socially, within the realm of placemaking and opportunity creation. The first vendor I interviewed had been a part of the market for over ten years. Like many of the other vendors, he has a weekday job and on the weekends run he runs his business with the help of his teenaged children. His hope is

to create enough capital to open a second booth at a different market and leave this booth for his son to manage. Owning a business, “even if it’s just on the weekends and not that big,” is extremely satisfying. He expressed that in the years that he has owned a booth at the market he has been able to provide for his children, both monetarily and through the process of character building. He believes that having his children work with him and learn how to effectively manage a business has been the most valuable lesson that he could have given them. Overall, he expressed satisfaction with the market culture, but did mention that he would like it if there were more food options that are more reflective of traditional Latino cuisine. Currently, the food stands, which are solely run by the market, only serve concession foods, like hot dogs, burgers and fries. He feels that if there was more authentic food that reflected vendors and patrons’ culture, the number of customers would rise.

I also had the chance to speak to a veteran staff member of the market. This particular employee has been part of the market for more than 25 years. She described to me the transformation of the market and how attendance has fluctuated and the demographics of the attendees has changed. The market initially was primarily white, but with time the demographics have shifted and the market is now more dominated by Latino patrons and vendor owners. She said one of the big differences between the Latino and White vendors is that the Latinos vendors tend to become permanent vendors, while white vendors tend to come and go. She believes this transience is due to the fact that previous White vendor owners viewed the market as more of a hobby, rather than as supplemental income. She also credits

Latinos for increasing attendance because of the abundance of unique products and the desirability of the many musical folklore bands that perform at the market.

I also spoke to a vendor who is on the cusp of retiring from the market. This vendor sells traditional quinceanera, baptism and formal gowns. She said her experience at the market has been a blessing. As an immigrant woman, she was able to realize her dream of becoming self-employed, which she thinks would have been virtually impossible in her home country. After her retirement, the business will be passed on to a family member who will continue her legacy. Overall, she has been very satisfied with the space, primarily due to the fact that it has granted her with many opportunities to grow as an entrepreneur, as well as provide her with a community of supportive friends and colleagues.

Chapter 6: Austin Flea Market Management

6.1 CURRENT CHALLENGES

Although these flea markets offer opportunities for immigrants to placemake, they are not without obstacles and vulnerabilities. Each flea market has its unique challenges based on location, time of operation, composition of the market and development in the area that creates parameters around the types of activities that can occur. The following are but a few challenges that the markets currently face:

One of the main vulnerabilities for immigrants is safety; particularly the fear of deportation due to their legal status. In 2006, there was a raid of some sort at El Gran Mercado; sources said it was for a vendor who sold counterfeit movies. Unfortunately, on the day of the raid rumors spread quickly across the market that Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) were there to round up people. This unfortunate misunderstanding caused many to go into a panic, some even abandoning their booths. The market attendance, of both vendors and customers, severely dropped in the months that followed. The numbers gradually picked up in the following weeks but according to a long-time vendor, they never recovered. On the other hand safety is one of the top amenities vendors and attendees appreciate from the 812 Market. People there feel safe because they are far from the core and the same security guards patrol weekly. Unlike El Gran Mercado vendors and clients feel a sense of safety and share a positive relationship with security guards. Many times security guards were observed engaging in friendly conversations with vendors

and patrons. One customer I spoke to said he felt safe because he trusted that the manager would at least give them a heads up if anything would happen- referring to the possibility of INS showing up. A sense of safety can also be observed through the relationship children have with the space, many are encouraged to play with other children in the common area and those who are outgoing even partake in the raffle activities to show off their dance moves and what. The 812 market layout is designed as a common shared space where people share benches, creating an environment where patrons cross words with more ease. A sense of safety can also be observed through the interactions teens have in the space; during several of the field observations I saw several groups of teens allowed to roam the markets while their parents sat by the stage to enjoy the music.

Development in the area is also a challenge for one of the markets. El Gran Mercado's ultimate challenge has been displacement due to redevelopment in the area. As a result, the owners of El Gran Mercado decided to sell. The new owners ready to redevelop the site gave vendors a notice to vacate the property on March 11th, vendors were told they had until early May to make adjustments. Surprisingly the property next door- an abandoned mini-golf and batting cage complex -had permits to set up a flea market since 2012. For the past three years, the owner had been advertising open spaces but no vendors had shown interest or perhaps not enough to open it officially. Due to the closing of the flea market vendors are transferring next door. Some vendors are hesitant because they fear similar to the property they are currently in, the new flea market owner will also choose to follow

suit and develop. Although this fear is very prevalent, many decided or were forced to transfer to take advantage of having the first pick of vending spaces to provide an easy and convenient transition for their clientele. Others are waiting out until May 15th and are looking for options where they can be assured they can stay in business for a substantial amount of time. As a result of the transition and new management, some issues have risen, mainly around booth space. In the original site the booths were set in a grid pattern each having the same dimensions, the new site is attempting to work around the existing infrastructure, so booths are different dimensions and not all have the same visibility. These issues have affected their customer numbers since vendors are split between the two properties and booths are not set up as they regularly are so people don't idle as much. Some vendors have had difficulty transitioning and finding a space that's big enough to recreate their former spaces, especially the food vendors, so many at the time do 'to go' orders.

As mentioned earlier each market is located in a different area, two are outside the ETJ of the city. The two; 290 Country Market and 812 Market, have issues of connectivity, both are outside the CapMetro service area. For those who rely on public transportation the closest they can get to any of these two is within two miles. The lack of transit routes limits those who have limited transportation options. The 812 Market is located near a neighborhood and is within walkable distance, but by far most people that attend do so by private car. In response the 812 Market has cleared and prepared the surrounding lots for parking spaces; parking attendants' direct patrons to specified lots and as demands increase, lots open. This can be seen as the

complete opposite of El Gran Mercado where parking is very limited and contested, but also proportional to the need for those who dare drive rather than commute by public transportation.

The composition of Markets are both advantages and challenges these three markets face. The 182 market unlike the other two is the most organic. It has a vast tree canopy, creek, and limited pavement. In the summer time its natural features are a great amenity for customers and encourage people to stay longer; but in the rainy seasons it can discourage people from attending due to exposure to rain, mud, wind, etc. This has a huge impact on the vendors who rain or shine, full parking or not, must pay their vendor fees.

One of the biggest challenges all three markets have is the lack of diversity. They are all predominantly Latino. This is important because it brings up questions of access for Latinos in the city. Do they come here because they don't like other spaces? Are the amenities so great that it skews them from going to say downtown, Zilker Park, 6th St., or are those same places not inviting to the population and as a default they congregate in spaces that feel safe? It can also be that the markets provide them with a sense of belonging because they are reminiscent of home. More research exploring the reason on why Latinos do not occupy other spaces is needed. It is important to understand if the spaces being created by the city are truly inclusive and inviting. This would be important in investigating how Austin can truly be an inclusive city as its Latino population continues to grow. The Latino population is ever growing,

putting the city in a position to assist Latinos in feeling safe by creating a sense of belonging to the broader city culture.

6.2 AUSTIN FLEA MARKET CODE

Alfonso Morales states that local government typically regulates markets for four reasons; to improve community image, protect existing shops and restaurants, avoid congestion on sidewalks, and reduce liability of businesses in the area (2009). Typically this regulation is through zoning and business licensing. The following is an analysis of how Austin is currently regulating flea-markets.

Currently, there is a chapter in the Austin city code that regulates open markets, but it is very brief and general. The chapter outlines general provisions that cover the approval procedure. Markets may be approved by the city council so long they find that the markets do not interfere with public use of a street or sidewalk or create a dangerous condition on the street. The process also includes a public hearing before approving any public markets. Approval of the market may also be dependent on required installation and maintenance of the facility (City of Austin). Flea markets are only mentioned under two code ordinances. The first ordinance in which flea markets are mentioned is for the Commerce of Live Animals. Chapter 3-2 Article 1 states that “a person commits an offence if they sell, trade, barter lease, rent, give way or display for commercial purpose a live animal; among the prohibited locations is flea market” (Austin City). The second ordinance under Article 6 dealing with Temporary Uses state that an “outdoor special sale, including a swap meet, flea

market, parking lot sale or similar activity may be permitted as a temporary use if the use is located in a commercial or industrial zoning district; and may not operate more than three days in the same week and no more than five days in the same month". As a result, the flea markets currently are regulated as a commercial use and looked at as a public space. This neutrality can be both positive and negative for flea markets. Having too many ordinances can negatively impact particular groups who may not be able to have the resources to comply with strict regulations, but not having enough regulation can also pose issues; particularly with health and safety.

These neutral regulations pose several issues for Austin flea market vendors, particularly the more informal ones. First, since they are so vague vendors don't have a clear understanding of what is and is not permissible and run the risk of being sanctioned. Furthermore, there are no clear guidelines that protect vendors from property owners (in comparison of a renter to the land owner). Vendors are vulnerable to relocation of their business should landowners develop the lands as well be at their discretion to set vendor fees. This can be seen by the contrasting prices between food vendors at different markets. For the owners of the land, these regulations can also pose issues as they are being treated as a commercial use and have to abide by the regulations attached to a commercial use.

Chapter 7: Discussion

These three flea markets all show clear signs of placemaking and as such are a vital part of the community surrounding them. This built environment serves as a haven, even if only in facade, an incubator of immigrant entrepreneurship and independence. As newcomers these spaces provide a network for social interaction, support, and survival. The flea markets offer a collective umbrella effect resulting in security from street harassment, safety in numbers; as well as exposure to clientele; a by-product of the one-stop shop setup and atmosphere.

Many of the businesses are a family affair selling, buying, trading, and marketing. To some these spaces have been the precursor to a brick and mortar business, thanks to the low capital venture required. This low investment flexible business type is key to their independence, a sometimes forced one. Through informal interviews business owners and patrons have credited the flea markets as a significant opportunity; in a sometimes tough job market that continually overlooks them as a qualified workforce, due to legal, lingual, and cultural background.

The stories of the participants of these markets is not unique; all across the nation markets have proved to be an integral part in the social integration for immigrant communities. In Los Angeles, where swap meets are part of most minority communities, vendors and shoppers have sustained these spaces. Markets in many cases across the nation have brought life back to communities. My family and I are part of those people that sustained our local swap meets and weekend flea markets. In my neighborhood, we have many mini-indoor markets, and street vending was

common and highly valued. For some of my friends, the swap-meets provided their first jobs. On the weekends, my entire family would visit the open flea market of the City of Paramount, which was about a 30-minute drive from home. It became a routine to visit the flea market to stock up on veggies, fruits, dry goods, tools, auto parts, good food and live music, a hoarders paradise. To my family, the flea market meant saving money, getting exercise and entertainment at the same location without on a tight budget. The swap meet near my aunt's house in South Central Los Angeles was one of the first places my cousins and I were allowed to walk to unsupervised. The same swap meet provided my uncle who due to his legal restriction found his first job, he has now clocked in 20 years of experience. The swap meet beyond a wage has provided him with a community. When I moved to Austin, one of the first things I searched for was a flea market. Flea markets bring about heavy and vivid recollections of my childhood, I feel a strong sense of belonging and comfort among people that speak my first language and around typical foods I grew up eating. Flea markets are unique areas that hold contested realities. Flea markets are found in areas where segregation and lack of opportunities exist but at the same time are hubs for survival both economic and social.

The flea markets in Austin are unique because of the mass development and growth the city is going through. These three markets are a reflection of the diversification of the city. It's important to acknowledge their existence and their impact.

7.1 CONSIDERATIONS FOR AUSTIN FLEA MARKET MANAGEMENT

Austin is currently in the process of revising the land development code which determines how land may be used. This code will impact how people will enjoy places and spaces, and will be revised in accordance to the Imagine Austin plan adopted in 2012. Austin's vision for the future is to:

“...be a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens, and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all. Austin's greatest asset is its people: passionate about our city, committed to its improvement, and determined to see this vision become a reality.” – Imagine Austin, 2012

To achieve this vision Austin officials have outlined seven building blocks and supporting policies. The seven building blocks are; land use and transportation, housing and neighborhoods, economy, conservation and environment, city facilities and services, society, and creativity. Public spaces are mentioned as part of the creativity building block, and states that “buildings and places reflect the inspirational and creative spirit of Austinites through design excellence, public art, and beautiful accessible public spaces” (Imagine Austin, 2012). Some of the supporting policies aim at protecting and enhancing unique qualities of Austin's treasured public spaces and places such as parks, plazas, and streetscapes; but conclude that “where needed” enrichment shall be applied to areas “lacking distinctive visual character” or where the “character has faded” (Imagine Austin, 2012). Such a policy could damage the

future of flea markets who historically have not had a visual character that has been pleasing to all do to its nature and roots in being informal spaces. Regulations must take into consideration the vision that Austin has in creating “people-friendly-places that promote equity” and deeply reconsider how if the current flea markets are not “aesthetically pleasing” may be enhanced without displacing the current actors.

Morales encourages planners to consider eight issues when planning public markets: the vending location, exemptions, caps of permits, areas for vending, space allocation, restrictions of certain goods, design, and fees and taxes.

1. Vending Location: Cities typically limit vending and other similar uses by establishing specifically zoned areas where vending is allowed, for example commercial; or by delineating specific places in the city, regardless of zone, where vending is permitted.
2. Exceptions: Vending restrictions are in large placed to protect neighborhoods from secondary effects; sometimes neighborhoods invite the idea of a market in their neighborhood. When this is the case planners should consider allowing permits for markets if vendors or market organizers get the consent from the neighborhood. This allows for neighborhood input on what activity occurs in the area and likewise encourages collaboration between residents and vendors.
3. Permit Caps: Capping the number of vendors can be a way to regulate markets, but this cap if implemented should be carefully considered to not create a higher demand than supply of vending permits. This

is particularly important to not leave out low-income vendors who benefit the most from permits.

4. Vending Area: The area for vending depends on the need for space. In the case of Austin which is highly dense in the center core vending area will most likely be smaller versus in area located in the peripheries. The important takeaway is that a standard vending area may not be a solution everywhere, if there is a lot that can hold more vendors and benefit more people they should not be held to the same standard as areas near the core.
5. Space Allocation: This consideration is at a micro level within the market. In the case of Latino's need for space is bigger than conventional vendor's spaces, this is because Latino's typically strive to have a large variety of goods to increase their chances in sales. Likewise for food vendors who want to recreate a 'restaurant' feel.
6. Restrictions on Certain Goods: This sixth consideration is whether specific items should be censored or the amount of vendor selling a certain good. For example in the 290 Country Market is currently placing a restriction on what type of vendors they accept, they want to increase the number of vendors selling antiques. This may pose an issue for vendors who wish to sell new items.
7. Design: This consideration is whether planners should regulate the vendor's booth space. Usually, these type of ordinances are put into place to improve the aesthetics of the market. In the case of Latino markets regulating the design is detrimental to the underlining purpose of the space, which is to embrace and celebrate culture.

Regulating booths/ carts can also place economic hardships on vendors who seek to comply with the rule.

8. Fees and Taxes: Permits, license and other fees are ways in which the city can continue to support the services for the area.

(Morales, 2009)

These eight considerations are, but a few to be explored when planning markets. Ultimately Morales calls for rules to be done on the ground, by those in the area who are directly affected by the markets. By leaving the rulemaking to the community it empowers them and create stronger cohesion among those who participate in the market. Shilbey and Scheneekloth push for “A critical practice of placemaking [which] attempts to give legitimacy to all knowledge. As such it does not privilege any single interpretation or professional perspective over the dynamics of the whole place” (1995). They push for professionals to “create a dialog, wherein groups of people can affirm, interrogate, and construct the knowledge they need to make and maintain their own places” (1995). Dolores Hayden asserts that:

“A politically conscious approach to urban preservation must go beyond the techniques of traditional architecture preservation to reach broader audiences. It must emphasize public process and public memory. This will involve reconsidering strategies for the representation of women’s history and ethnic history in public places, as well as for the preservation of places themselves” (1997).

Specifically when professionals become interested in exploring the practice of placemaking in low-income communities; whose current space may not be

“aesthetically pleasing” or up to “code”; “should begin with an exploration of the meaningfulness of place, and a consideration of the attributes of place that contribute to meaning, rather than beginning with a discussion of physical attributes and appropriate uses” (Rios et al., 2012).

But not all fault should fall as the responsibility of city officials, advocates and vendors also play a critical part in the preservation of markets. The San Jose Flea Market vendors from San Jose California are a great example of how one group of organized people saved their market (even if just for a few years). In 2007, the City of San Jose released a draft plan for the expansion of the train, which if put to place would pass very close to the market. The owners saw an opportunity and hired a consulting firm to draw up plans for an upscale mixed-used development. Vendors and pro-market advocates organized and fought against the plans and were able to stall the approval of them. It seems that the most probable thing is that the market shuts down eventually given that the city master plan does not include or mention the market. Although the owner has not yet officially stated he will sell vendors and organizers have become a loud voice in the process and have gotten the attention of many. Vendors and organizer identified strategies for ensuring the markets survival. Ginny Brown one of the many who reported on this stated that some of the strategies were:

1. Building a broad-based community coalition to win a legally binding Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with the current or future

owners, which would formally incorporate the flea market into the site's development plan.

2. Forming a nonprofit merchants cooperative that can develop its own funding and governance structure and, if need be, partner with the City or County to relocate on publicly owned land. Such a cooperative could also institute a fund that, over time, would be able to purchase the land.
3. Creating a traveling market that locates in different neighborhoods on different days of the week or weeks of the month—modeled after Ciclovía, an increasingly popular event that shuts down city streets for a day to promote biking and walking, often accompanied by street vending and public entertainment.
4. Pushing for the creation of a regional fund using redevelopment money—similar to affordable housing funds—to support immigrant entrepreneurs incubate small businesses in TOD zones with mechanisms, such as subsidized commercial rents or infrastructure for new open air markets.

(Brown, n.d)

The important take way from this example is the power that vendors have when organized. Austin flea market vendors and organizers can learn from this and other successful examples and help save the markets that are facing the effects of re-development.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The three markets are living examples of Latino placemaking in Austin. These three markets are spaces where needs are met; aspirations are accomplished and socioeconomic development flourish. These spaces have been essential to Latino Austin residents, supplying affordable healthy foods, daily household items, as well as place where social capital is gained. Markets help Latinos network and socialize in a comfortable setting that are reminiscent of the sights and smells of their home country and provide the space to recreate that community. In Austin, they are the “counter-spaces” of a city undergoing fast transformation.

Each of the three markets analyzed can help inform what next steps can be implemented to encourage community placemaking. Austin has the opportunity to support the growth of markets as public spaces and build trust between the city and Latino immigrants. City officials have a unique opportunity moving forward and have a great responsibility in involving flea market patrons and vendors through participatory planning strategies to create just and reasonable city codes that can assure safety and health issues are addressed along with the preservation of culture, equity and opportunity.

Appendix A. Site Visit Schedule

- Morning 8:00am - 12:00pm
- Afternoon 12:00pm - 4:00pm
- Evening 4:00pm - 8:00pm

November 2014

Date	Day	Market	Time of day
9 th	Sunday	812 Market	Morning
15 th	Saturday	El Gran Mercado	Morning
		290 Country Flea	Afternoon
16 th	Sunday	El Gran Mercado	Morning
		290 Country Flea	Noon
29 th	Saturday	812 Market	Morning

December 2014

Date	Day	Market	Time of day
6 th	Saturday	290 Country Flea	Evening
7 th	Sunday	El Gran Mercado	Morning
		812 Market	Evening
13 th	Saturday	El Gran Mercado	Evening

January 2015

Date	Day	Market	Time of day
3 rd	Saturday	El Gran Mercado	Afternoon
10 th	Saturday	812 Market	Morning
11 th	Sunday	290 Country Market	Evening
25 th	Sunday	El Gran Mercado	Afternoon
31 st	Saturday	812 Market	Morning

February 2015

Date	Day	Market	Time of day
8 th	Sunday	812 Market	Morning
		290 Country Flea	Afternoon
14 th	Saturday	El Grand Mercado	Afternoon
27 th	Friday	812 Market	Afternoon
28 th	Saturday	El Gran Mercado	Morning

March 2015

Date	Day	Market	Time of day
1 st	Sunday	812 Market	Morning
		290 Country Flea	Afternoon

14 th	Saturday	290 Country Flea El Gran Mercado	Morning Evening
22 nd	Saturday	812 Market	Morning
23 rd	Sunday	El Grand Mercado	Afternoon

Appendix B. Interview Format

Interviews with both vendors and customers were conducted in Spanish. In order to organically engage in an informal conversation, I followed the flow of dialog, varying the questions and expanding on some fruitful topics that came up. I felt it was more important to listen to rich content than prescribed questions. The following served as conversation starters:

1. Que tanto tiempo tiene como vendedor?

How long have you been a vendor?

Si no es vendedor: cuanto tiempo tiene visitando esta pulga?

If not a vendor: How long have you been attending this Flea Market?

2. En su propia recolección cual ha sido la historia de este lugar, algo particularmente interesante?

In your own recollection what has been the history of this place, any interesting events?

3. Cuál es la razón por la que opto vender/ comprar aquí versus otros lugares (tienda, en la calle, otras pulgas o locales)?

What are your reasons for vending/ shopping here versus other spaces (store, streets or other public markets)?

4. Cuales han sido las ventajas en vender/comprar aquí?

What have been the advantages of vending/ shop here?

5. Que significa la (pulga, el Swapmeet) para usted / familia? Que significa la pulga para la gente que visita?

What does this place mean for you / your family? What do you think this place means for those that attend?

How important is this place Space for Latinos?

6. Cuales han sido las ventajas de tener su negocio aquí?
What are the advantages of having your business here?

Y las desventajas?
What about any disadvantages?

7. Cuantos vendedores conoce?
Do you know many of the vendors?
8. Cuáles son sus relaciones/redes sociales en la pulga?
What are your relationships/ social networks within the market?

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