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The Effectiveness of Monarch Café and Hub City Farmers' Market in Feeding the Northside: Perspectives from Two Communities

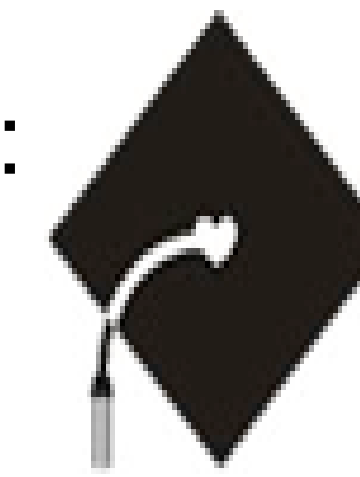
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Introduction and Capstone Focus

The Northside was once considered a food desert, or a low-income area that lacks access to fresh produce and other healthy foods while having 33% of the census tract population reside more than a mile from a supermarket (Gallagher, 2011). A solution to combat the of food insecurity in the Northside is the creation of Harvest Park, a food hub comprised of Hub City Farmers' Market, Monarch Café, and a community garden/farm.

The Hub City Farmers' Market runs every Saturday from April to mid-December. Vendors at the market are from local farms and businesses (Hub City Farmers' Market, n.d.-a). To attract a diverse array of customers, the Hub City Farmers' Market has a double SNAP program, and after the third visit every dollar that a customer spends for up to \$40.00 will be matched (Hub City Farmers' Market, n.d.-b). SNAP or the supplemental nutritional assistance program, provides assistance to low-income families for purchasing food (What is SNAP? n.d.). The Hub City Farmers' Market also has a healthy bucks program in which \$10 spent on fruits and vegetables will give one \$10 in tokens to purchase more fruits and vegetables at the market and therefore encourage healthy eating.

Another component of Harvest Park, Monarch Café, is a café and fresh food store. Monarch Café is run by the Butterfly Foundation, a community development organization. Along serving as a café and food store, it offers a culinary job training program in which unemployed and homeless adults are trained for a career in the food service industry. Monarch Café also accepts SNAP (The Butterfly Foundation, n.d.). The addition of Harvest Park has caused the Northside to no longer be considered a food desert, but the question remains whether, and how, Harvest Park is actually benefitting the Northside community.

The purpose of my research is to gain insight as to how Northside residents who live in Victoria Gardens and Cleveland Heights perceive Hub City Farmers' Market and Monarch Café. This is important because with the addition of Harvest Park, the area is no longer considered to be a food desert, so there could be potentially less focus on if Northside residents have access to fresh and affordable foods. Furthermore, my project looked into suggestions for future improvements for Monarch Café and Hub City Farmers' Market in order to attract more Northside residents in the future.

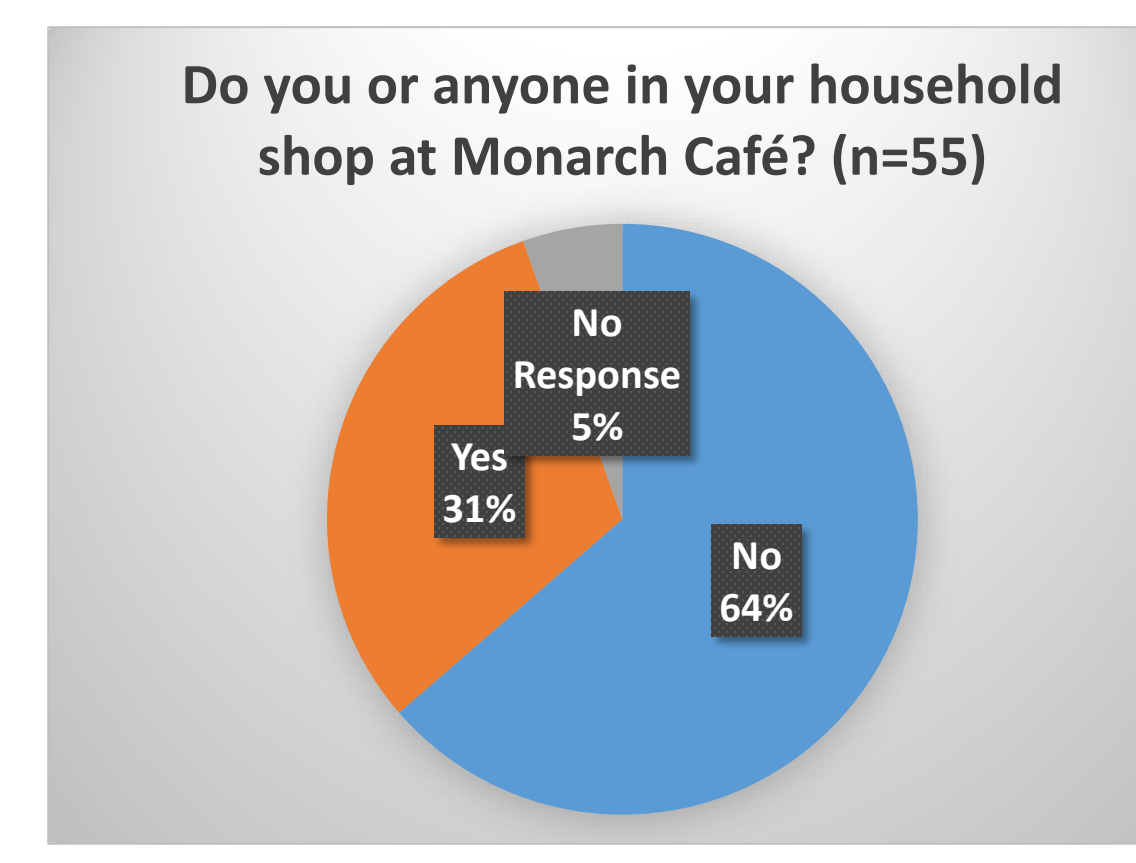
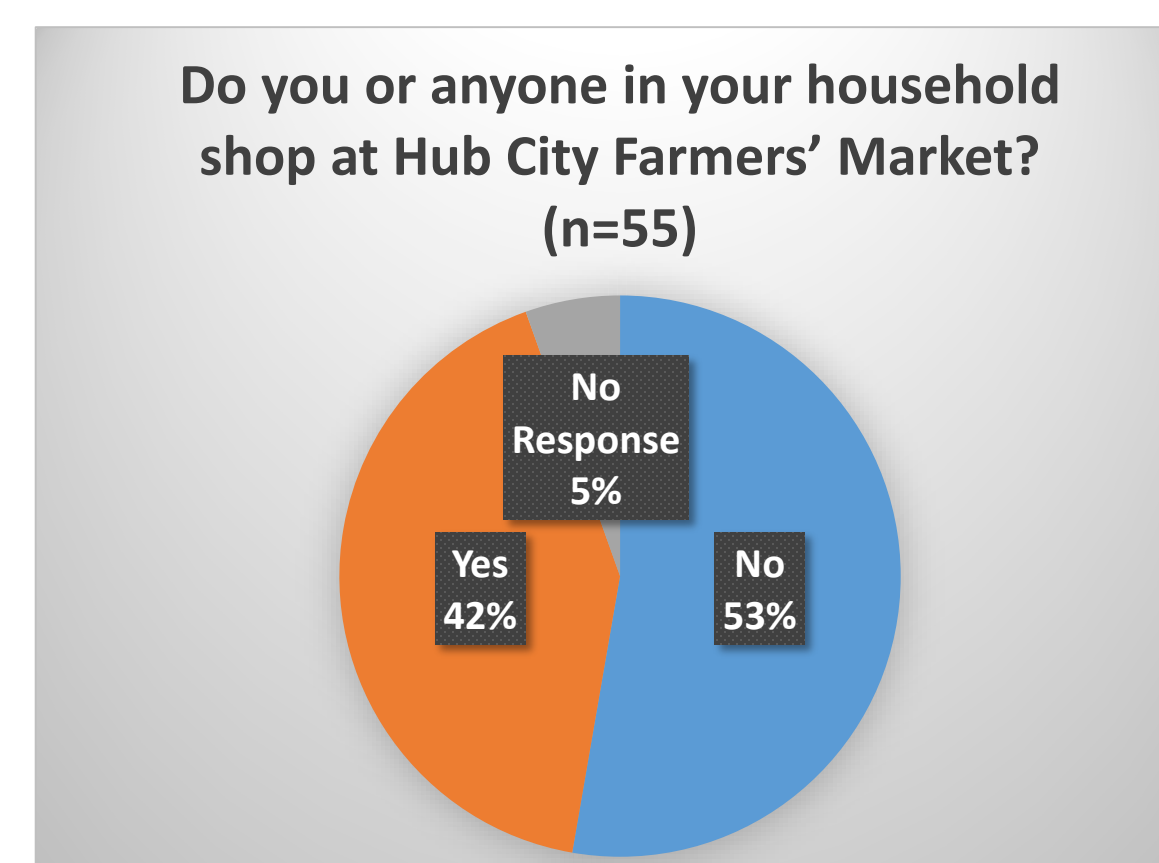
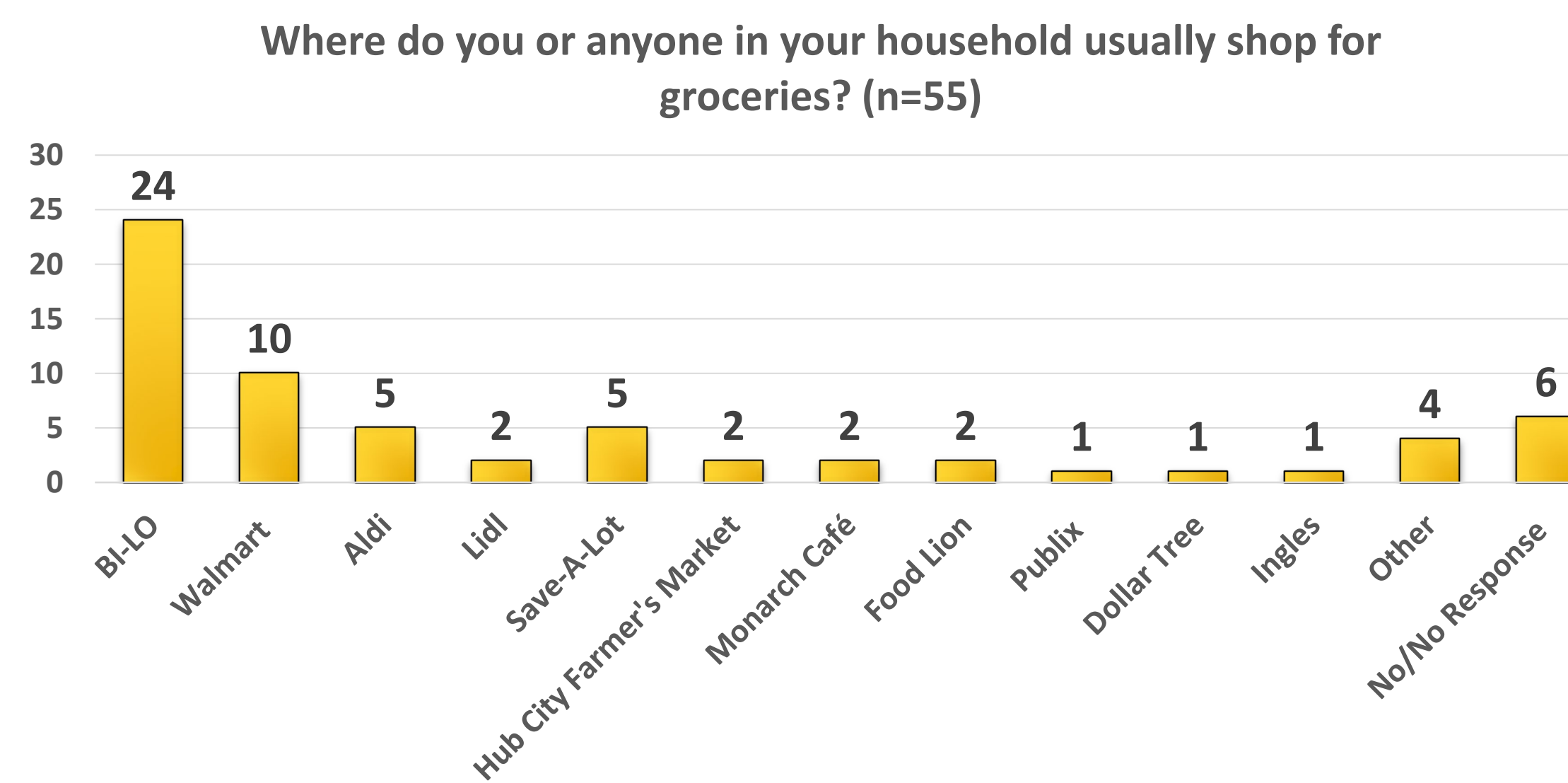
Bonner Field Experience and Research Methods

I surveyed two neighborhoods in the Northside, Victoria Gardens, and Cleveland Heights. These neighborhoods were chosen because they contain the highest density of Northside residents, thus the best locations to obtain a sample for the neighborhood as a whole. Out of the 1800 residents of the Northside, there are 144 households in the two neighborhoods combined. Victoria Gardens is an apartment complex with 84 apartments. Cleveland Heights is a neighborhood of around 60 homeowners. The surveys were handed out door to door because that was the only feasible way to collect data from the residents in the two neighborhoods. Data collection spanned from 10/11/2017- 11/06/17. Because of scheduling conflicts, data were collected between 2:00 pm-4:00 pm, a time which many people are at work.

The survey consisted of 14 questions, some were open-ended and other questions were multiple choice. The purpose of the open-ended questions was to not limit the type and kind of responses that the respondents can give. Respondents were offered the chance to take part in a raffle for one of two \$25.00 gift cards for the Hub City Farmers' Market or Monarch Café. The goal of the raffle was to provide an incentive for the respondents to answer the survey along with having respondents who may have never been to Harvest Park to go by there.

In all, there were 55 respondents, 24 from Cleveland Heights and 31 from Victoria Gardens. Out of the 55 respondents, the majority are African American females. For the open-ended questions (5, 11, 12, 13, 14) there are a wide array of answers. To better represent my data, the answers were placed into different categories created after reading the survey responses.

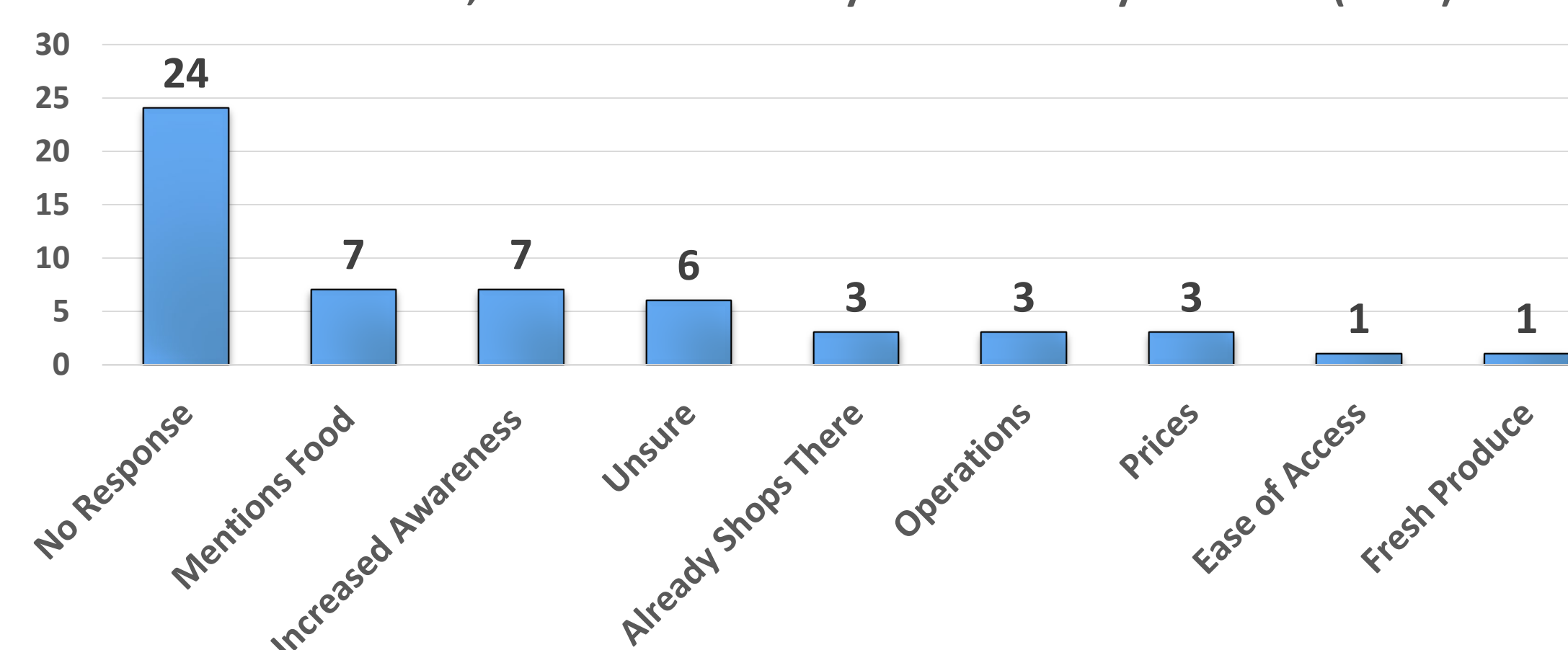
Results/Reflection



If you or anyone in your household currently DO NOT shop at Hub City Farmers' Market, what would make you more likely to do so? (n=55)



If you or anyone in your household currently DO NOT shop at Monarch Café, what would make you more likely to do so? (n=55)



Summary & Conclusions

Overall, this study helped me gain some insight into the shopping habits and perceptions of the Northside community. It would be useful to do another study on residents' access to transportation. Transportation and accessibility to it in the Northside is critical to access food. Although 32 out of the 52 respondents indicated that they did not feel as if they had difficulty obtaining groceries, this answer could be biased in the sense that residents may have a preconceived notion that the way they get groceries now is normal and not difficult. However, if one does not have access to a car, they would need to rely on their neighbors or use public transportation. Further research on the number of households with cars or access to cars will provide a more accurate look at how food insecure the Northside may actually be. The more households with access to a car, the less difficulty there may be in obtaining groceries, assuming that many of the residents are shopping at nearby grocery stores such as BI-LO. It would also be worthwhile to see how many residents use public transportation or walk in order to go grocery shopping because it may significantly limit how much they are able to purchase since they will need to bring the groceries back on the bus or carry them home.

Another future study would be where Northside residents prefer to shop and why. A limitation of the data from my study was that it did not look into prices at Monarch Café and the Hub City Farmers' Market and compare them to BI-LO. My study also did not look into how much residents spend on groceries on average, the percentage of residents that use SNAP, or what groceries they purchase. This information will be useful in order to learn more about the shopping and eating habits of the Northside neighborhood and can better curate the grocery options offered at Monarch Café and Hub City Farmers' Market. This study would also give insight into how Northside residents view food. Oftentimes, because of cultural barriers, people may not purchase fresh and healthy produce although it may be readily available and affordable. A final thing to keep in mind is that the preparation of fresh foods takes a long time. If one comes home from work late or does not have the time to prepare food, they will be more likely to purchase something ready-made or convenient to cook.

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