The Role of Values in Farmers' Markets; Comparative Case Studies in Minneapolis and Vienna

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Abstract: Over the past decade, contemporary farmers' markets (FMs) in the US have grown exponentially in popularity and numbers. Viennese FMs, on the other hand, can be seen as an historical form of traditional food-access, yet have been decreasing in size and losing actual farmers' as vendors. Could the US boom be an eventual passing trend, or could the values involved in the operational architectures of these FMs lean toward a new approach that may persevere? This paper explores a topic few have researched, the role of values in farmers' markets as an establishment, and does so using case studies in two different regions, Minneapolis, Minnesota and Vienna, Austria. The values described by farmers market managers, goals, mission statements and individual vendors of these two regions have been preliminarily examined to understand their role within farmers markets and how they may affect the markets and what they may have to offer for the future of FMs. Initial results show that FMs in Minneapolis have more of a connection to values as well as more varied prevalent values, illustrating the possibility of perseverance due to a value-laden governance structure and involvement with surrounding community. This finding leads to many suggestions for the FM model in Vienna not heavily focused on values or similar values, in order to help strengthen the local Viennese agrifood system.

Keywords: Farmers' Markets; Values; IFOAM; Generative Ownership

Introduction

Farmers' markets today offer a gateway for the increasingly compromised smaller farmer to make a livelihood and to explore additional innovative marketing approaches of direct marketing within their urban communities (i.e. cooperatives, CSA models, community food hubs, etc.) (Hinrichs et al., 2004; Coster & Kennon, 2005). Other than being known as a direct marketing venue for smaller farmers, farmers' markets (FM) have a reputation for providing a different quality of products and services, a social atmosphere as well as community integration, and are often seen as an alternative to the retail supermarket experience (Brown & Miller, 2008; Vecchio, 2009; Rainey et al., 2011; Byker et al., 2012). Although FMs play a minor role in overall marketing forms of food today, they are still a well-known form of direct marketing for farmers around the globe. Due to different historical, cultural and political situations however, FMs take on various operational principles and have different guiding values resulting in differing market contexts and contrasting gradients of small farmer support.

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Most recent studies of farmers markets, in the US and in Europe, focus on operational and organizational features of markets as well as consumer behavior (Brown, 2001, 2002; Brown & Miller, 2008; Stephenson, 2008; Vecchio, 2009; Byker, et al., 2012). There have been few value-centered assessments of farmers' markets (Alkon, 2008; Smithers & Joseph, 2010) and a very limited number that specifically consider the relationship of FM structures and their associated values in the markets.

All FMs can be said to reflect sets of values. Some markets have values explicitly stated in mission statements; others might be understood through their management and governance structures. Values are a significant component to the running of FMs and they interact with the operationalizing of the markets in such a way that may affect support for both markets themselves as well as smaller farmers. Research for this paper is concerned with: what role values play in farmers' markets. Using two different metropolitan case study regions, Minneapolis and Vienna, with differing operational architectures and values, we can begin to examine the roles of values in farmers' markets today.

Following the national trend of the farmers' market boom, Minneapolis, Minnesota has experienced a growth in new FMs in the past 10-15 years. Most markets in Minneapolis are organized through non-profit organizations that are planned around different specific purposes or mission statements that influence the markets in different ways. These highly successful contemporary FMs have been organized around a strong community of customers dedicated to supporting small farmers and locally produced products. Additionally, many of the FMs in Minneapolis have been created by the community specifically to support small farmers, asserting a fundamental difference in purpose and governance of such markets from others that are municipally or farmer-started or run.

City markets were common in the US until they very nearly disappeared in the late 40s, however the metropolitan farmers' markets in the US today, and in this case, specifically Minneapolis, are widely popular. Examples of this popularity include markets that are being extended throughout the winter season, new markets continuing to be opened, and evidence of a strong customer backing. Yet this movement is young, and could be categorized as a passing trend.

Conversely, Viennese Markets in Austria reflect a long tradition of civic policy to assure food access for city residents. Until recently, these markets offered marketing opportunities for large numbers of small family farmers who lived around major cities (Viennese Market Manager B, 2013). However, as city growth has led to a decline in the number of small family farms in the surrounding area of Vienna, re-sellers have begun to replace farmers and producers. Furthermore, the farmers' markets of Vienna are becoming smaller and are open fewer days of the week.

These observations lead to a series of questions concerning the FMs in each of these metropolitan areas. Despite the current popularity of urban US FMs, do the historic Viennese farmers markets show the future for Minneapolis FMs? Or, could the operational architectures and associated values of the Minneapolis markets provide the foundation for a more enduring presence? Moreover, what could the Viennese markets learn from those in Minneapolis?

Such a comparative analysis requires more than a comparison of the structure and functions of FMs. Instead, this analysis must be based on a value-centered conceptual perspective that allows us to explore the principles and values that define their design and guide their operational architectures upon which FMs are organized and operate. This would allow for ethically based questions that are sensitive to the structural features of the FMs in both Minneapolis and Vienna, and allow for a comparison of the two metropolitan markets.

Theoretical Framework

While most studies of FMs look more at organizational FM analyses (Stephenson, 2008) by primarily focusing on values when examining FMs, this study uses an analytic framework that draws our attention to the ways in which specific values become rules and norms within the markets' operational architectures. These values, especially organized around Health, Ecology, Fairness and Care (see IFOAM²³¹) are expressed in what Kelly refers to as the "ownership design" of markets defined by the their Purpose, Membership, Governance, Finance and Networks (see Generative Economy²³²).

This analytic framework is illustrated in Figure 1. Here, the 5 'principles' of Generative Economy outline the operational architecture—the structure, logistics, and functions of the markets—and are embedded within the IFOAM values. The concept of Generative Economy was used by Kelly to examine ethical businesses; therefore implying a framework that is already value-based. In adding the IFOAM principles to this structure another level of depth helps to understand and assess the predominant values within FMs. This framework has shaped this study. It has influenced how the qualitative interviews have been structured, which key observation points in the participatory observation were selected and the analysis.

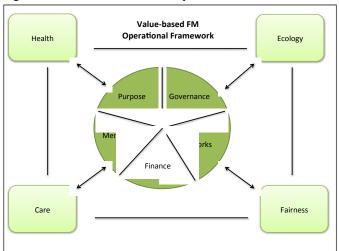


Figure 1: The Value-Based FM Operational Framework used

Two examples of Generative Economy principles applied to the operational architectures of farmers' markets would include: for Purpose—mission statements, goals, atmosphere marketing, etc; for Governance—how is the market run, how is it organized, who makes the decisions, what is the vendor criteria? Moreover, the boundaries of the IFOAM principles are defined in relation to FMs and their accompanying values. These include examples such as: Health—food safety, healthy food, information about nutrition; Ecology—recycling, composting, supporting organic and sustainable practices; Fairness—food access, vendor selection, EBT use (electronic food stamps); Care—community issues, decision making processes, community education.

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²³¹ International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements: Principle of Health: Organic Agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal and human as one and indivisible. Principle of Ecology: Organic Agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them. Principle of Fairness: Organic Agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities. Principle of Care: Organic Agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well being of current and future generations and the environment. Source: IFOAM (2009)

²³² Generative Ownership Principles: Living Purpose: Ownership alternatives to create the conditions for life over long term—i.e. social enterprises, community land trusts, cooperatives, etc.; Rooted Membership: Ownership in human hands, as opposed to corporations today that have absentee ownership; Mission-Controlled Governance: Control by those dedicated to social mission as opposed to governance by markets, where control is linked to share price; Stakeholder Finance: Capital as long-term friend as opposed to casino finance of traditional stock market ownership; Ethical Networks: Collective support for ecological and social norms (Kelly, 2012).

In addition to adding a level of depth in understanding FM values in the analysis, the IFOAM principles help organize the values to find which ones are acknowledged by the markets in becoming rules and norms. Finally, the principles are also embedded in an agricultural background, specifically an organic one that resonates in a FM context because of the high organic farming participation rate in FMs (Dimitri & Greene, 2000; Trobe, 2001; Rainey, et al., 2011).

Methods

In addition to a literature review, data collection occurred during 2012-2013. 12 farmers' markets, were studied, 6 from Vienna and 6 from Minneapolis. Qualitative interviews, participatory observation and a reoccurring exchange between the researcher and key stakeholders were completed.

These methods were organized around the Generative Economy principles to be used as guiding categories and the IFOAM principles, used to thoroughly examine the dynamics that create the structures of FMs and the important values apparent in the markets, between markets within the individual cities, and between the markets of Minneapolis and Vienna. Such an approach was used to create both a holistic picture of the markets through a wide-variety of stakeholders—from professionals in the farmers' market field, to market managers, vendors and consumers—as well as repeated contact with key actors to discuss findings, meanings and relativity to market situations.

Findings

Viennese Farmers' Markets

Allegedly going back to 1150, Viennese markets illustrate a rich history of food access for its citizens. A centrally controlled Market Bureau which governs all market stands, farmers' markets as well as restaurants, grocers and other non-foodstuff related stores, was first created in 1839. This governance structure presiding over all Viennese markets marks a significant difference from most US markets and all of the Minneapolis markets. Within the market bureau, there is a section devoted solely to markets and farmers' markets, which was the focus area of data collection.

Vienna has 17 permanent, weeklong markets. These market spaces have small fixed buildings that act as storefronts as well as 1/3 of the space that is left open for farmers, producers and resellers to sell from. For the residents and consumers this designated space, called the Landparteienplatz, is considered the 'farmers' market'. The Landparteienplatz has a different operational architecture than that of the other fixed stands at the very same market. It has a different set of rules, produces a miniscule income for and requires much less organization and maintenance from the Market Bureau often resulting in it being overlooked.

Because it is regulated and organized from the same Market Bureau, the Landparteienplatz in each market in Vienna has the same rules. The Market Bureau takes great care to provide a safe (food safety and hygienic) environment for consumers and a fair environment for vendors. To do so, they have routine food safety checks in the markets and have implemented a lottery system and other checks for accepting vendors.

Each January, open spaces for stands are reassessed, if a vendor has retired or simply left the market, the free space must be filled. Each market organizer has a waiting list of farmers, producers and resellers wishing to participate in the market (if the particular market is full, not all markets are). Farmers and producers take precedence for selling space, followed by resellers, and finally by those selling items other than food.

A small percentage of the Landparteienplatz at each market is required to be left open for seasonal vendors. During the year, when permanent vendors are sick, on vacation, or have a crop failure, etc. their spaces and the few open spaces (again only if it is a full market) are given temporarily, through a lottery, to vendors interested in selling at that particular market that day. This happens about every 3 days, depending on the market, ensuring fairness of vendor selection.

In 2006, the Market Bureau regulations were changed to follow a more kameralistisch way or a business strategy more akin to mercantilism. This limited the influence that market managers have on the vendors and vendor selection.

In this study of 6 Viennese markets, 5 were chosen from 17 total fixed weeklong markets, and one from 3 temporary weekend markets. They were chosen to have different sizes, popularity and atmospheres. Although each market has a different character and perhaps a varying customer base, they all share the same governance structure and therefore purpose, with the

Table 1. Viennese Farmers' Markets

Farmer's Mar- ket	Description	Owner- ship	Mission statement	Vendors	Sum- mer Dates	Win- ter Dates	Days Ope n	Years Run- ning	Staff	Size of mar- ket
Freyung Organic Bauernmarkt	A temporary weekend plaza market opened specifically for organic consumption, in the first district, providing food and products for first district citizens and tourists, there is a mixture of farmers and resellers, yet popularity of the farm products as opposed to the ready to eat items have been decreasing in popularity	Run by an organization Bio-Freyung Markt Verein but regulated by the City of Vienna	To provide fresh organic products to people and specifically first district citizens while supporting smaller farmers	20-25 tempo- rary stands	open year round	open year round	Fri- Sa	20 years	1 official for set up; organization of president, secretary, etc 1 inspector	small
Karmelitermar kt	A market on a plaza as opposed to a street creating a cozy, niche like feeling, including many organic and slow food options, a lot of farmers and producers and places to stay and eat. Providing for a well-to-do clientele of many ages including many families	City of Vienna	To provide local access to safe (i.e. food safety, hygienic) food for citizens; and a fair participation process for vendors	30 fix places approx. 40 free places	open year round	open year round	Mo- Sa	but officially since 1671; 343 years	1 market manager; 1 official person for logistics	medi- um
Viktor-Adler Markt	A thriving street market with 10 producers and 50 resellers selling to a neighborhood demographic of international consumers who still cook; selling cheaply but selling a lot, organic does not have a presence here.	City of Vienna	To provide local access to safe (i.e. food safety, hygienic) food for citizens; and a fair participation process for vendors	75 fix stands. 60 free places on street 70 vendors	open year round	open year round	Mo- Sa	1874: 139 years	1 market manager; 1 official person for logistics	large

Kutschkermark	A small	City of	To provide	20-50 fix	open	open	Fri-	1885;	1 market	small
t	street market,	Vienna	local	stands	year	year	sa	128	manager; 1	Silidii
	with a very		access to	approx.	round	round		years	official	
	friendly and		safe (i.e.	30 free					person for	
	personal		food safety,	spaces					logistics	
	feeling,		hygienic)							
	providing a		food for							
	majority of		citizens;							
	organic		and a fair							
	foods of		participa-							
	farmers and		tion pro-							
	resellers, to		cess for							
	predominant-		vendors							
	ly well-to-do									
	families, lots of children									
N b l - 4	are present. Vienna's	City of	To provide	120 fix	omon	omon	Mo-	1780;	1 market	larga
Naschmarkt	most well	Vienna	local	stands	open	open	Sa	233	manager; 1	large
	known	Vienna	access to	Approx.	year round	year round	Sa	years	official for	
	market,		safe (i.e.	50 free	Tourid	Tourid		years	logistics;	
	providing a		food safety,	spaces					one 'market	
	lot of exotic		hygienic)	spaces					master'	
	foods and		food for						inaster	
	tourist items		citizens;							
	to a variety		and a fair							
	of people.		participa-							
	Today there		tion pro-							
	are a lot of		cess for							
	re-sellers and		vendors							
	a smaller									
	amount of									
	farmers, on									
	Fridays there									
	is a specific									
	organic									
Brunnenmarkt	selection. Exotic street	City of	To provide	120 fix	onon	onon	Fri-	opprov	1 market	large
Drunnenmarkt	market	City of Vienna	local	stands	open year	open year	Sa	approx. 1830;	1 market manager; 1	iaige
	heavily	v iciiia	access to	Approx.	round	round	Sa	1830,	official	
	frequented		safe (i.e.	50 free	Touriu	Tourid		years	person for	
1	from those		food safety,	spaces)	logistics	
1	who live		hygienic)							
1	around the		food for							
	area, colorful		citizens;							
1	and bazaar		and a fair							
	like, support-		participa-							
	ing a festive		tion pro-							
	atmosphere,		cess for							
	a lot of		vendors							
1	organic									
	present.								1	

Table 2: Minneapolis Famer's Markets

Farmer' s Mar- kets	Description	Owner- ship	Mission tatement	Vendors	Summer Dates	Winter Dates	Years running	Staff	Size of market
Minne- apolis Farm- ers' Market	Oldest largest permanent munici- pal market in MN; farmers, producers and resellers; variety of customers, many from suburbs; mixed local and exotic products. High Hmong population. Integrating market- ing strategies and more modern farm- ers market values into its daily routine.	Central Minnesota Vegetable Growers' Associa- tion (non- profit)	Dedicated to the success of its farmers markets, the future of small farms and agricul- ture, and providing quality to customers	Over 252 vendors plant and flowers: 51 Vegetables: 150 Fruit: 38 Farm- stead products: 27 Crafts: 13	Everyday, 6am-1pm	after new years 9- 12	Precursor market: 1876; current market in 1937-76 years	4 staff 2 EBT 3-4 staff for cleaning and haul- ing	large
Mill's City Farm- ers' Market	Large market known for its organic and sustainable values; Very professional and organized, many locals and suburban families dedicated to support market. Has reached a size need to assess what values are and how to keep values or change in order to expand for the future.	Non-Profit 501c4	Support local, sustainable and organic agriculture, farmers, urban youth, small businesses and food artisans, access to healthy local foods and build a vibrant gathering place for visitors	Over 65 food related vendors over 17 art related vendors	May 12th- Oct 27th Saturdays 8am-1pm	2nd Saturday of every month	7 years	2 full 2 part-time 4 Saturday workers 8 Interns	large
U of M Farm- ers' Market	Very small street market run by a non-profit subsidiary of the University of Minnesota specifically from the health and wellness program geared toward the faculty and staff of the university. Local vendors from within 2.5 hours of the Twin Cities. This market is the shortest run market and the less established market of the six markets studied	Non-profit 501c3 subsidiary,	Supporting the health and wellness of university faculty and staff	10-18 vendors One organ- ic U of M farm vendor	Wednesday from 11 am until 2pm July 10-October 10	N/A	9 years	2 Full, with only part of their time allotted to the FM	small
Mid- town Farm- ers' Market	Market with mixed clientele of ethnicities and ages a feeling of a community-based food system. Focus on equitable access to healthy, locally produced food and supports reinvestment in surrounding community. A very festive and welcoming atmosphere is cultivated at this market.	Non-profit Cocoran neighbor- hood organiza- tion	To create a vibrant forum connecting community residents and nearby rural food producers in a mutually beneficial economic and cultural exchange.	More than 80 vendors; Over 67 mixed food and art vendors	Saturday 8 to 1pm May- October Tuesdays 3 to 7 pm June- October	N/A	10 years	1 fulltime, 1 americorp s intern	medi- um

Farmer'	Description	Owner-	Mission	Vendors	Summer	Winter	Years	Staff	Size of
s Mar-		ship	tatement		Dates	Dates	running		market
kets									
North-	Focuses on food	Non-profit	Provides a	Over 35	Saturday	N/A	14 years	1 full 1	small
east	justice, family		safe, acces-	mixed	from 9-1pm,			part time,	
Minne-	programming,		sible and	vendors	rain or			one intern	
apolis	education, events,		friendly	Produce:	shine, June				
Farm-	and engagement in		environment	15 Baked	1st through				
ers'	community. Many		for commu-	goods and	October				
Market	producers who		nity com-	specialty	19th				
	catering towards a		merce and	foods: 9					
	lower-income		socialization	Arts, crafts					
	clientele with a		promotes	and more:					
	mixed background		sale of local	11 Food					
	in ethnicity and age;		and fresh	trucks: 5					
	market itself has a		foods and						
	festive atmosphere		gifts. En-						
	with a neighborhood		hancing						
	feel.		livability and						
			sustainability						
			in the com-						
			munity.						
King-	A smaller neighbor-	Non-profit	To bring	30 plus	May 19th -	Once a	12	One full	small
field	hood-run farmers'		neighbors	vendors	oct 27th	month		time one	
	market, very dedi-		together to		2013	Nov		part-time	
	cated to producers		buy, eat, and		Sunday	April		seasonal	
	and small farmers,		learn about		from 8:30-				
	very family orient-		local food.		1pm				
	ed, and middle to		Supporting						
	upper class clientele		local farm-						
	creating a very		ers, commu-						
	friendly, neighbor-		nity and						
	hood atmosphere.		locally						
			owned						
			businesses,						
			and effecting						
			important						
			changes in						
			food and						
			agriculture						
			policy.					1	

exception of the temporary organic FM. Table 1 includes the description, ownership, mission statements, vendor description, dates open, years running, staff and size of each market examined in Vienna. Table 1 illustrates the 6 different markets studied in Vienna.

Minneapolis Farmers' Markets

Minneapolis has 15 full farmers' markets and 10 mini markets (FMs consisting of 4-5 stands in the hopes of improving food access). Of the six FMs in Minneapolis chosen in this study, one is municipally owned, however all 6 markets are run and the other 5 owned by differing non-profit organizations. The fact that each of these organizations are run by different organization in differing locations creates dissimilar operational architectures resulting in the assertion of equally divergnt values.

The city of Minneapolis has 3 different definitions of farmers' markets allowing for differing ratios of producers, re-sellers and additions of non-edible products at each market, yet all definitions lie under the overarching term of farmers' market. All of the markets except for the permanent Minneapolis FM, opened first in 1876, have been recent additions to the community and are temporary markets. The city of Minneapolis plays the role of inspector for food safety issues and has a little role in the immediate governance of the FMs.

The independent market managers take on a private business air in selecting vendors that would benefit the markets rather than picking from a first come first serve basis or lottery system as in the case of the Viennese markets. This allows for more integration of the manager in issues such as governance and marketing. Market managers share a close relationship with the farmers and the farmers are often involved in decision-making processes and in some cases they also take part in the governance structures such as taking an advisory position for the board of directors. The vendors in the Minneapolis markets tend to be extremely creative and focused on the marketing of their products and the relationships made with their customers. Table 2 illustrates the 6 different markets studied in Minneapolis.

Discussion

In this preliminary assessment of the role of values in 6 FMs of two metropolitan areas, the values behind the general market architectures in each region differed in diversity and intensity however, a pattern of values when looked through the perspective of the value-based FM operational framework in figure 1, can be found for each area. Viennese markets have a few prevalent values focused predominantly on Health—food safety and hygiene; and Fairness—specifically in vetting vendors.

The Minneapolis markets portray a variety of values differing in importance from each market due to the different ownership and governance structures, including a large focus on Ecology i.e. sustainability, recycling & composting, organic farming practices; Health—associated with fresh, organic, high-quality products Care—focused on community involvement and improvement; and finally Fairness—seen through small farmer support. In these markets the variety of values were deeply embedded in the vendors chosen, the community involvement, the consumers and the purpose and image of each individual market.

This initial assessment draws a strong parallel between the governance and management structures of the markets in both regions and the values embraced and encouraged in the individual markets. These values instill a specific market image that when the two regions are compared create a stark difference: in Vienna a presence of a long-tradition of food access and in Minneapolis a modern, vibrant and purpose-based FM scene.

Conclusion

These case studies have represented values and principles based on two different regions and both have illustrated at different extents, the possibilities and challenges of integrating values in their economies, even if at a small scale. We recognize the possibility of this modern turn towards FMs in the US as a trend, yet the plethora of values and dedication of the non-profits and communities behind the individual FMs allude to a more lasting presence. Such a finding is confirmed by Alkon (2008), who found in the FMs she studied the "...potential to link local consumption to collective action" (p.497), also encouraging long-lasting value-based relationships.

FMs in Vienna have an advantage of having a permanent home and their general needs met—i.e. trash collection, snow removal, access to water—yet values of their customers and even the small farmers themselves are not being necessarily reflected in their governance and overall market structures. With infrastructure in place, Viennese markets, or in avoidance of slow bureaucratic changes, Austrian farmers, have a chance to learn from the Minneapolis markets focus on management focused on values, with projected purposes creating a lasting image and presence of trust within the markets, and essentially supporting and strengthening Austrian small farmers and their attempt to continue in providing local food access.

Even if it holds a minority in the food and agriculture sector, the future is positive for a vibrant and sustained local foods movement in the US, and specifically Minneapolis. The Austrian, and particularly Viennese food and agriculture sector has potential to build on a younger consumer base focused on alternative ideas and values to the traditional local culture, eventually building upon the localized agrifood system. As this paper is an attempt to convey preliminary results, the future holds an exchange of information and ideas of suggestions for possible furthering of FMs in both regions.

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