

# Barriers to Access to Healthy Foods: Lessons from the *Voices into Action* project

Sarah Bowen and Sinikka Elliott

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC



### Semi-structured interviews

- n = 124 black, white, and Latina female caregivers
- ≤ 200% of federal poverty line

### Ethnographic observations

- n = 12 families
- 250 hours total



# Sample



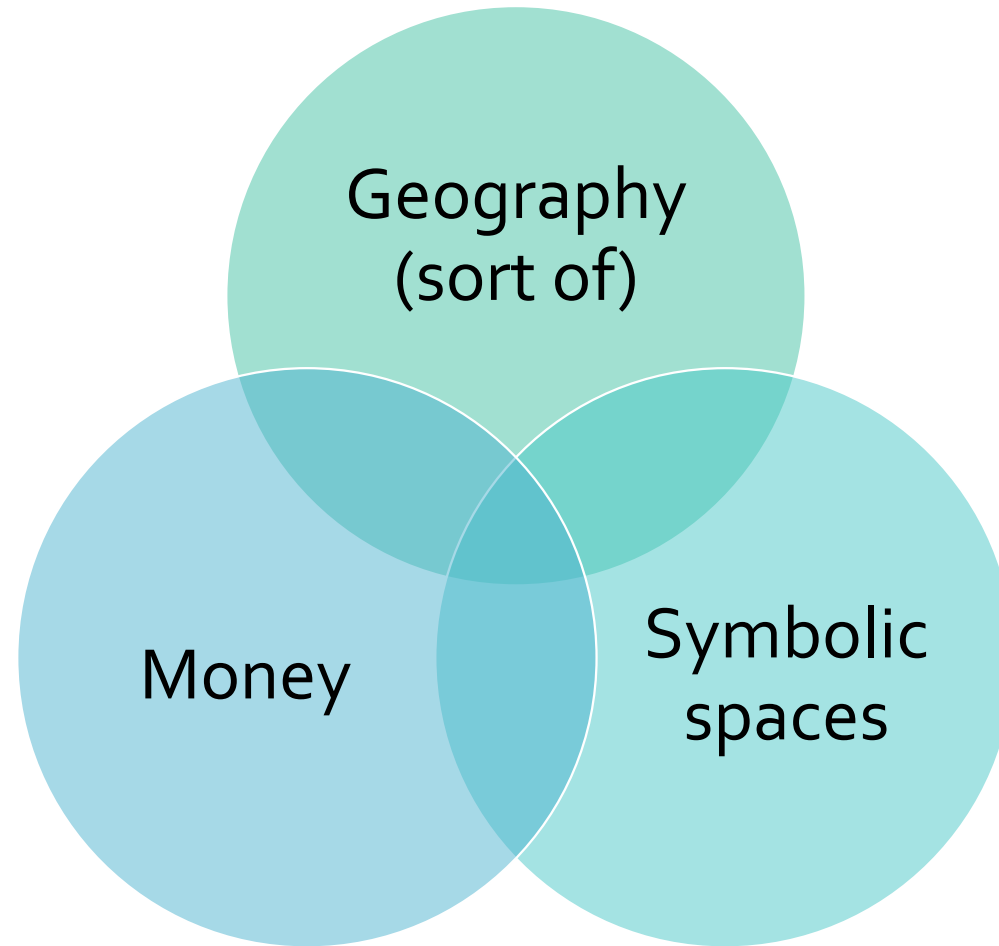
## Food insecurity status

High food security	49% (60)
Low food security	31% (38)
Very low food security	20% (25)

## SNAP

Receive SNAP	76% (94)
Do not receive SNAP	24% (30)

What are the  
barriers to  
access to  
healthy food?



## Geography (sort of)

"You see us walking with like four shopping carts.. So **we're shopping for the month at that one point in time** because we don't have the money to keep traveling back and forth every day to the market to go grab things... **I shop for everything at Walmart.** My whole life is Walmart... I don't go anywhere else. I think it's the brand. I love doing rollback low prices, and Wal-Mart is huge. It has everything."

"If I don't get all the food that I want on the first day of the money, I know the first thing I'm going to do is go run down to the corner store for anything. **And they triple the price at a corner store... I'd rather do it that way than risk... because I have a corner store here** that has all the goodies and snacks that I like to eat."

- Ramira, black mother of three

## Money

"There's a lady at [a local charity] and she sat me down and was telling me all of this gross stuff about food... I just let that go in one ear and out the other. Because I can't even listen to that, because I don't even want to think about that when I'm drinking milk. **I can't buy organic milk. I can't afford that.** So I mean my family's got to have their vitamins so **I try not to think about the details so much.**"

- Priscilla, white mother of two

## Symbolic spaces

**“I don't try to like, you know, go buy like lobster with [my food stamps]. I'll try and go with the cheaper stuff that will last and will stay fresh long. So that way it will carry over just in case I do run out.”**

- Beth, white mother of two

Moving  
forward:  
connecting  
producers and  
consumers



Source: <http://www.solidarityacrossborders.org/en/food-for-all-committee>