

Profit in the Food Desert: Walmart Stakes its Claim

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Efforts to ensure that people in all neighborhoods have access to healthy, affordable food are essential in the movement for food justice. An organization called the Partnership for a Healthier America has taken on food access as one of its five core areas, and because this organization has the backing of high-profile state representatives and considerable resources, its efforts matter. The Partnership's biggest accomplishments to date involve negotiating "meaningful commitments" from private-sector actors, including the biggest food retailer in the United States, Walmart. In this paper I examine the terms of Walmart's pledge to the Partnership for a Healthier America, and question whether the commitment from this massive corporation is likely to contribute to or obstruct actual food justice. I argue that the relationships this non-profit organization cultivates between the state and the private-sector insulate an entity such as Walmart from regulatory scrutiny, and generate positive publicity and good will for a company that may be doing little more than expanding its market. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: http://www.transformativestudies.org ©2014 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

KEYWORDS: Food Deserts, Obesity, Neoliberalism, Walmartization, Glocalisation, Governmentality, Consumption, Public-Private Partnerships.

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