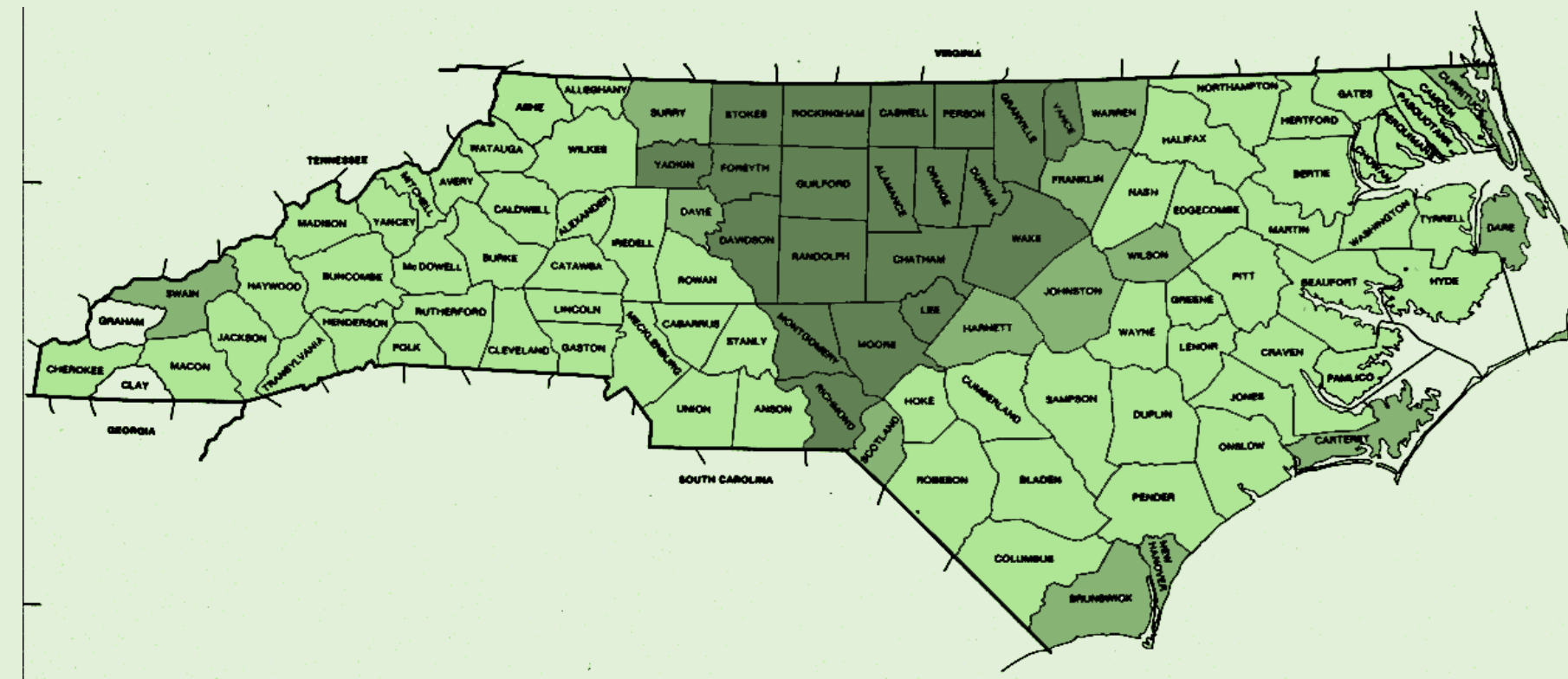


# How COVID-19 Changed Provisioning Habits in the North Carolina Triangle: The Move Towards Technology in How We Get Our Food

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## Introduction

- Examining the COVID-19 pandemic through a disaster framework because of its deep connections with society, culture, and political and economic environments (Wisner et al. 2004).
- Some anthropologists discuss disasters by considering the aspects of cultural change that continue beyond the disaster (Hoffman 2020).
- Food provisioning can be broadly defined as the methods one uses to procure food or “the work necessary for food security” (Henrici and Ju 2021).
- This thesis examines the continuity of behaviors that arose out of crisis response and how the COVID pandemic has resulted in long-term societal change and food system resilience.
- **Did the COVID-19 pandemic change food provisioning strategies for consumers in the Central Piedmont region of North Carolina and if so, how?**



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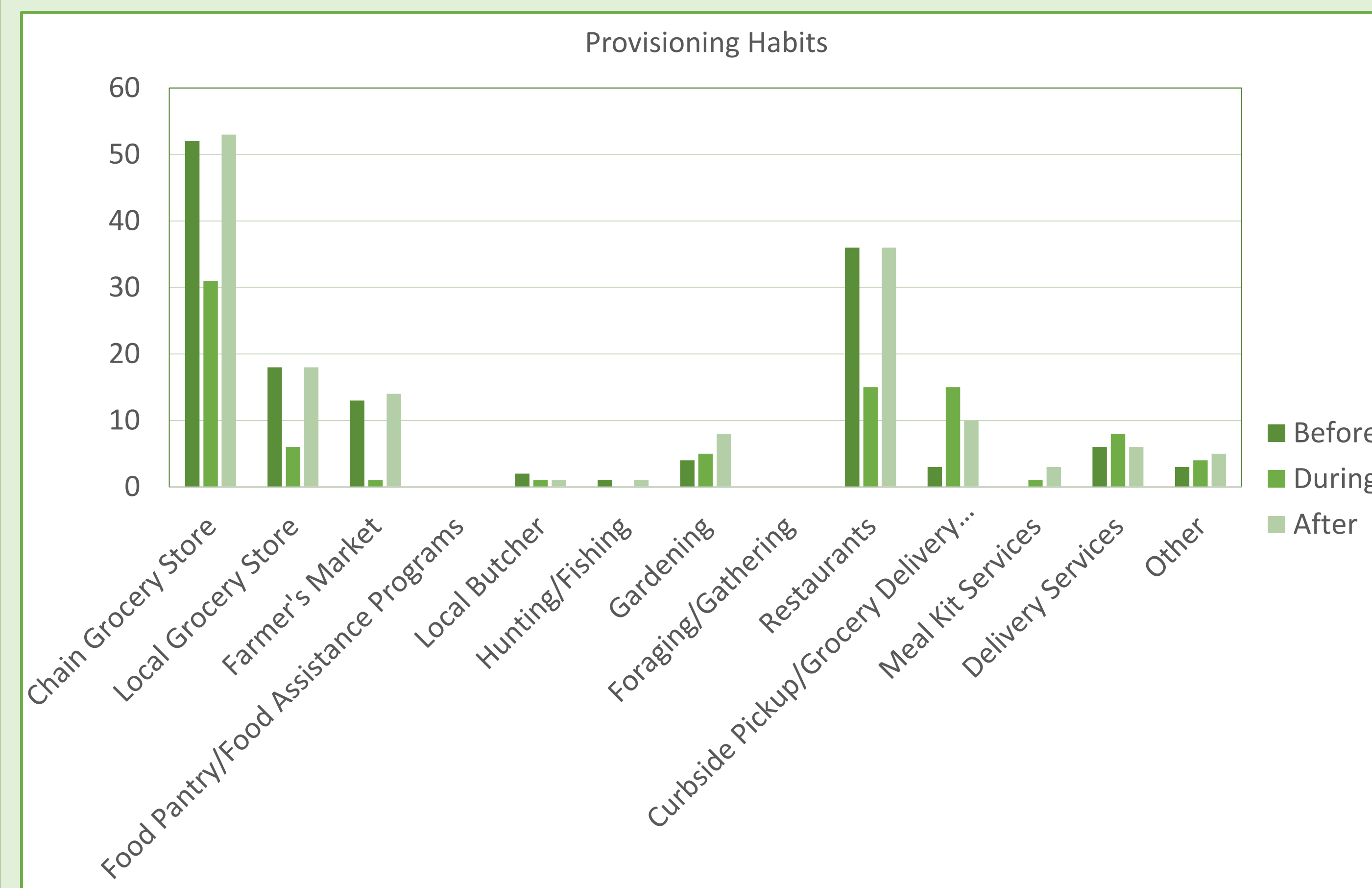
## Methods

- Providers, also known as producers, were recruited through brief one-on-one conversations at local farmer’s markets and grocery stores.
- Three virtual interviews were scheduled to discuss consumer behaviors. The longest interview lasted 23 minutes and the shortest 20. The average was 21 minutes.
- These interviews, as well as field notes, were analyzed for keywords and with an eye toward identifying and analyzing common experiences between providers like similar technology adaptations and delivery services to give insight into consumer provisioning practices also using MAXQDA Analytics Pro
- Brief, informal interviews with participants who were interacting with food systems were conducted from November 2022 to February 2023.
- 54/103 participants participated in the survey about provisioning habits before, during, and after the lockdown period of the pandemic.

## Producers

- Two providers spoke of introducing **new technologies** which have allowed them to reach a broader audience that are still in practice today.
- All providers interviewed and included in this study spoke of difficulty finding “**good help**” during and after the lockdown periods of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- One provider, the manager of a grain company, noted that shopping local at the Carrboro Farmer’s Market acted as a way to interact with the community, highlighting the importance of **eating local to strengthen communities and increase resilience**. This idea is supported by previous research with food provisioning after Hurricane Katrina (Chrzan and Berris 2006).

## Provisioners



- When asked if they believed the COVID-19 pandemic changed where or how they get their food, 37 out of the 54 participants believed it did.
- **Curbside pickup** and **grocery delivery services** are used more now than they were prior to the pandemic but not as frequently as they were during the lockdown period.
- More participants report **gardening** as a regular provisioning method than they did prior to the pandemic or during the lockdown period.
- Most other provisioning habits have returned to pre-pandemic levels by the time of interview.

## Conclusions

### Limitations

- This study was conducted in an area with access to a wide variety of provisioning opportunities and cannot be representative of locations without this access.

### Conclusion

- The testimonies from both providers and provisioners demonstrate a larger trend towards **technology-based provisioning practices**, in particular, curbside pickup, grocery delivery services, and order ahead technologies
- Provisioners have also demonstrated a rise in **home gardening** which is congruent with responses to previous disasters and can serve as a method of control over one’s food.
- **The COVID-19 pandemic has created lasting cultural change in provisioning practices that will go beyond the end of the pandemic and increase food system resilience in preparation for future disasters.**

### Future Directions

- This study should be continued as we move further away from the lockdown periods of the pandemic to assess how technology-based provisioning practices continue to be utilized.



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## References

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