THE BLACK AGRARIAN IMAGINARY: RACE, FOOD, AND THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE IN CLEVELAND, OHIO

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THE BLACK AGRARIAN IMAGINARY: RACE, FOOD, AND THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE IN CLEVELAND, OHIO

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With approximately 30,000 vacant parcels of land, Cleveland, Ohio is well positioned to embrace alternative land use strategies, especially in neighborhoods that have experienced significant population loss and housing demolition. Many of these neighborhoods are concentrated in the predominantly and historically black east side of the city. This dissertation is a study of the production of space by black farmers and gardeners in the city as they strive to enact an alternative vision for land, food, and black spaces in Cleveland. I develop the black agrarian imaginary, which is a vision, praxis, and epistemology for a different kind of urban space held by many black growers in Cleveland. Through this lens, I examine how valuations of land, development, and economic or entrepreneurial engagement inform the work of black urban growers. I also explore political ecologies of food, race, and urban processes more broadly through an ethnographic study that includes residents, city officials, community development professionals, and real estate developers. While city officials often express their support for alternative land use projects, such as urban agriculture, the dominant logic of neoliberal capitalism places limits and barriers around the possibility for alternative urban forms. These barriers encountered by black growers as they assert alternative ways of living in the city are contextualized by a post-industrial city striving to become globally competitive, and a global movement for food sovereignty, as it struggles for the freedom to choose.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Justine Lindemann has a background studying French colonial history and Africana Studies (New York University, 2008), as well as working in US-Africa Policy with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. Prior to beginning her Masters in Development Sociology at Cornell University, she worked for Winrock International in the West African country Mali on a USAID project called Farmer-to-Farmer. This program brings technical assistance to smallholder farmer cooperatives in countries across the world. Her substantive focus shifted to domestic questions of racial equity, urban planning (including urban agriculture), and food systems more broadly when she began her graduate work at Cornell University in 2011. Her masters research examined participatory planning and food justice in Syracuse, New York, which is also where she grew up. Her dissertation research brought her to Cleveland, Ohio, where she currently resides with her husband and son, and their "tripawd" dog Porter.

To Valerie, who should have been here,

and to Deedo, who was here some time ago.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe this work almost entirely to the black farmers, gardeners, and organizers who allowed me to spend so much time with them, asking endless questions, and – hopefully – contributing to their work as well. In particular, I am grateful to Kimberly Foreman, who is an excellent teacher and collaborator, and Louise, who demonstrates how to age with grace, style, and spunk. To Gladys, Amina, and many others: your knowledge and wisdom have been invaluable.

Since I first came to Cleveland in 2014, three inspirational, and incredibly dedicated people have passed on. Like so many of their brothers and sisters before them, they all died too young. Dave Wright, who passed away in 2015, introduced me to the Rid-All Green Partnership Farm, and demonstrated incredible insight as a "citizen philosopher" (his words). Kai Wingo farmed in the Buckeye neighborhood, and has left a legacy that her son carries on. I feel incredibly lucky to have interviewed her just two-and-a-half weeks before she died, in February 2016. And finally, Damien Forshe, one of the founders of Rid-All, and a visionary in Cleveland, passed away in November 2018. His legacy lives on at the farm, and in the everyday strivings of his friends, colleagues, and the thousands of people that he touched through the enactment of his agrarian imaginary. To those who have passed, thank you for shining so brightly while you were here. I am grateful to have witnessed that light.

I could not have ever completed this journey without the constant support, insight, and wit of my advisor and mentor, Phil McMichael. Thank you. A special thank you to Ellie Andrews for knowing the difference between British and American conventions in English, and for being a great friend and colleague along the way.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband Jeff for his patience, love, and occasional curiosity about what I have spent so many years working on. And to my baby boy, Hudson Blue: one day I hope you will read this.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BFJC	Black Food Justice Collaborative
CCLRC	Cleveland Cuyahoga Land Reclamation Corporation
CDC	Community Development Corporation
CLB	City Land Bank
CMHA	Cleveland Municipal Housing Authority
CNP	Cleveland Neighborhood Progress
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
CWP	City Wide Plan
FTMP	Forgotten Triangle Master Plan
NBFJA	National Black Food Justice Alliance

The land swaddles the bones of our elders. Our histories are rooted deep beneath surfaces [made] rich with Black blood.

And that Black blood marks the spot where Afro-futuristic possibilities are waiting to be unburied and rediscovered.
Kirsten West Savali 2019

CHAPTER 1: THE BLACK AGRARIAN IMAGINARY

Where can we be safe? Where can we be free? Where can we be black?
Solange Knowles 2015

I. INTRODUCTION

This is not a story about growing food, nor is it a story just about the people who are growing it. This is a story about the production of different kinds of urban spaces – specifically and assertively black spaces – and the assertion that there is an inherent value to and in those spaces. This is a story about the processes that comprise and produce both the city and the people who inhabit it (Harvey 2012), the practices that continuously transform the differentiated unity of both humans and nonhuman nature (Loftus 2009; Marx 1844/1993). It is about growing food *and* people, about the assemblages or hybrid things within the city that produce space (Certomà 2011; Classens 2015; Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006; Swyngedouw 1996) – agricultural and otherwise; about the changes, transformations, and constant metabolisms that occur between humans, their environment, and the non-human natural world. Ultimately, this is a story about continual change, the power relations that undergird it, and the resulting material effects on the social natures that constitute urban space in general, and black spaces in particular.

Social spaces, and the relations that produce them, exist as "an expression and a medium of power" (Massey 1995:284). From this perspective within radical urban theory, power is conceptualized not as an "external relation 'taking place' between already preconstituted identities" but as constituted by and constitutive of a dynamic set of identities and relationships. Embedded within that understanding are the stories of many different people striving to enact their particular vision for the city: residents (mostly black farmers and gardeners), community development professionals, city officials, and real estate developers. The processes described, examined, and theorized in this dissertation are specific to Cleveland, Ohio and yet common to

many other places across the United States. The line of inquiry I pursue can help to shine a light on dynamics of social, spatial, and racialized inequalities in communities across the United States, particularly in urban areas. The epistemic and methodological focus of this study is on the endeavors of black gardeners and farmers as they work to enact an alternative vision for Cleveland and its land. This includes working towards racial equity within socio-spatial relationships; a more just urban food system; self-determination within that food system, including access to and choice around food that is grown and eaten; and the production of more just urban spaces in which to live, work, and play.

Mark, the farm manager at The Rid-All Green Partnership Farm (Rid-All), a large urban farm whose story is told throughout this dissertation,[1] explains the undergirding philosophy of the farm, one that is shared by many black growers in Cleveland:

> It's not just about the plants and the vegetables. We consider you the plants and the vegetables. So, when you come, you're actually getting seeds dropped in your brain. And you get watered, by the time you leave up out of here, and then my man gonna smile at you and that's like sunshine, and it just clicks all the way in! And you get the Rid-All Effect, we call it the "natural effect." You been hit by the natural effect.

The recognition of parallel, mutually constituting, social and natural ecologies amongst black farmers and gardeners within Cleveland is evident – either tacitly or overtly – in the ways that urban growers in the city talk about the work that they do and their visions for the spaces they produce. Mark observes that deficient soil "can't grow good, healthy plants. It'll stunt out," he says. He explains how this same idea pertains to people. If people are deficient, "your organs can't metabolize the food you eat every day and the same thing ensues. It's the same thing."

[1] Keymah Durden, Randy McShepherd, and Damien Forshe, childhood friends, are the founding members of the Rid-All Green Partnership Farm. Damien passed away in late 2018 from a heart attack (at age 50). Mark White, also quoted in this writing, is the Farm Operations Manager. Other employees include David Hester, known by most on the farm as Dr. Greenhand.

Many growers share this deep understanding of the power of planting seeds to change the physical, ecological, and human aspects of a neighborhood. The articulated power of planting seeds to change oneself, one's community, and the city – reflects the philosophies of both philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1991) and geographer David Harvey (2012) on the right to the city: "far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts' desires" (Harvey 2012:4). The idea that the "mind needs to be fertile for ideas [to grow] the same way that the soil needs to be fertile to grow food" (personal communication 2016) is part of what constitutes what I call the black agrarian imaginary, which is progressively described throughout the chapters. The black agrarian imaginary is constituted by the epistemological framing(s) communicated and deployed by black urban growers, both as they manifest in urban space and as they exist in tension with epistemologies of state officials, community development professionals, and other subjects that hold power within the city. The claims of urban growers as they produce space – claims to the right to the city and the right to difference – and the recognition that growers can change themselves and their community, are crucial to understanding the emergence of the black agrarian imaginary within the city (Fiskio and Scott 2016; Mayes 2014; Zeiderman 2006), as well as the ways in which it is both enacted and stymied across city space.

Among growers, there is also a deep recognition of the power relations that have produced the current hegemonic political order of things. Cleveland is a city that is – and has been for decades – in the process of renegotiating its footing as a productive urban center. Simultaneously, black gardeners and farmers across the city are also reimagining both the city as a whole, and black spaces in particular. Black urban growers, in particular, are working upstream: not only against 'common sense' perceptions of what urban development and change should look like, but they are also striving for a change in processes of resource allocation across urban space, and, ultimately, for broad-based shifts in the governance, monitoring, and

discipline of the black community in Cleveland. This dissertation examines the many processes that produce the city, urban spaces, and the people who inhabit those spaces. A focus on urban food provisioning in the black community provides a lens on processes of racialization as well as the racial inequities that are deeply inscribed in the urban food system. Individuals and communities have historically responded to inequalities in the food system by engaging in urban food production, which, while not new to urban areas, has experienced increasing popular, media, and political attention over the past several years. This dissertation explores some of the socio-spatial and political responses to racial inequalities in the food system as a way to shed light on how race is inflected in urban change, the production of space, and the politics of rights. Through the following research questions, I examine implicit and explicit claims made by grassroots individuals, collectives, and organizations, and the multiple and varied responses to these claims within the city of Cleveland.

Research Questions

My research examines alternative land-use projects in Cleveland, Ohio, specifically the ways in which self-provisioning in food is – or can be – deployed as a part of a black agrarian imaginary in the city. I do this primarily using the framework of three research questions, which have been shaped and informed by my research participants and the research process more broadly. The research questions are as follows:

1. How do practices of urban food provisioning manifest in Cleveland? In other words, how do human and nonhuman processes move through and metabolize within the city, and what are the resulting forms and trajectories of urban change (Chen, Wang, and Waley 2019; Heynen et al. 2006; Swyngedouw 1996)?
2. What are the social, spatial, political, and cultural implications of the production of space by black growers within the City of Cleveland? Relatedly, how do black growers

situate themselves culturally and spatially within the urban landscape, and what are the resulting impacts of and on their agricultural pursuits?

3. To what extent does urban food provisioning represent a broader claim within and to urban space (Purcell 2002; Shillington 2013), that is, a claim on the state (or state space) for the right to the city, for more substantial participation in urban policy or decision-making processes, or to full membership and inclusion in urban society as citizens (Plyushteva 2009; Purcell 2003)?

Within the broader urban landscape of Cleveland, this research has a particular focus on black spaces, as well as the socio-natural relations and power dynamics that in part constitute those spaces. Following Katherine McKittrick (2006), Catherine Nash (2003), Clyde Woods (1998/2017, and other black geographers, black space is conceptualized as part of and formed by larger processes of racialization, rather than as a static descriptor of dominant phenotypes or statistics found in particular neighborhoods or communities. Black spaces are marked not only through geopolitical processes (such as redlining maps of the 1930s), but through continual processes of marginalization and exclusion. Catherine Nash promotes an anti-essentialist perspective on race in order to both deconstruct normative racial hierarchies, and to dismantle the notion of whiteness as an "unmarked norm against which the racial difference of others is judged" (2003: 640). This encourages a processual understanding of race: how are different individuals and groups placed within racial categories, and to what material effects? The spatial focus of this research remains within black urban spaces, with a concerted effort to not essentialize the standpoints or perspectives of research participants. In other words, I recognize the inherent complexity in and need to recognize epistemic plurality in consideration of processes of urbanization, including social and spatial processes (Buckley and Strauss 2016).

Racial inequalities in the food system engender socio-spatial struggles around rights to and in the city, many of which center around access to land, a vision for urban space (i.e. development), and participation in urban economies. Throughout the following chapters, I address these questions through the lens of the black agrarian imaginary, as a vision and ideology that undergirds the production of space by black growers in Cleveland. This can be understood as an epistemological intervention, but also as an ontological one. I use the idea of a black agrarian imaginary to explore the ways in which black growers across the city are reimagining and remaking both the city as a whole, and black spaces in particular. The black agrarian imaginary signals the future existence of a different kind of urban space, while also drawing upon and reclaiming black diasporic histories as an articulation of what black liberation or emancipation might look like. In this way, I consider the practices and vision of Cleveland's black growers as an important continuation of the "black peasant and working-class struggle" that has persisted over time and space (Gilmore, quoted in Woods 1998/2017:xi). The black agrarian imaginary remains emergent amongst black growers; it is also both deeply historical and futuristic, with roots that extend beyond Cleveland to the American South, the Caribbean, Africa, and draws upon the black diaspora as a whole.

Methods, Methodology, and Data Collection

As an exploration of the multiscalar locations of power and privilege as well as the political implications of urban food production (McCann 2003; Smith 2008; Gilmore 2002), my approach to research is mostly ethnographic, and centers the voices and experiences of marginalized groups, particularly black urban growers living in neighborhoods on Cleveland's east side. I focus my research on the east side of Cleveland specifically because it has been historically occupied by a majority black population (see chapter 2 for more on the history of racial segregation in Cleveland). Several neighborhoods are between 90 and 98% African-

American[2] (U.S. Census Bureau 2010), and have seen drastic increases in urban food production over the last several years, two key variables in my research. Recentering spaces of poverty and marginalization (especially racialized spaces) is key to a better understanding of local governance, the state and its relationship to marginalized groups within civil society, as well as civil society as it confronts and negotiates an intensely globalized and neoliberal economic structure (Cameron and Palan 2004; Gupta 1995; Keil 2003; Wilson 2007b).

My research is constituted as an ethnographic project with an emphasis on critical ethnography, or interview and participant observation techniques that explore historical and contemporary power relations. I aim to unpack how these relations are both interpreted and contribute to the creation and persistence of race- and class-based inequalities, as well as how the relational positionalities of various actors – grassroots organizers, non-profit sector workers, city officials – contribute to the socio-spatial and political dynamics in Cleveland (Madison 2012). Unless otherwise noted in the text, all of my informants[3,4] are black or African-American. I choose to normalize black rather than white (and use the terminology of black) as the unmarked category or position (cf. Peake and Schein 2000), rather than to continuously identify, call out, and risk "othering" the race of black subjects and participants. As a non-black transplant to Cleveland with an academic background, I remain an "outsider" in the communities and – to a lesser extent – in the political spaces I research. Over the two-and-a-half years I spent doing research in black

[2] Generally in this dissertation, I use the terminology 'black' or 'black American'; however, I also use African-American in places where I am borrowing the language of another person, organization, or institute. In this case, the U.S. Census Bureau uses the language of African-American when asking about race and ethnicity, so I have preserved that here.

[3] Most research participants names have been changed, with the exception of some political figures (eg. Director of the City Planning Commission Freddy Collier, who specifically requested that I use his real name or those that are easily identifiable. Throughout this dissertation I use first names only, and anonymize to the extent possible (without fictionalizing places or events).

[4] My research is almost exclusively with black growers and in predominantly black spaces, although I also completed several interviewers with city planners, community development professionals, real estate developers, and others implicated in the production of space. Even within those "professional" groups, research participants were mostly black (including the director of the City Planning Commission); however, I would not characterize places such as City Hall to be "black spaces."

communities in Cleveland, I gained the trust of most of my research participants. I intentionally engage in research with the potential to highlight and challenge dominant power dynamics within urban social and political spaces, and which allow for residents' perspectives to be heard in meaningful and impactful ways.

In neighborhoods across Cleveland, urban gardeners and farmers have expressed interest in establishing a broader network of food justice advocacy, with the ultimate goal of building more a self-determined food system that specifically serves the black community. Research participants frequently referred to "their" or "the" community, especially when talking about their desire to feed their community, or contribute to the health of the community. I frequently asked participants what they meant by community, and was invariably told, "black people" or "the black community." I therefore refer to "the black community" in Cleveland throughout this dissertation, which is not a methodologically precise or unified category, but rather one that has been formulated by my research participants. (I discuss this further in the subsection titled *Black Space: Race, Racialization, and Reclaiming Space*.)

Urban agriculture organizations such as the Rid-All Green Partnership Farm, the Kinsman Farm, and the Lil' Africa Farming Collaborative, as well as individuals and groups of residents are all working toward greater social and racial justice and equity in the food system in underprivileged neighborhoods in Cleveland. These individuals and groups comprised the starting point for the interviews I completed during my research.

Within the city and the surrounding Cuyahoga County, there are many institutional apparatuses that engage with, fund, and/or promote urban food production from a variety of approaches. The Cleveland Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (CCCFPC) works to bring together community organizations and NGOs working on food related issues (see

www.cccfoodpolicy.org). The Cleveland Botanical Garden funds GreenCorps, a program that employs youth at urban farms and farmers markets, as well as a small program called, Vacant to Vibrant, which attempts to create beautiful spaces that have been neglected. The Ohio State University Extension services offer several programs that teach horticulture and agricultural skills to potential urban gardeners or farmers. A significant number of my interviews were with individuals working for these institutions, in order to determine how the food policy council, extension, and other organizations fit into the network of food based advocacy within the city, and the extent to which they open up avenues for rights claims on the part of urban residents. In my research, I tried to remain attentive to the ways in which radical, progressive, and reformative agendas coexist in partnership between organizations and in dialectical tension within organizations (Galt 2014; McClintock 2014; Purcell 2002).

Additionally, several innovative zoning and legislative interventions regarding urban food production on a policy level within Cleveland. Re-zoning within the city has made it possible to protect urban gardens from real estate development; it is now legal to keep chickens and bees; and an urban agriculture overlay zone has the potential to transform almost 30 acres of land into one of the largest urban farms in the country. Governance mechanisms within the city and the practices of the state are important to a better understanding of the extent to which these practices either allow or detract from the work of activist urban farmers and gardeners, and the ways in which the state intervenes in the production of space at multiple scales (individual, community, city).

The main focus of my initial interviews was black urban farmers, community gardeners, and members of City Repair, a city-wide group of about 50 people who design and undertake community-based placemaking projects aimed at urban change, community empowerment, and the reclaiming of public spaces (such as parks) for community use. In 2014, I did preliminary

interviews with several key participants within the urban food movement[5] in the aforementioned spaces, as well as with a nascent Food Justice Collaborative aiming to create a network of food-based advocacy leadership in Cleveland. I also completed preliminary interviews with staff members and coordinators at several non-profit organizations that work with and coordinate many of food-justice related activities, and used these points of contact to expand the reach of my interviews within the non-profit and community development sectors of Cleveland.

Between 2015 and 2018, I conducted a total of 87 semi-formal interviews. Slightly more than half of those interviews were with people actively involved in urban food production in the parts of the city I have identified. While I am most interested in speaking with people who consider their work to be aimed at social justice and racial equality within the city, many research participants do not specifically define their work as "political" or motivated by social justice; however, as I describe throughout this dissertation, political activism or actions often begin in spaces that are not self-consciously political or visibly so (Williams 2006).

I also spent several hundred hours conducting participant observation in community gardens, urban farms, and at community meetings. I attended meetings of City Repair as well as a nascent Black Food Justice Collaborative that emerged as resulted of the 2014 Race, Food, and Justice conference. I also attended Food Policy Council meetings as well as neighborhood community gardening and OSU extension meetings of community gardeners. I attended these meetings as an observer, but always introduced myself as a way to recruit research participants. I worked as a volunteer on two urban farms, the Rid-All Green Partnership Farm and Vel's Purple Oasis. The people who run these farms are extremely knowledgeable and well-connected

[5] I refer here to the food movement in an informal way. Whereas there are hundreds, if not thousands of gardeners and farmers across the City of Cleveland, a cohesive or mobilized "food movement" has yet to materialize among black or white growers in Cleveland in any substantial way. Particularly among black growers, issues of mistrust and the perception of the need to compete for limited resources negatively impact any potential cohesion between growers.

within many circles in Cleveland, and have contributed enormously to my research. In working on farms or in community gardens as a form of participant observation, I intended for my labor to contribute to the goals of growers, while also gaining insights and knowledge from them.

I also conducted interviews with individuals within political and governing institutional bodies including the Cleveland Land Bank, the Cuyahoga Cleveland Land Reclamation Corporation (CCLRC, or the County Land Bank), the City Planning Commission, and the various Community Development Corporations (CDCs) that finance and regulate urban initiatives in the different neighborhoods in Cleveland. Governance bodies (such as CDCs and the City Planning Commission) are responsible for organizing and managing everything from health care to housing, neighborhood safety, community initiatives, community gardening, and urban farming. There are several important focal points to consider regarding these gatekeeping structures including, but not limited to: their role in the production of space, the ways in which systems of governance reproduce themselves, the extent to which they retain legitimacy, and how they either help marginalized groups to vocalize their needs or suppress those voices. The spatial distribution of resources in Cleveland tends to be mediated through CDCs and other municipal institutions such as the two land banks that connect both directly and indirectly with community groups and urban food producers. Through policy analysis that examines the potential effects of agricultural, zoning, and land or food-based policy decisions on marginalized groups (Ritchie and Spencer 2002) as well as interviews with relevant policymakers or government officials, this part of my research has helped to situate government and governance institutions historically and geographically.

During my research, I had extensive involvement in a Kresge Foundation funded grant project, both as a participant observer during my PhD research and later as a paid consultant on the planning and implementation team. We focused on resident-led community development at the

intersection of food, arts, and culture, and deployed an equity model that integrates entrepreneurial engagement and economic justice to build economic sustainability into the projects.

I also examine how policies and regulations impact the ability of community groups to engage in urban food production, the extent to which these enable or suppress the production of space and the rights associated with access to urban space. Through interviews and participant observation at political meetings and events, I explore the legal and institutional relationships to urban food production, which areas and demographics tend to be privileged, and the various ways in which people have access to state processes surrounding urban food production. I draw on Richie and Spencer's (1994) framework for policy analysis, which examines the social and political context in which policies are implemented, the underlying factors for public perceptions, the needs of the impacted populations, the effectiveness of existing policies, and strategic analysis of how existing or future systems might be improved. In addition, I remain attuned to community responses to particular policies and regulations, which emerged in interviews, meetings and other forms of participant observation that I undertook over the course of my research.

There is a vision of the city that emerges out of my observations and interviews as well as the other interactions I have had in Cleveland. This vision of the contested city paints, with broad strokes, an image of a site of constant struggle for democracy, of a place where individuals and groups are striving for the construction of radically democratic and liberated futures (Holston 1999; Kelley 2001; Purcell 2008).[6] For the purposes of this dissertation, radical democracy and

[6] Radical democracy refers here to Lefebvre's *autogestion*, and to the ideals of radical democracy championed by the black leader and teacher Ella Baker. *Autogestion* is a term that signals the self-management or self-direction of workers within factories, as well as grassroots and popular control over a particular spatial area or jurisdiction (Lefebvre 2009). Ella Baker's idea of radical change and radical

radical democratic ideals denote: a) direct democracy as it is evoked by participation and appropriation of urban space, b) the extension of democratic attitudes beyond the public sphere into the workplace and the family (Purcell 2008:105); c) the reversal of oppressive and exclusionary practices such as racism, sexism, and classism together with the relinquishing of privileges by those who hold racial, class, or gender privilege (Ransby 2003:368). A focus on the agency of racialized and spatially underprivileged subjects highlights some of the main entry points for rights claims, participation, and activism within the urban landscape.

The city as contested space is not a uniform vision, nor is it shared by all of the black subjects who appropriate and produce space across Cleveland's urban terrain. This vision should not be taken as one that essentializes or flattens the nuances that exist within and amongst growers, nuances that are informed by their unique experiences, worldviews, or standpoints. Rather, framing the city as contested treats it as a space where rights are created, challenged, and reconfigured, and therefore also as an ideal site of inquiry for exploring state building and governance processes (Holston 1999; Smith 1994/2008). It is produced space, the result of and situated between the intimate socio-spatial relations of everyday life, and larger society regulated by power relations, legal systems, and global institutions.

This view of the city begins with an understanding of the city as a "creative collective work by and for inhabitants" (Purcell 2008:105); it is "much more use value than exchange value" (Lefebvre 1996:101). This understanding is counter-hegemonic to neoliberal models of the city as a space for investment, development, and the free movement of capital (Brenner and Theodore 2005). In other words, this approach depicts the city as use value for its inhabitants rather than for capital accumulation over time, and the urbanization process as a set of claims

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democracy included understanding the causes of a system that does not meet your needs, and changing that system so that it does.

for the right to the city. Over the next several chapters, I will describe where this vision comes from (contextual histories and geographies), the nature of some of the contestations that arise (epistemic tensions), and how present-day struggles for democracy are rooted in a liberatory ideology: the black agrarian imaginary.

Site Selection

At its population apex, Cleveland was a crucial geographic node on the production line for American industry, particularly in steel, railroad, and automotive production. Situated along the shores of Lake Erie, Cleveland was a strategic part of a production system that also included Buffalo, Erie, Toledo, and Detroit. Today, the majority of those jobs are gone. The postindustrial replacement of productive industry with an "eds and meds" service industry is instantiated in Cleveland by the Cleveland Clinic (the Clinic) and the neighboring Case Western Reserve University, as well as University Hospital and Cleveland State University, which sits further west, close to the Central Business District. The 165-acre Cleveland Clinic main campus spans several neighborhoods on Cleveland's east side. According to a Community Health Neighborhood Assessment done by the Clinic in 2016, over 90 percent of the population of four zip codes neighboring the Clinic is black, which is more than thirty points higher than the black population of the city as a whole. The spatial unevenness and racial segregation within the city of Cleveland, and surrounding the Clinic, are reinforced by disproportionate levels of unemployment and nearly twice the levels of poverty as found in the state of Ohio as a whole.

In 1950, the city of Cleveland was the sixth largest in the United States, home to almost one million people. According to recent American Community Survey data, the population is now fewer than 385,000, and the City of Cleveland continues to lose population at a slowed but

steady pace. During the Great Black Migration of the twentieth century,[7] the black population grew from less than 2 percent of the population to more than 30 percent. The black population today makes up about 53 percent of the city, while white residents comprise only 37 percent. About 10 percent of Cleveland's population is Hispanic or Latinx, with a large proportion of Puerto Ricans among that group, who mostly reside on the west side. The rising proportion of black residents over time needs to be contextualized within overall demographic trends of population decline within the city. That is, both white flight, or the precipitous decline of white residents to suburban areas, and the in-migration of black residents over time, have contributed to the current racial makeup of the city.

Simultaneously, Cleveland remains incredibly racially segregated between black and white populations. The east side of the city (not to be confused with East Cleveland, which is its own independent municipality) was the historical relocation site for black migrants from southern states. The Central neighborhood, which remains over 90% black, is the first neighborhood where incoming black Clevelanders settled. The segregated, all-black Outhwaite Homes, built by the Public Works Administration as a part of New Deal housing construction, continues to house predominantly black families in this neighborhood. While many middle-class black families have left Cleveland over the last several years for inner and outer ring suburbs such as Middleburg Heights, Cleveland Heights, and South Euclid, census tracts within the city remain highly segregated and isolated. Many communities within Cleveland – especially on the east side – are not only comprised disproportionately of people of color, but are also areas of concentrated poverty, compounding issues of socio-spatial marginalization.

[7] The Great (Black) Migration spanned both World Wars, starting roughly in 1910 and ending in about 1970. I refer to it here as the Great Black Migration, as it is sometimes called, but will subsequently call it simply the Great Migration. People often refer to the two 'waves' of migration, coinciding with the labor demands of each World War.

University Circle, which neighbors the Clinic, is home to Case Western Reserve University as well as several other anchor institutions including the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Natural History Museum, the Cleveland Botanical Gardens, Severance Hall (home of the Cleveland Orchestra), the Cleveland Institute of Art, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and the University Hospital main campus. University Circle is the wealthiest Statistical Planning Area (SPA) in Cleveland, with quite different demographics than the city as a whole, and the east side in particular. As of 2000, over 55 percent of the residents in University Circle were white, with a black population of less than 15 percent.

The economic decoupling that has occurred over the last several decades of postindustrial transition has left many in Cleveland with a skill set that is no longer necessary or useful to a dominant service economy. Whereas Cleveland's public schools used to provide industrial training for students, and adult education classes were also available through the public school system, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) is now ranked in the bottom ten of Ohio's 602 public school districts. Jobs and career training programs in Cleveland include such programs as Ohio Means Jobs, which is an online platform funded through the Ohio Department of Education. Industrial production continued to decline in Cleveland into the 21st century; however, as of 2013, ArcelorMittal, a global firm with a plant on Cleveland's west side, had replaced human labor with more mechanized modes of production at its Cleveland location, to compete with cheaper global labor. The Cleveland location employs only about half of the workers than it used to; however, production continues, and the company has invested over $100 million in the plant to continue to grow operations (ohiosteel.org; _____). Restructuring of the steel industry has allowed for continued prosperity and profitability for the industry (at both global and local scales) due in part to technological shifts that allow companies to employ far fewer people.

The context of Cleveland reflects broader socio-political and spatial patterns occurring in postindustrial and economically struggling cities under neoliberal governance structures across the country (Mallach 2014; Weber 2002; Wilson 2007). Everyday struggles over knowledge and power, as well as control over space and labor, share the common neoliberal agendas of states and municipal authorities, with their characteristic reproduction of class- and race-based inequalities. The co-constitutive character of race or processes of racialization and neoliberalization (Roberts and Mahtani 2010) brings state practices and an examination of the racial state to the fore of any analysis of race within urban space.

My research is focused on the historically black east side of Cleveland, where many different approaches to neighborhood- or community-based food production and activism are becoming increasingly prevalent. A 26-acre Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone in the Kinsman neighborhood supports almost 20 acres of urban farming, including aquaponics and hydroponics operations, as well as several community gardens and local and grassroots food enterprises. These sites within Cleveland represent an ideal ethnographic case study of how residents and communities stake claims on urban space, as well as how humans and nonhumans articulate together to produce space differently – according to community needs and desires. This dissertation examines these processes through a socio-spatial lens, with attention to the historical, geographical, and political contexts in which they are situated.

The majority of research participants in this study who work in food production view their work as explicitly rooted in social justice. Growers, food entrepreneurs, and environmental activists are striving towards a shift in the political, economic, and spatial paradigms within the City of Cleveland. Several food-based activities and initiatives within Cleveland make this city an instructive case study. Hundreds of community gardens, urban farms, a county-wide Food Policy Council, programming associated with the Cleveland Botanical Garden and Ohio State

University Extension as well as innovative zoning are only a few amongst them. The annual conference of the Association of Community Gardeners was hosted in Cleveland in August 2016, which, together with the annual Sustainability Summit, represent two important ways in which governing bodies and other institutions within the city are implicated in the politics of food, food production, and socio-ecological processes more broadly.

Cleveland has not received the same academic and research attention as cities like Detroit or Chicago; however, Cleveland has received some national-level attention for innovative zoning policies and permissive urban agriculture policies. Simultaneously, it has come under scrutiny for other race-based reasons such as police violence, segregation, racialized poverty, and population loss. This context offers an important opportunity for research to be both situated in a larger emerging body of literature on urban food production and the associated activisms, politics, and claims; as well as to contribute a new and different perspective by exploring the relationship of the black agrarian imaginary to governance, rights, the state, and citizenship (Boer and Vries 2009; Ghose and Pettigrove 2014; Somers 2008). Black subjects are often rendered invisible in the face of investment in predominantly white areas of Cleveland, such as the downtown Central Business District, and Ohio City, Tremont, or the Detroit-Shoreway, as well as by large-scale infrastructural and development projects that manage and direct the public gaze away from so-called ghetto areas (See chapter 2; Wilson 2007a, 2007b).

Some activists in Cleveland cite an emergent, but widespread "change in consciousness" that manifests in both obvious and subtle ways in the urban food system in Cleveland regarding environmental and food justice work. Urban metabolisms – the labor that people do for their own social reproduction and the ecological processes that occur to that end – have always included food provisioning and urban gardens, especially in times of economic distress, and particularly amongst the urban poor (Gray et al. 2014). Cleveland represents an ideal a field site

for its historical and demographic characteristics, for the presence of alternative grassroots food practices that not only contest the standard and dominant corporate food system, but also represent a claim to the right to the city. These practices exist amidst complex institutional and governmental apparatuses and structures, and represent a counter-hegemony to the dominant paradigms of urbanization and development.

The "change in consciousness" cited in different ways by many of the growers and organizers I interviewed is conceived of (by black subjects) as ideologically linked to the endeavors of gardeners, farmers, and food activists across the black diaspora. As I introduced earlier in this chapter, I am calling that shared consciousness within the community of black growers the black agrarian imaginary. This dissertation explores and explains the roots of that imaginary through other philosophical frames including blues epistemologies and Afrosurrealism, as well as how it emerges and manifests across Cleveland in the objectives, the practices, and the visions of black growers. The strivings of black gardeners and farmers in Cleveland thus represent an important touchstone for understanding a broader movement of black agrarianism, its epistemic underpinnings, and how it might contribute to a better understanding of the political ecologies of black food sovereignty.

II. BLACK AGRARIAN EPISTEMOLOGIES

For the purposes of this work, the black agrarian imaginary represents a worldview that propels growers beyond what is presented as possible, sustaining their commitment to the production of more equitable and inclusive urban spaces. The black agrarian imaginary, as an epistemological frame rooted in praxis, creates new perceptions around what black spaces look and feel like in order to produce black spaces differently, changing the lived experience of black Clevelanders as a result. Katherine McKittrick asserts that "geography, the material world, is infused with sensations and distinct ways of knowing" – a material world "embedded with Uganda, Sri

Lanka, slave castles" (2006:ix). McKittrick's epistemic intervention emphasizes how a specifically black spatiality exists within black diasporic histories, which is relevant to the construction of a black agrarian imaginary that, while specific to Cleveland, both exists as and draws from a more capacious black experience. The epistemologies embedded within the black agrarian imaginary relate to land, labor, economies, and urban or development but also include the affective, spiritual, imaginative, and especially the emancipatory aspects of food production and the production of space.

The black agrarian imaginary, as I describe it, emerged from many hours of informal conversations, interviews, observations, and experiences with black farmers and gardeners in Cleveland over two and a half years of research. In that sense, the black agrarian imaginary I outline is specific to the experience of black growers in Cleveland. However, the associated politics of access to land and the particularities of an impoverished and unequal postindustrial city are shared by urban regions across the American rust belt.

In addition to the more codified and institutionally legible produced natures and space, examples of a black agrarian imaginary manifest in many different ways: foraging in urban forests, guerilla gardening in public spaces, grafting fruit branches onto urban trees (Galt et al. 2014; Hardman and Larkham 2014), poultry and small livestock husbandry in backyards, rooftop beekeeping (McClintock 2014; Meenar et al. 2012), wetland remediation and permaculture projects in a neglected neighborhood of Cleveland, or the cultivation of rare mushrooms to sell at local farmers markets. Composting operations that reduce and repurpose food waste have become much more common in cities across the country, and try to approximate more "closed-loop" systems of production (Viljoen and Bohn 2005). Vacant and marginal land and urban side lots are being repurposed for food production (McClintock 2010),

and spaces of disuse within postindustrial landscapes are being reimagined through an ecological and agricultural lens (Meenar et al. 2012).

In describing the black agrarian imaginary in Cleveland, I borrow (discursively and theoretically) from philosopher and bioethicist Christopher Mayes, who describes an urban agrarian imaginary as "enabl[ing] urban food practices to be seen as a continuation of historical agrarian practices and as providing unquestionable goods that have practical, social and political benefits for society" (2014:267). Mayes' agrarian imaginary, in turn, follows philosopher Charles Taylor's social imaginary. The social imaginary is defined by Taylor as "the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations" (2004:23). Mayes' agrarian imaginary also draws on the Jeffersonian ideal of "agrarian virtue," which is implicitly white, relies upon white (non-slave) histories, and ignores racial exclusion and the exploitation of black bodies for agricultural labor. Mayes' agrarian imaginary is thus conceived of as a white imaginary, one that – in urban spaces, "serves to cover over or legitimate certain problematic practices" such as gentrification, what he terms the "agrarian vice of exclusion [within] urban agricultural contexts" (2014:280). The contours of his agrarian imaginary are the "re-appl[ication of] agrarian ideals to urban contexts" in order to contend with or remedy "the social, environmental and political ills linked to industrial agriculture and globalized urban life" (2014:266) While Mayes recognizes that urban agriculture often takes place in historically marginalized neighborhoods he does not account for an agrarian imaginary outside of a predominantly white alternative movement (cf. Guthman 2008).

Thus, the black agrarian imaginary represents a particular understanding not only of agrarian practices, but also histories including slavery, sharecropping (Woods 1998/2017), tenant

farming, land loss (Gilbert, Sharp, and Felin 2002), forced or induced migration (McKittrick and Woods 2007) and resettlement (Adero 1993), and the reproduction or reinterpretation of historically black agrarian practices in urban spaces (Fiskio and Scott 2016; Zeiderman 2006). As described above, much of Cleveland's black community migrated north from southern states, or are the descendents of those migrants. While the displacement of black Americans from southern spaces of white supremacy, economic and labor exploitation, and racial terror has no direct parallel in Cleveland, the black community there has experienced a different kind of displacement. Over time, segregation, marginalization, and ghettoization (with associated patterns of surveillance and policing), urban renewal and slum clearance, deindustrialization and the resulting shift in economies, and the recent housing foreclosure crisis, have communicated to the black community that it is unwelcome within a city that, at times, has so urgently needed the labor of black Americans.

The idea of being "doubly displaced", as I have articulated it, is more complex than simply being cast out or dispossessed of a job or a house. For some black Americans who fled the shifting economies and racial terror of the South, leaving became criminalized (Adero 1993). The exodus of southern blacks was at times crippling to southern economies. Simultaneously, in northern geographies including Cleveland, the displacement of redlining, urban renewal, and deindustrialization (and the resulting decoupling of the labor force from the economy (Massey and Fischer 2000)), largely took place during Cleveland's economic apex. In other words, black residents were both shunned and marginalized while they were desperately needed as physical labor to fuel capitalist expansion.

The worldview of black growers, and the ways in which ecologies of race, food, and space encourage an explicit recognition of and naming of power, is described over the next several chapters as both epistemic tensions, and the construction of counter-hegemonies. Three

epistemic tensions emerged over the course of my research that help to explain the struggle to assert alternative land-uses and other counter-hegemonic practices within the black community in Cleveland. These tensions exist in large part between black growers and various arms of the state that they encounter in their daily lives: city planners, community development professionals, and other city officials, including the police. These tensions are not unique to Cleveland; rather, they appear in urban as well as rural places, specifically where there is intense political ecological metabolism and change. As geographer Alex Loftus writes, "Political ecologies are criss-crossed with … hegemonic struggles. Hegemonic projects in turn, might be considered socio-natural projects." I have found it useful to think about political ecological change in Cleveland through the lens of the following epistemic tensions, and how the struggle over hegemonies continues to shape the urban landscape, and particularly black geographies of land and food in the city.

The logic of an epistemic tension – or multiple epistemic tensions – is useful for the purpose of better understanding some of the many ways in which city officials (as ideal-type bureaucrats) understand space, place, and sociopolitical relations differently than city residents (especially black growers, also constructed as an ideal type). I do not intend to essentialize or flatten these perspectives, and, indeed, I explain some of the ways in which each group shares elements of the other's epistemic standing. For example, black growers, while interested in building economic structures that exist in extra-capitalist spaces (see chapter 4), also desire better access to markets and integration into the food economy in Cleveland in order to sell their products.

The first and second tensions relate to the value proposition of land (specifically the contradiction between value propositions of the state apparatus and black urban growers) and epistemologies of urban development. The value proposition put forward by the state is instantiated in this context by city planners, the city and county land banks, and various council

people, all of whom are dependent upon and motivated by current and – more importantly – potential future tax revenue. The valuation of land by residents – in this case black urban growers in predominantly black neighborhood – relies on community-based value through the creation of self-determined food systems as well as resilient community economies and networks. These different understandings of land value represent a conflict between exchange value and use value, a tension between priorities in urban development ideology. Thus, the second epistemic tension is in the contradictions between different ideologies of development, namely the tensions between economically (exchange-value) driven and socially (use-value) driven development. These epistemic tensions undergirds the third, and are thematically recurrent throughout this dissertation.

The third epistemic tensions centers around economic relationships and entrepreneurship. Karl Polanyi, in his landmark 1944 book *The Great Transformation* wrote about the degree to which the market is embedded in social relations, and vice versa. Polanyi explores how society superimposes itself onto a capitalist market system that is, in its essence, anti-humanist (Burawoy 2003; Polanyi 1944). His theory of the double movement explains the shifting degrees of socialist protectionism that emerge from various countermovements and exist simultaneously with (if not in opposition to) capitalist market dominance. Correlatively, the last of the three tensions examines contradictions in economic relations between and within black communities and a hegemonic (white dominant) capitalist market.

This discussion of epistemology sheds light on the contradictions inherent to any model of growth and development, but is particularly salient in the Cleveland context: a spatially, economically, and politically racialized city that struggles to manage several thousand acres of vacant land scattered mostly across the majority black east side of the city (WRLC 2016). Political support – both discursive and legislative – for alternative land use projects coincides

with the economic realities of a dwindling tax base, caused in part by continued population loss and policies of housing demolition that exacerbate the increase of vacant land (Rosenman and Walker 2015). The framework of epistemic tensions allows for an anti-essentialist understanding of how different individuals and groups engage[8] in spatial politics given the particularities of their lives and, importantly, the contradictions within their needs and desires.

This dissertation explores black geographies and political ecologies of land and food in the city through the lens of these three epistemic tensions. Land is central to black geographies and questions of urban spatial marginalization and development, which often mutually reinforce each other. In Cleveland, as in other cities across the American Rust Belt, black geographies of food and land are the result of geographical and racial formations that date back hundreds of years and span thousands of miles. In this dissertation, it is not possible to explore the entirety of these spatial and racial formations, or the racial projects that impact black geographies today (McKittrick and Woods 2007; Omi and Winant 1994). The Atlantic slave trade and centuries of plantation ecologies in the American South have imprinted themselves deeply in the collective black consciousness and are crucial elements in the formation of black epistemologies and

[8] To wit, not all examples of urban food production are grounded in an explicit political motivation towards equitable urban change or social justice. Many urban producers consider their work purely economic: either for the purposes of generating a profit through food production, or for expanding economic opportunities through job creation. Brandon Chrostowski, the founder of Edwin's Leadership Institute, runs a training program in the restaurant industry, working almost exclusively with re-entering citizens, who are majority black or Hispanic, reflecting the prison population. Chrostowski's perspective is not one rooted in social justice or food justice. Rather, he works in the restaurant industry – and teaches people those skills – because "it's a very easy skill to learn, to teach. Everyone can cook. […] It's very simple when you break it down, and then that skill is employable. In the market, where hard work prevails. (It) overcomes any education – hard work is more important than any education. […] The harder you work, you can prevail" (personal communication 2016). His perspective and jobs training program are based in ideologies of hard work and personal responsibility, with a peripheral "half an eye on a political ball spinning" (personal communication 2016). Edwin's Leadership Institute includes a restaurant, three urban gardens that provide food for the restaurant, a residence (including a library and a gym), as well as a new butcher shop. Chrostowski, who himself faced jail-time as a teenager, is not the only one to see the potential for food production to both create jobs and to generate a profit. His positionality as a white man suggests that he is not motivated by historical and systemic oppression against himself and his community, but rather by an individual experience that opened his eyes to the potential to make a difference in other people's lives.

geographies (Woods 1998/2017). My research participants draw upon this collective memory in many ways; however, I have chosen to focus on more recent history.

Central to this dissertation are memories and experiences of the Great Migration, urban housing policies in Cleveland, segregation, urban renewal and revitalization, gentrification and other violence against and within the black community (including police violence), and widespread foreclosures and policies of housing demolition. I integrate the lived experiences of black urban growers in a discussion of black ownership of and access to land, the political ecologies of land and food in the city, and the agrarian imaginary that insists upon a specifically black approach to growing food, fostering community, and building resilience.

Southern Roots and a Diasporic Expanse

Black agrarianism amongst urban growers in Cleveland reflects a spirituality and black diasporic spatiality that aligns with a broader black epistemological framing (Collins 2000). Shared by almost every grower I spoke with, the black agrarian imaginary is a vision for black spaces and experiences (both current and future) that draws upon a collective memory shared by the descendents of slaves, tenant farmers, and sharecroppers. In this way, urban gardening and farming "is just going back and remembering or relearning something that we already know" (personal communication 2015). Furthermore, the black geographies and histories that inform this black agrarian imaginary produce something more expansive than urban agrarianism. Indeed, I argue that the black agrarian imaginary as it manifests in the actions and vision of black growers in Cleveland represents a tacit critique of, and dismantling of the category of the urban. The rural agrarian heritage embraced by growers blends with their lived experiences in much denser urban areas, allowing for a reimagining of urban life, as well as for better connections between urban and rural areas (see chapter 5).

Epistemological frames that help to comprise the black agrarian imaginary include the blues epistemologies described by black studies scholar Clyde Woods and the liberatory, abolitionist, and emancipatory vision and practices often associated with an Afro-surrealist ideology (Kelley 2002; McKittrick and Woods 2007; Rosemont and Kelley 2009; Woods 1998/2017). Much like black geographies more broadly, the black agrarian imaginary is not tethered to particular spaces or moments in history. It transcends past and present, reaching towards an imagined liberated future across the black diaspora. Woods' blues epistemology grew out of southern spaces where the blues tradition came to represent a social philosophy, but has a deep impact on black Americans across the US. Woods writes that whereas the plantation (as a physical location) was essential to black cultural formation and racial identity, "many of the descendants of the 6 million African American migrants who left the South between 1920 and 1970 (3 million of them between 1950 and 19070 alone) still measure social progress and spirituality in relation to their physical and psychological distance from 'down home'" (Woods 1998/2017:30). Woods argues that the blues tradition extends beyond direct plantation relations in southern states as a potential platform from which to examine and understand racialized relations as they exist off the plantation (30).

Cleveland, and other cities that are home to black Americans with a southern tradition, have become part of an "up-south" geography, where the influence of "down home" or "down south" memories, experiences, and ideologies is intensely formative. Willie Dixon, named the "poet laureate of the blues," argued that "all blues songs actually related back to Africa or some African heritage things" (Dixon 1990:3). Like Afro-surrealism, the blues "represents the past, the present and the future." Dixon writes, "by knowing about yesterday, how things came along and are still advancing, it can give you a greater idea of what the future could be" (Ibid.) Woods describes the blues epistemology as a "pillar of African American identity," comprised of the

"intellectual traditions and social organizations through which working class African Americans lived, understood, and changed their reality" (1998/2017:29).

Surrealism, with its many Afrocentric and black diasporic underpinnings, is an important part of the lineage of black literature, arts, and culture. It represents a non-religious but spiritual path, a "plunging into the depths of the unconscious", but also a dedication to the lived experience: "a living, mutable, creative vision of a world where love, play, human dignity, an end to poverty and want, and imagination are the pillars of freedom" (Kelley 2002:158). The Chicago Surrealist Group, one of the only significant surrealist organizations in the US, describes the goals of the surrealist movement as emancipatory: "Beginning with the abolition of imaginative slavery, it advances to the creation of a free society in which everyone will be a poet" (quoted in Kelley 2002:158). In other words, surrealism represents an emancipatory pathway from racial, economic, political, and spiritual oppression in everyday life. Drawing upon histories and legacies of resilience and a sense of diasporic interconnectedness, black surrealists draw upon visions of future liberation in order to change their present reality.

The blues epistemologies and Afrosurrealism that I argue are embedded within the black agrarian imaginary are praxis-oriented, liberatory frameworks rooted in the history, including the traumas, of the black diaspora. Both philosophies emphasize the creative mind as inextricably linked to both material conditions and a liberatory praxis. Surrealists[9] acknowledge the role of the spiritual, the ideological, the material, and the metaphysical as they impact the lived experience – including emotional experiences; this ontology lays the groundwork for the

[9] In the introduction to the volume, "Black, Brown, and Beige: Surrealist Writings from Africa and the Diaspora", Franklin Rosemont and Robin D.G. Kelley write that "(s)urrealism's worldwide membership has rarely if ever exceeded two hundred at any given time," but that outside of those that participate actively in the international surrealist movement, there are scores of black "forerunners and close allies" to surrealism that have contributed to surrealist thought. Rosemont and Kelley also emphasize that there are many who, without ever recognizing or specifically naming surrealism, adopt and adapt ideologies that align closely with surrealism.

struggle for freedom. Both Afrosurrealism and the blues epistemology represent a "process of disalienation," a way to "reclaim [one's] authentic character" or to "emancipat(e) (one's) consciousness" (Césaire 2000). From the beginnings of surrealist thought in the inter-war years of the 20th century, surrealists have largely taken on a pro-Africanist, anti-imperial stance. Drawn to knowledge systems emanating not from the Enlightenment but from ancient Egypt, defending African and tribal sculpture as "visible poetry", and part of a creative revolutionary force, early surrealists such as André Breton celebrated the liberatory potential of the arts – particularly poetry – to unshackle peoples across the world, and to contribute to the "world revolution" against Western civilization (Rosemont and Kelley 2009).

A dominant thread emerges from my conversations with black growers who describe an agrarian imaginary undergirded by specifically indigenous (surrealist or blues) ways of knowing or "method(s) of knowledge" (Kelley 2002: 159). These epistemic frames celebrate culture and the arts – with the associated emotional or affective elements – as central to knowledge production, and agrarian practices. That said, not all black gardeners and farmers subscribe to an identifiable ideology, nor do they all believe in a spiritually motivated path to liberation. For those growers that are in touch with their own version of the blues or surrealist epistemologies, they describe an element of the black experience that is often occluded by mainstream theoretical frames that tend to elide the affective dimensions, to focus on the political and the environmental or ecological. Within political ecology for example, especially urban political ecology, attention to questions of race, equity, and justice are central (Heynen, Perkins, and Roy 2006), with some scholars arguing that first world political ecologies must treat questions of race and racial equity as they relate to marginality and coloniality or post-coloniality (Loftus 2017; McCarthy 2002; Rocheleau 1995). However, discussions about the spiritual and otherworldly elements of land, agriculture, food, and community are notably missing from theoretical texts, despite being so present in the everyday lives and activities of black growers.

By contrast, black growers in Cleveland often articulate a vision for urban space and of food production that extends beyond the socio-natural or the political ecological, as they imagine alternative urban futures.

The conception that many black gardeners and farmers have of growing food goes beyond a simple rejection of capitalist economic relationships, to embrace an agrarian imaginary that unites their work to that of other black growers across time and space.

> I feel connected – there's a connection whether it's never even stated. Because any time you have, in your heart, to do good, there's a place where we connect, beyond our physical presence around each other. Our project connects with people who care about the rainforest in South America. Our work connects with people in Tibet. Our work connects with everybody that's positive about sustainability on the earth. Because that's the energy that goes forth that pushes back against … commercial agriculture [and] deforestation, all of these individual efforts. They combine somewhere in the space beyond me being in your physical presence. We create a greater shield around the planet. I always call it – that's the real way around the world. All of these small little energies. There's a term called "universal consciousness" that if enough people think the same way at the same time we can create a shift in the universe. That's the same way with this whole [...]regenerative approach to land, to people, to communities. Whether we never meet John Doe that has a farm down the street, our work still meets somewhere, because there's a common energy there that exists that makes a difference in the universe (personal communication 2016).

The spiritual connection across space described by this farmer, the energy shared "beyond … physical presence," reflects how the black agrarian imaginary aligns with an Afro-surrealist epistemology. Surrealism, with its many Afrocentric and diasporic underpinnings, represents a non-religious but spiritual path, but is also a material project. It is a vision for the future, one that is both based on liberation from past traumas and rooted in everyday actions that create an emancipatory path away from racial, economic, political, and spiritual oppression. It draws upon histories and legacies of resilience and a sense of diasporic interconnectedness, black adherents to surrealism draw upon future visions of liberation in order to change their present reality. Entering into the realm of the surreal means going beyond what is present, digging into the past as well as enacting an imagined future to heal past and present traumas. Historian

Robin Kelley observes that the surrealist vision for "freedom (is) far deeper and more expansive than any of the [other] movements. […] It is a movement that invites dreaming, urges us to improvise and invent, and recognizes the imagination as our most powerful weapon" (2002:159). The vision(s) held by urban growers in Cleveland for black agrarianism reflects a spirituality, a black diasporic spatiality, and a draw towards the affective and imaginative closely aligned with black surrealist thought (Kelley 2002; Rosemont and Kelley 2009).

The connections between the built environment, human livelihoods, the health of the natural world, and the health of the black community motivate black Clevelanders to make claims on spaces around them in order to transform those spaces according to their needs and desires. Sometimes those transformations are temporary: a block party at a community garden in the Garden Valley neighborhood in August of 2016 . Colorful tents housed vegan chefs offering food samples, puppet shows about "greening the ghetto," yoga, tai chi, garden demonstrations, and local hip-hop music. Surrealists have long relied upon the "imaginative freedom" of music (Kelley 2002); indeed, residents commented appreciatively that this block party was reminiscent of the old school hip-hop scene. In a community long relegated to the list of "hopeless, poor, black" neighborhoods in Cleveland (Wilson 2007b), this day's activities were a material manifestation of imagined alternatives for many residents. While this space might not be described as worthy of investment by the majority of city officials, one of the organizers and participants that day articulated the power of claiming the right to difference through the production of space.

Damien, a black farmer in Kinsman who died of a heart attack in November 2018, stood at the event near his farm evoked a future-oriented imaginary when he remarked, "See how we can make this space from nothing into something? We create what we want and need in our neighborhoods. [We can] create something beautiful in a place where there wasn't anything like

that." Describing how space can be produced in alternative and even subversive ways, Keymah, another urban farmer, who worked with Damien, remarked:

> Some of these problems are a lot larger than we could fix, just right here, but we could start just one person at a time, and make a difference that way. So, we do what we can in the space we've been given, and hope that each one teaches one and the message goes further than [where we are].
>
> […]as I drive back and forth on my commute daily, I think the majority of people want to make it home safely every day. I just don't think that story is told enough, and it gives a picture that we live in such a violent world. But it's more people that wanna be in peace than wanna be in violence. So, [the farm] gives us a landscape to highlight that. There is a counter-story to the story that's being told. There is an alter-ego to violence.

For these gardeners and farmers, urban agrarianism constitutes an alternative production of space, with the potential and objective of producing beautiful, safe neighborhoods. This motivation reflects the collective memory of black Clevelanders, as well as its reclaiming and reframing for the construction of an alternative future.

This event only lasted one day; however, it indicates a shift in mentality within a chronically neglected community space. The community garden that hosted it was a space produced by two sisters who transformed an empty lot into a vibrant, peaceful, and highly productive growing space that contributes immensely to the socio-natural well-being of that block. Children are welcome, neighbors can avail themselves of the garden's produce, and the aesthetic contribution to an otherwise unmaintained and overgrown area of Garden Valley creates a sense of "nurturing," "peace," and "intention" for those who experience it (personal communications 2016).[10] While the sisters lease rather than own the lots on which the garden sits, they have taken ownership of it. In other words, they have appropriated that space in order to become stewards of the land and its socio-natural value[11] (Lefebvre 1996, 2009). These kinds of

[10] These are words from participants in that days' event.
[11] The appropriation of space is a Lefebvian concept that has largely been deployed by political ecologists and human geographers to indicate, following Lefebvre, the everyday practices whereby residents inhabit,

transformations in the physical environment exist in a dialectic with changing mentalities within communities. The affective and spiritual aspects of urban change are not often highlighted in mainstream discourse about community development; however, they are central to the black agrarian imaginary and in the everyday environmentalism of black growers in Cleveland (Loftus 2009, 2012).

Residents in Garden Valley often struggle to think of their neighborhood as anything other than violent and unsafe. A neighborhood survey[12] conducted in 2016 revealed that more than half of residents feel unsafe at times. When asked during a community meeting for one problem he would like to see addressed in Garden Valley, a young resident responded, "just make the killings stop." No one would argue that violence in Garden Valley (and Cleveland more broadly) is not a serious issue; however, inherent to the black agrarian imaginary – and the Afro-surreal – is the visioning of a liberated future, the potential for emancipation to result from the dialectical transformation of space.

III. LITERATURE AND THEORY ON RACE, SPACE, AND URBANIZATION

Black Space: Race, Racialization, and Reclaiming Space

The concept of black space, as racialized spaces and spaces of racialization, is not a static descriptor. It is also not solely a concept imposed upon predominantly black neighborhoods from the outside, but rather one that residents are trying to reclaim, in order to subvert negative stereotypes. Black growers work to produce black spaces that are oases of black culture and safe

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occupy, and use (urban) spaces to meet their needs and desires. The concept of appropriation is intimately linked with the Marxian idea of use-value, in that appropriated space are theorized by Lefebvre as "*l'œuvre*", which Lefebvre theorized as "the quest for spaces that allow for autonomy and creativity" (Ronneberger 2008:135). Lefebvre's concept of *autogestion*, or radical grassroots democracy, is also implicit in the ideals of appropriation and *l'œuvre*, which both signal the ultimate goals of radically democratic urban spaces: self-realization and collective self-management (Ronneberger 2008).

[12] The survey was conducted during the pilot phase of the Kresge Foundation Grant that funded the community garden block party. In total, 79 residents were surveyed.

from violence (including police violence). An elder in the community spoke to me about working towards making the city (and particularly her neighborhood) safer through gardening and farming. She commented that farming the city might produce black spaces such that policing them from the outside would no longer be necessary. Communities could police themselves, and as a result of living in these self-determined black spaces, would not have to constantly worry about "just making it through the day alive" (personal communication 2016).

Not only do I theorize black spaces as intentionally produced over a long process, but I conceptualize race itself as part of a larger process. Borrowing from Rachel Brahinsky (2013), race is not a static ontology or a fixed relationship between particular racial or class groups, but rather an analytic "mode of being". The idea of race has changed over time: what it signifies, who it others, and how it operates and manifests in different societies. The historically contingent meanings attached to race can be understood through Omi and Winant's (1994) seminal work on racial formation and racial projects, both of which regularly emerge in research interviews. Research participants recognize the significance of being racially marked in Cleveland.

Throughout this dissertation, race and racialization are presented not as "superstructural effect[s] of capitalism" but rather as constitutive elements of a capitalist political economy (Brahinsky 2013:1261). Processes of racial formation, by which "racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed" and racial projects, whereby "human bodies and social structures are represented and organized" (Omi and Winant 1994:55-6) are central to patterns of capitalist accumulation across space (Woods 1998/2017). Capitalist – and particularly neoliberal – economic relations are mutually constituted with processes of racialization; especially the ways in which normatively construed economic behavior also constructs the

"anti-citizen" or "anti-market behaviors" among black ghetto residents in relation to the "ideal neoliberal citizen" (Roberts and Mahtani 2010:249; Wilson 2007b).

Many scholars theorize social classes and racial groups (or a more dialectic theory of race-class) as an "effect of struggle" across time and space (Brahinsky 2013; Gibson-Graham 1996/2006:50; Laclau 1977). Research participants in this dissertation often refer to an abstract "black community" (or "the community" invariably referring to black people in Cleveland) not constituted by geographical location or proximity within a particular neighborhood, but by collective histories of oppression, struggle, and marginalization. I do not believe the people I interviewed are essentializing their community (or black people more broadly), but rather they perceive a certain level of experiential or knowledge-based commonality, including historical traumas, collective memories, and everyday actions and interactions that are specific to the subjugated positionality of blackness in the United States, and Cleveland, in particular (see Patillo 2007). The shared experience of being black in the United States, and the collective struggle that represents, is what has produced a perceived cohesiveness among black subjects. The production of black space by and for the black community is therefore resistance against the marginalization and oppression experienced by the black community under a capitalist neoliberal logic. To produce black space differently is to claim sovereignty over and within these spaces stereotyped as ghetto spaces, and to produce them as safe, healthy, and self-determined spaces.

Urbanization: Capitalism, Hegemony, and Counter-hegemony

The majority of black subjects in this dissertation are farmers and gardeners, whose production of space not only contests racially typecast space but also problematizes common-sense beliefs about what constitutes the urban. Under the hegemony of a system that privileges a capitalist

production of space through the division of labor and differentiation of space (Lefebvre 1996), the city has been discursively separated from surrounding rural areas. At the same time, urban space is internally differentiated: zoning laws, racialized segregation, and jurisdictional distinctions between segments of government (both within cities and between cities and the surrounding areas) inform beliefs and policy about what does and does not belong in the city (Mayes 2014; Zeiderman 2006). Common-sense understandings of what is and is not appropriate for urban space continue to evolve as socio-economic and spatial conditions within urban spaces shift (Smith 2008).

Relations within nature also develop historically and geographically, influencing and altering human socio-ecological activities in and across space. For example, divisions of labor between agriculture and industry have crystalized between rural and urban areas: typically, urban areas saw more industry and rural areas saw more agriculture. Reifying this framework, however, relies upon a dualist and mutually exclusive understanding of urban and rural space, informed in part by a dichotomous understanding of society and nature (Smith 1984/2008). But rural and urban space are mutually constitutive; elements of each are found in the other, and the meaning and physical form of these spaces continually evolves. In breaking down dichotomous understandings of city/rural and nature/society, it becomes possible to reimagine the function and physicality of cities. In other words, it becomes possible to "to change it after our heart's desires" (Harvey 2003: 939), or as urban sociologist Robert Park writes, "in making the city man has remade himself" (quoted in Harvey 2003: 939).

The production of space through agricultural activity, especially by the poor, has been present in cities for as long as they have existed. It has at times been welcome, such as in the victory gardens of World War II (Hagey et al. 2012); however, the modern city is seen often as antithetical to agriculture, and some cities strictly forbid certain agricultural practices

(Pothukuchi and Koffman 1999). In industrial and modern capitalist times, urban food production is often a survival mechanism; laborers migrating to work in industry produce food urban areas, in part to reduce the high cost of living, but also sometimes as a way to hold onto peasant livelihoods and a sense of autonomy (McClintock 2010; Minkoff-Zern 2013). In one sense, this is a reduction of the relative cost of urban labor, or the subsidization of forced underconsumption by capital. However, scholars have also framed such practices as a counter-hegemonic claim to space and the full rights of citizenship (Boer and Vries 2009; Ghose and Pettigrove 2014). The ways in which environmental and agricultural space is created and maintained through urban gardening or backyard animal husbandry is a claim to the right to nature in the city – a way to participate in and appropriate urban space to create use values, rather than exchange values, meeting the needs and desires of its marginalized inhabitants.

Low-income neighborhoods, especially neighborhoods of color, are often spaces of marginalization, disenfranchisement, and neglect within the increasingly neoliberalized American city (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Davies 2013; Geddes 2014; Massey and Fischer 2000; Wacquant 2008; Wilson 2009; Wilson and Sternberg 2013). They exist in the margins of the state (Asad 2004) in terms of access to political power and participation (Susser 1992/2012), at the same time that they are subject to the intense discipline of the state. Indeed, residents find themselves excluded from full participation in the political system, the total range of the rights of citizenship (Holston and Appadurai 1999), full access to urban space (Lefebvre 1991, 1996; Purcell 2002, 2008; Young 1990), and the (purported) benefits of the formal capitalist economy (Bonacich and Wilson 2011).

The establishment of productive or aesthetic green space is one way to claim rights within these spaces: the right to nature for groups that have been subject to social and spatial discipline by the prevailing neoliberal logic (Gray et al. 2014), the right to appropriate (use, occupy, change,

produce) urban space (Lefebvre 1991, 1996 Shillington 2013), the right to difference, and the right to the city more broadly. For Lefebvre, the right to difference builds upon the right to the city, which demands that all urban residents are simultaneously implicated in decisions and processes around socio-spatial transformations within urban space and not excluded from spaces (especially in city centers) or marginalized within urban space. Lefebvre describes the right to difference as a claim to

> modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (*citadin*) and user of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the centre, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the 'marginal' and even for the 'privileged'). (1996:34)

Claims on the right to the city and the right to produce different spaces (in this context producing black space differently) reject the homogenizing forces of neoliberalism that fragment social life and produce difference in exclusionary ways (Cameron and Palan 2004:146; Kipfer 2002:143).

Spaces of resistance call explicitly for the right to difference, rather than hierarchical difference. The former provides a platform for voices that have been historically marginalized and disenfranchised, and works against raced, classed, and gendered oppressions that reinforce white epistemic privilege (Lefebvre 1996; McCann 1999; Sundberg 2013). It allows all groups the right to use and produce space so as to meet their needs and desires, offering the potential to remake or appropriate the city itself as *l'œuvre* – as use value.

Embedded within these rights claims is a dismantling of the hegemony of capitalist logic, and the associated spatial organization of the city. Rather than fixed moments in time or space, this perspective considers hegemony as part of a regime of negotiation, a "continuous process[es] of becoming" (Gramsci 1971/2014:182) or a means of the "survival of capitalism" (Lefebvre

2009). The right to difference in particular, "lay(s a claim) to a *different*, no longer capitalist world" (Kipfer 2008:203) asserting the possibility for self-determination or sovereignty as the central organizing logic. Simultaneously, the right to difference represents non-hierarchical difference (cf. Young 1990) and "a commitment to strip existing social differences" that are often both alienating and divisive (Kipfer 2008:203).

In cities across the United State, urban agriculture has become widely heralded as a way to combat poverty, food insecurity, and nutritional or health disparities, and contribute to economic revitalization (Gray et al. 2014; Guthman 2008; McClintock 2014; Saed 2012). This illustrates how common-sense understandings of what is and is not appropriate for urban space evolve over time, as socio-economic and spatial conditions within cities shift (Smith 1984/2008). Brenner and Schmid (2015) write that the "basic nature of urban realities— long understood under the singular, encompassing rubric of 'cityness'—has become more differentiated", observing that there is no longer one singular urban form, but rather, that "new processes of urbanization … are bringing forth diverse socio-economic conditions, territorial formations and socio-metabolic transformations across the planet" (p. 152).

There are several reasons to situate the urban, epistemically, as a site of democratic action and contestation against neoliberalization (Purcell 2008; Soja 2010; Young 1990), as well as a crucial space for the articulation of rights claims (Holston 1999). Following Young (1990), who pushes for a conception of the urban experience as one of differentiation, with encounters of social difference that do not lead to exclusion, we can see diversity in the city as a normative ideal for how politics, participation, and the production of space should be carried out. Similarly, Mark Purcell (2008) describes the city as constituted by a multiplicity of social, political, and economic formations (p. 105). Rather than setting aside difference order to come together for the "common good," the right to the city includes such broad ideas as the "right to

appropriation" and the "right to participation," (Purcell 2008:94-95) with all of the different interpretations of how these might be enacted. Lefebvre (1996) wrote about his vision of the right to the city, that:

> "it would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the "marginal" and even for the "privileged") (quoted in Purcell 2008, Lefebvre 1996:34).

In their own ways, black growers engage in both legible and less overt political actions, and at times enact "hidden transcripts," or "critique(s) of power spoken behind the back of the dominant" (Scott 1990:xii). These actions[13] are central to a differentiated and inclusive politics of radical democratic change (Kelley 1994; Scott 1990) and establish a grassroots politics that is at times unfamiliar to those not embedded in it. One common thread in Lefebvre's (1996) conception of the right to the city, and the analysis by both Purcell (2008) and urban studies scholar Edward Soja (2010) is a theory of visioning that focuses on how marginalized urban residents can gain control over the production of (un)just urban spaces. Based on the idea of *inhabiting* the city, Lefebvre's right to the city represents the heart of everyday radical opposition to ingrained hegemonic socio-political and spatial constructs, and the right of urban residents to make use of urban space in order to live *well* in the city (Purcell 2002, 2008).

The long relationship between capitalism and urbanization provides another rationale for theorizing the city as a potential site of everyday resistance. Capitalist production relies on and reinforces urbanization while urbanization has led to both the growth of capitalism and resistance to it (Purcell 2008:89). Neoliberalism, as an advanced form of capitalism, is a

[13] The "hidden transcripts" of black black growers have emerged throughout my research, and include everything from guerilla gardening (direct appropriation of a parcel of land for food production) to a refusal to engage with particular community development organizations or community foundations (for fear of losing control over a particular project). Regarding the latter, one research participant commented that "people are using the urban ag movement (to extract knowledge) because they're sucking in information from folks on the ground, and when opportunities for funding come in, they are dogging them, so-to-speak" to illustrate the risk of collaboration with city or community development agencies.

definitively spatial process, tested and revised in urban centers across the world, which makes spatial resistance to the neoliberal project an important touchstone of the contested city (Purcell 2008:88); the production of urban space through radically democratic means is a good starting point for such a resistance.

The Right to the City

The right to the city illuminates the possibility for contestations of power – the appropriation of urban space in everyday life – to inform discourses and practices around the rights of urban dwellers (Kelley 1994; Wilson 2007). The right to the city, as a framework, provides a different perspective on how people live in and move through urban space, and the potential for historically disenfranchised groups to reproduce urban space according to their own needs and desires. By focusing on cities as an important site of socio-political change, participation becomes a platform for access to the state through different realms of authority and power. Rather than accessing decision-making at various scales and relying on liberal democratic means with little room for inter- or intra-group difference, the ultimate goal is to significantly alter landscapes of authority and power and the socio-spatial configuration of urban space from the ground up.

Claiming a right to the city is not rooted in liberal democratic or more legible traditions like voting; rather, it constitutes a radically different way of seeing and inhabiting urban space, and acting on that vision in a way that substantively changes the city for the use of inhabitants. Participation might include the "hidden transcripts" of everyday protests This took place on buses and streetcars in space of Jim Crow segregation, where southern blacks made claims with their own bodies on spaces marked for white bodies alone; "hidden transcripts" were the performative choices of working class blacks to dress a certain way, to control the speed at which they worked, and, to the extent that they could, to negotiate the terms of the work they

did. During the 1960s, non-violent sit-ins at lunch counters claimed space that had been hostilely denied to black Americans, while armed groups of Black Panthers and other proponents of Black Power patrolled neighborhoods to both stake claims on space and to protect black communities from the violence perpetrated against them (Kelley 1994:194). Geographer David Wilson (2007) emphasizes the importance of "tactical walking" as a way for young black ghetto residents and "neoliberal-resistive black politicians" to redefine spaces of police surveillance and brutality (p.138-139). This strategy of reclaiming the streets serves different purposes for different groups. For gang members, this serves to remake the streets as their own; for politicians, strategic walking may actually confirm myths of perceived ghetto dysfunction and disorganization, but may also serve to complicate these narratives and to break down boundaries between different racially constructed spaces (Wilson 2007).

Contestation over rights to and in the city often center around housing, employment, the use of public spaces, access to food, and services such as water, heat, education, and transportation (Kelley 1994; Purcell 2008:94; Soja 2010; Wilson 2007). What makes this understanding of participation so different is that political actors often work outside of the market or market-based concepts of scarcity, and rather attempt to reconfigure social relations and establish the city as a public good. This perspective follows Davies' (2013) suggestion that scholars "spend more time considering the kinds of political action that might transform [neoliberalism]" (Davies 2013:3227), rather than focusing on modes of participation that work within structures and inevitably (at least in part) reproduce them.

Rights claims through participation and protest is a normative project that, often in the interstices of legible politics, attempts to modify conventionalt understandings of urban politics and activism. It is a mode of "experimentation with new urban possibilities" (Swyngedouw, quoted in Davies 2013:3227). The utopian ideal of the contested city is that coalition-building

happens across differences, without flattening them or reducing groups to their race, class, gender, or other identities, and that through this work, residents will begin to (re)make the city and their own lives (Harvey 2003). This evokes citizenship practices that reflect what Soja refers to as the "thirdspace of political choice" or a "meeting space for all peripheralized or marginalized 'subjects'" (1996: 35).

Theories on and proponents of the right to the city or other such contestations over city space have only partially drawn the contours of new such forms of citizenship. There are no promises that such a movement will not simply reinscribe already existing inequalities and power differentials (Purcell 2002). The right to the city movement has taken hold in cities across the world, in diverse ways and under different labels. Instances of successful rights claims have been documented in places like Los Angeles (Soja 2010), Seattle, and Brazil (Purcell 2008), while smaller acts of activism are working to change and reimagine urban space in Portland, Oregon and Cleveland through neighborhood and community projects such as City Repair (cityrepair.org; neighborhoodgrants.org). Whether or not a vision of the city as contested space – with the associated claims to the right to the city, and the right to difference in the city – will take root on a larger scale remains to be seen. However, this vision of the city and approach to understanding urban processes is grounded in a vision of the city that creates room for that possibility.

IV. CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

Chapter 2 describes two events in Cleveland's history, the 2014 killing of 12-year-old Tamir Rice, and the more protracted 2007-2008 housing foreclosure crisis, to illustrate and contextualize black historical geographies in the city. Using these "moments" methodologically (see Abrams 1982), I show how perceptions and representations of black bodies and spaces are formed, and continuously reified over time.

Chapter 3 introduces two epistemic tensions around both value and urban or community development. The tension around the value of land, is a way to instantiate the material effects of the dominant urban planning and development paradigms, and to show how black growers contest the prevailing hegemonic order. This chapter is the first of three that discusses counter-hegemonic praxis among black gardeners and farmers, examining how capitalist relations are being reworked in an urban agrarian environment.

Chapter 4 explores black encounters with capitalism, and the efforts towards new and different economic relationships. A resulting epistemic tension between the dominant market ideology and an emergent entrepreneurialism among black farmers is the focus of this chapter. This alternative market ideology, which I refer to as black entrepreneurialism, is the least cohesive component of a counter-hegemony among growers. It is thus perhaps the most illuminating example of how growers negotiate their relationship to the city, to their livelihoods, to their communities, and to the food movement. This chapter outlines alternative economies, including cooperative and collaborative enterprises and economies of sharing, that are dominant among black growers.

Chapter 5 discusses how the black agrarian imaginary emerges from and takes hold within marginalized communities in Cleveland. This chapter picks up the thread of counter-hegemonic engagement from the previous two chapters, analyzing the revival of marginal urban spaces, as well as the influence of a southern heritage among black farmers and gardeners. The southern roots of the majority of black residents in Cleveland contributes to a shared history among growers, including collective memories of slavery, sharecropping, and migration, that has deeply influenced agriculture in Cleveland. Southern black ways of knowing, or Clyde Woods'

(1998/2017) blues epistemologies, travel outside of former slaveholding spaces to inform the work of black growers in "up-south" spaces such as Cleveland.

The conclusion, chapter 6, threads together many of the concepts articulated in the previous chapters as a way to reconstruct the materiality of the black agrarian imaginary as a historicized and dialectical dimension of black food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is not a concept or practice that can be imposed upon a particular place, but rather emerges from time- and space-specific contexts to meet the needs of individuals and groups involved in the movement. It reflects many of the epistemic frames of the black agrarian imaginary, while providing a broader world historical context for the strivings of black urban growers in Cleveland.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL & GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

> We have a job as black women to support whatever is right,
> and to bring in justice where we've had so much injustice.
> Fannie Lou Hamer (1971)

I. MOMENTS IN HISTORY

Two moments in the recent history and geography of Cleveland, Ohio can be used as analytical devices to gain a deeper understanding of the racial, political, economic, and spatial dynamics of the city over time as a whole, and, more specifically, of the lives and experiences of black Clevelanders as they struggle to build and rebuild their everyday environments (Loftus 2009). I use these events to narrate how the production of space in Cleveland is deeply informed by black geographies and black epistemologies (Brahinsky, Sasser, and Minkoff-Zern 2014; McKittrick 2005; McKittrick and Woods 2007). Philip Abrams (1982:191) describes an event as "a happening to which cultural significance has successfully been assigned" whose "identity and significance are established primarily in terms of its location in time." I argue that a crucial element not included in this description is the significance of an event's location. Black histories are geographic, "placements and displacements, segregations and integrations, margins and centers, and migrations and settlements" (McKittrick 2006:xiv). Both race (as "bodily difference") and space (as asocial, homogenous, and ahistorical) tend to be essentialized within social theory (McKittrick and Woods 2007), but this chapter – and this dissertation more broadly – is an attempt to "de-essentialize" the histories and geographies of black Clevelanders through a closer look at the particularities of black geographic experiences and their role in shaping the political economic and socio-spatial experiences of black urban growers in Cleveland (Abrams 1982; McKittrick and Woods 2007:7).

What follows in this chapter is a recounting of two particular events within the black historical geography of Cleveland, and evidence of how deeply these moments are embedded in the black

agrarian imaginary in Cleveland. This chapter establishes the context of race, food, and land in the city.

Although not directly related to each other, both moments speak to how black bodies move through, respond to, and are perceived across the urban terrain. These moments have been particularly influential in producing perceptions and representations of black bodies and black spaces (as well as black geographies more broadly (McKittrick 2011)) across Cleveland. According to geographer Carolyn Finney, these representations of blackness and black bodies, are deeply impactful within the black community as well. She explains that, for black people, "there is a danger of internalizing negative images to the extent that they cannot imagine different possibilities for themselves" (2014:68). While Finney's lens offers a somewhat passive understanding of black geographies, subsequent chapters contextualize the production of space by black urban growers as part of a counter-hegemonic agenda, which reclaims the right to the city.

This chapter will also focus on how the production of space – as an active and agentic practice – touches down in very real ways concerning access to land, personal and community safety, and urban and community development. I am primarily concerned with the political ecologies and socio-spatial implications of the production of food and land as they pertain to processes of racialization and the everyday lives of black Clevelanders. That is to say, I attempt a more in-depth understanding of how black subjects contest the socio-political and spatial representation of black spaces – and thus black bodies – as both marginal and at the margins of the state, illegible or erased. I examine the motivation for the production of difference – claims to the right to difference – in the city among groups who are, by and large, under the hypersurveillance of the governing political apparatus while also being generally excluded from white spaces (Asad 2004; Finney 2014; Wilson 2007).

The two moments in question illustrate not only the continued importance of race in Cleveland's historical-geographical landscape, but demonstrate how crucial the historical scaffolding of racial formations and other racial projects have been in constructing racial politics in the city today (see Omi and Winant 1994). Both of these moments have had a significant impact on the black population of Cleveland; they are etched into the shared black consciousness in Cleveland, and have more deeply entrenched many of the racial formations and racialized patterns of inequity in this city.

Racialized '"Moments" in Cleveland's History

The first moment took place over fewer than 45 seconds in a small public park. On November 22, 2014, a 12-year-old boy named Tamir Rice was shot and killed by police trainee Timothy Loemann outside of the Cudell Recreation Center on the west side of the city. Tamir was playing outside with other young children, waving a toy gun in his hands. A man called 911 saying that "a guy with a gun" was outside the recreation center; he also told the 911 dispatcher that the guy was "probably a juvenile" and that the gun was "probably a fake"; this additional information, however, was not relayed to the police officers who went to the scene (Heisig 2017). Upon arriving at the recreation center, the two officers, Frank Garmback and Timothy Loemann, broke protocol by driving their police car over a curb just a few feet from where Tamir and the other children were playing. Within two seconds of exiting the car, Loemann shot 12-year-old Tamir from close range. Neither Garmback nor Loemann offered Tamir medical attention, as protocol would have demanded. The boy died the next day from his injuries. Neither officer was convicted of any crime associated with the killing, although Loemann was later fired from the CDP for an unrelated incident, lying on his employment application (Fortin and Bromwich 2017).

The other "moment" occurred over a period of several years in the early 2000s, with direct repercussions for thousands of individuals and families across the entire city and the surrounding Cuyahoga County. From 1995 to 2007, the number of housing foreclosures in Cuyahoga County quadrupled (Coulton et al. 2010). Nationwide, four of the top twenty-one zip codes impacted by the foreclosure crisis in 2007 were located in low-income, majority black neighborhoods in Cleveland (CNN 2007).[14] A foreclosure domino effect – whereby the existence of foreclosed-upon and vacant homes increases the likelihood of other foreclosures in close proximity – intensified the impact in these neighborhoods (Rokakis 2015). Slavic Village is a predominantly black neighborhood that includes the zip code –44105 –that was the hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis in the United States in 2007. That zip code counted 783 filings in the summer of 2007 alone, and almost 4,000 foreclosures between 2001 and 2012 (Bracantelli 2013); by 2013, about 3,000 of the 12,000 residences lay vacant (Smith 2013). In just one year, housing values across the city plummeted, with the median sale price in Cleveland dropping from $62,000 in 2007 to just $15,500 in 2008. Black neighborhoods bore the brunt of the loss. Homes in neighborhoods such as Kinsman, St. Clair-Superior, and Hough lost between 80 and 87% of their value between 2004 and 2015 (Western Reserve Land Conservancy 2015:33). This moment was acutely painful in and of itself, but it also stands in for decades of slum development (and subsequent clearance under policies of urban renewal) and housing demolition, as well as other instances of "creative destruction" across Cleveland, especially in majority black neighborhoods. Central to most racial projects inscribed in space, creative destruction is an intrinsic, albeit unpredictable, part of the capitalist spatial fix: a reworking of capital across space that "thoroughly transform(s)" landscapes for the purpose of reinvigorating capital accumulation (Brenner and Theodore 2002:355).

[14] Throughout this dissertation, I will refer to the east side of Cleveland to indicate neighborhoods that lie east of the Cuyahoga River, but within the boundaries of the City of Cleveland, such as Kinsman, Glenville, Hough, Fairfax, or Buckeye. This is not to be confused with the city of East Cleveland, which is adjacent to Glenville, outside the city lines, and represents a distinct, albeit also incredibly impoverished and predominantly black, municipality.

Both police violence and the Great Recession of the early 2000s were "racialized moments" (Schein 2012:942) in Cleveland. Geographer Richard Schein argues that transformations in urban space over time are essential to "processes of racial formation [and]racialized landscapes" (Ibid.) These moments are intimately connected to the racialized historical geography of the city as a whole, which includes other outbreaks of violence such as the Hough riots of 1966 and the 1968 Glenville Shootout between police and a black natonialist group. These moments connect with black political organizing in Cleveland, the history of black farming in the American South, and an international black agrarianism that has found local roots in Cleveland. Both moments have had deep impacts on the political and economic lives of Cleveland's black population, including their engagement in urban agriculture, gardening, farming, and other land-based practices.

To demonstrate the historical geographical importance of these two moments, to understand their role as "markers of transition" (Abrams 1982:195), I situate them within the broader historical geography of Cleveland and its black residents. Following Gramsci (1971/2014), I do not claim that either the foreclosure crisis, as a spatial crisis of capital, or the homicide of Tamir, is directly responsible for producing any particular historical event or conjuncture. Rather, particular social, political, or economic configurations, crises, and contradictions lay the groundwork for the "dissemination of certain modes of thought, and certain ways of posing and resolving questions" (Gramsci 1971/2014:184; see Hall 1986, for more on Gramsci's interpretation of Marx's economism). This approach to history helped define Gramsci's "concept of immanence" (Gramsci 1971/2014:400), which is central to his philosophy of praxis. Immanence, or the mutual constitution of history, geography, economy, and politics – and of political ecologies – is expressed in each fragment of praxis, and is present in each moment of the (re)production of new socio-natures (Ekers et al. 2013; Loftus 2009). Gramsci's concept of

immanence, or "being with history" is present in neighborhood and community praxis that asserts a different way of living and being within (and against) the hegemony of white capitalism. The production of difference, or claiming the right to difference (as a step towards *autogestion*), is embedded within the black agrarian imaginary.

For black urban growers, access to land, innovation around vacant land use, and a deep connection to ancestral and diasporic agrarian practices in part define a black agrarian imaginary, and have become central to the production of black space. To be sure, there is political variance amongst growers in Cleveland: their relationship to political processes or willingness to engage in them, how they understand what it means to "be political" or whether they understand their agrarianism as part of a political movement, and how they situate themselves as a part of the historical geographies and struggles around black land. Notwithstanding this variability, most growers I spoke with are unsure of or mistrust the City's land practices and those that control it, or are frustrated at the opacity of bureaucracies around land (see Chapter 3). The mode of thought that most black growers embody is, broadly speaking, concerned with the production of black space and with the material impact that the assertion of an agrarian imaginary has on the black community.

The two moments, outlined above have shaped the political, social, spatial, and racial landscape of the city, with specific and important impacts on black gardeners and farmers. This chapter will expound upon the spatial and historical development and political significance of the black agrarian imaginary from its American origins in the rural south[15] (Fiskio and Scott 2016; Mayes 2014; Zeiderman 2015), and how associated everyday practices work to produce new black

[15] The black agrarian imaginary, as I conceptualize and understand it, has its deeper roots in African agriculture, and continues to draw upon a broad set of diasporic influences. However, for the purposes of this piece, I am situating this urban agricultural epistemology within the American context, from the rural American South, the Great Migration, and in the present urban context of Cleveland, Ohio.

geographies against the terrain of a hegemonic urban whiteness. These two "racialized moments" provide insight into how hegemonic spatial relationships are produced, reified, and contested through the production of different socio-natures, or black space.

To discuss these two historical events requires a discussion of the demographics of Cleveland, including the rise and fall of its population and the changing racial makeup of the city, as well as the significance of these trends for inventories of vacant land as well as vacant and abandoned properties. I will also briefly present a specifically black geography of Cleveland, which includes spatial histories of black migration from the American South to Cleveland as they relate not only to the city as a whole, but to black growers within the city. I will then turn to a more politically centered discussion of black activism both within Cleveland and in the rural South. The influence of black nationalist organizing, including the Black Panther Party and the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) holds an important place in the black political and spatial history of Cleveland. Additionally, political organizing by farmers and gardeners has traditions that extend beyond the borders of Cleveland. "Down-south" agrarianism is embedded in much of the work being done "up-south" in black spaces across Cleveland (Jelks 2008; Zeiderman 2015). Farming and civil rights icons such as Fannie Lou Hamer and George Washington Carver, and groups like the Black Panthers, have deeply influenced how black growers in Cleveland see their work, and understand their own urban agrarian visions.

II. POPULATION, FORECLOSURE, VACANT LAND, & URBAN RENEWAL

The more protracted "moment" of housing foreclosures and mortgage loan crises in Cleveland has had deep socio-spatial impacts on the black community in Cleveland, with implications for black agrarianism and the urban agriculture movement more broadly. Despite the lingering effects of the recession and widespread foreclosures in Cleveland, a discourse of revitalization and renaissance is common in political and community development circles, albeit in uneven

and quite racialized ways (Lebovits 2016). Uneven development of urban space is increasingly evident, with significant investment in the downtown business district as well as a few predominantly white west side neighborhoods such as Ohio City, Tremont, and Detroit Shoreway.[16] In Kinsman, which is about 95% black, median house values peaked in 2005 at about $72,000, but had fallen to about $15,000 by 2015, which is only 21% of pre-Recession levels.

The foreclosure crisis does not explain all of the struggles facing the black community, nor does it provide a complete groundwork for a specifically black production of space with which I am more specifically concerned. The foreclosure crisis does represent, however, an important moment within the prolonged history of creative destruction of communities of color in Cleveland: policies and practices of clearing land, racialized concentration of poverty, and the vision for a certain kind of competitive edge for outside investment and development. The housing and foreclosure crisis of 2007 therefore serves as a microcosm of many of the transformations in Cleveland over the last several decades.

Between about 1910 and 1970, the induced migration of black Americans from southern states (Davies and M'Bow 2007:14; McKittrick and Woods 2007) brought millions of former sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and former slaves and their descendants to industrializing cities in the North. Cleveland was a major destination for migrants from Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina. These migrants were spatially confined through politics and policies of segregation, displacement, and dispossession (Davis 1972; Rothstein 2017). The two moments that provide the analytical frame for this chapter are squarely situated within the black

[16] Additionally, the majority of gentrified areas within Cleveland are located on the west side of the city, and are now predominantly white neighborhoods. These include the above mentioned neighborhoods, as well as the East and West Flats, two neighborhoods that border the Cuyahoga River, which is the informal dividing line between the east and west sides of Cleveland.

geographical imaginary of Cleveland, in part constituted by this historical movement of black bodies across the country.

Population over Time and Space

In 1950, Cleveland's population peaked at just over 914,000 people (U.S. Census Bureau), making it the sixth largest city in the United States at that time. But by the year 2016, the population had dropped to just under 390,000 people, a loss of about 57% of the population (American Community Survey). While the rate of population decline has slowed, some city planners estimate that the population will drop below 350,000 people by the 2020 census. As in other postindustrial and deindustrializing cities, Cleveland's continued population loss is not simply a result of the changing spatiality of industrial production across the globe or within the United States[17] (Mallach 2014a; Wilson 2007a, 2007b) but rather a complex concatenation of factors, including white flight to the sprawling suburbs of the greater metropolitan area. Consistent with the rest of the United States, the black population has borne the brunt of economic shifts in Cleveland and across the region (Wilson 2009), with lower educational attainment and disproportionately high rates of poverty, homelessness, joblessness, and disease such as HIV/AIDS, diabetes, hypertension, and obesity.

While the urban population of Cleveland decreased by more than 50% in seventy years, the population of the surrounding Cuyahoga County continued to grow until 1970, when it peaked at 1,721,300, and has since only fallen 27%(US Census Bureau). The population decline began with federally subsidized suburbanization in the post-war years, which disproportionately

[17] Much of the exodus of industry and business from Rust Belt cities is to areas friendlier to more relaxed labor laws (i.e with less support for labor unions) and environmental deregulation.

benefited whites, much like other mid–to large cities in the United States (Frey 1979; Rothstein 2017).

Cleveland was an important destination for participants in the Great Black Migration. The number of migrants to Cleveland significantly increased between 1910 and 1920. During this decade, the black population rose from 8,448 to 34,451, increasing from 2.3% of the total population of the city to over 4% (Davis 1972:270). This Great Migration happened in two waves, correlated to the two world wars and the associated increases in demand for laborers to contribute to the industrial production of the war machine. By the year 1950, the black population had grown to 16% of Cleveland's population, and continued to grow in total numbers and as a percentage even while the overall city population began to decline. By the year 2000, African Americans made up 51% of Cleveland's population; with a further 17.1% decline in the city's population between 2000 and 2010, the racial makeup tilted even further. Today, black Clevelanders comprise over 53% of the population, with non-Hispanic whites making up just 37% of Clevelanders (US Census Bureau).

Black Clevelanders have long been concentrated in neighborhoods on the east side of the city (see Figures 1 and 2). By 1940, 80 percent of the black population of Cleveland was concentrated in the Central neighborhood (on the east side) (Davis 1972:271). The influx of black southerners into Cleveland during the Great Migration created a sense of urgency for the City to both manage and accommodate the changing population dynamics and racial geographies of the city. Race-based divisions between the east and west sides of the city that emerged with the first waves of black migrants sequestered in the Central neighborhood (Davis 1972) persist to this day. Since the creation of redlining "security" maps in 1936, the racial, socioeconomic, and spatial divisions within Cleveland that they helped, in part, to create, have been crystallized.

At the same time that redlining maps were being drawn, Federal Housing Authority policies of segregating public housing cemented the spatial segregation of black and white Clevelanders, even those from roughly the same economic class. Outhwaite Homes, built in 1937 in Central, was one of the first housing projects to open in Cleveland, and, together with the Lakeview Terrace and Cedar Apartments, was among the first in the nation to be funded by the Public Works Administration. All of these projects were segregated by race: Outhwaite was limited to black families, while Lakeview (in the Ohio City neighborhood on the west side) and Cedar were available only to white families.

This racial segregation remains, as geographer Arun Saldanha writes, "sticky" (2006). In this way, present-day black geographies of Cleveland are also deeply historical. In 1976, for example, a fire burned down more than 60 homes in the Forgotten Triangle, also known as Garden Valley (part of Kinsman) where inadequate water pressure in the hydrants prevented firefighters from stopping the houses from burning (Kerr 2012). Due in part to bank redlining practices from the 1930s that labeled this residential neighborhood as high risk, none of the houses had homeowners' insurance. "Supermarket redlining," (Eisenhauer 2001) which mirrors the historical bank redlining practices, has left this area with no full-service grocery stores to this day, and instead with many businesses that benefit greatly from concentrated poverty, including check cashing and lotto stores and overpriced corner stores that sell more alcohol and tobacco than fresh produce or healthy food (Alkon et al. 2013; Reese 2008).

Commissioned by the Federal Housing Authority, the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) created neighborhood-level maps of over one hundred cities across the United States, assigning color-coded risk levels for mortgage or home improvement loans. The colors –green, blue, yellow, and red –indicated ascending levels of risk. Lenders relied upon these maps to

determine whether a particular neighborhood was "safe" for loans. There was a direct correlation between the color of particular zones and the racial makeup of those neighborhoods, such that "redlined" neighborhoods were almost always entirely black neighborhoods. These were and continue to be areas deprived of investment. These maps indicate the racial project of assigning risk levels to racially marked neighborhoods within Cleveland. Led by the federal government and national banking system, redlining maps have become an illustration of how geographical and racialized patterns endure across both time and in spite of political intervention and, by corollary, the difficulty of undoing this sort of *de jure* segregation (Saldanha 2006:10). The collaboration of the Home Owners Loan Corporation with the Federal Housing Authority (cf. Rothstein 2017) represents the kind of politically motivated racial project wherein "racial categories play a key role in structuring… political and economic relations" in space (Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011:13).

Racial Projects of Uneven Development

It is an oversimplification to suggest that investment strictly follows either racial and other demographic markers or geographical location, but both race and place are essential variables in patterns of uneven development in the United States (Smith 2002, 2008; Squires and Kubrin 2006; Schein 2012; Wilson 2007b). Uneven capitalist development across historical geographies coupled with the concentration of foreclosures within particular neighborhoods in Cleveland have contributed to a preponderance of vacant, abandoned, and distressed properties within predominantly black communities. Thousands of these vacant properties have been demolished by the city and county, or have been destroyed by fire (for history of arson in Cleveland, see Kerr 2012), resulting in almost 30,000 vacant lots (constituting more than 3,300 acres) within the city (Mallach, Steif, and Graziani 2016; Meenar et al. 2012). Funded in part by the Department of Treasury's Hardest Hit Funds (see Mallach 2014b), almost 1,000 vacant and abandoned properties are demolished every year (Abdelrazim 2016).

The demolition and burning of buildings is a means to clear neighborhoods for redevelopment and is part of a broader suite of urban renewal policies and practices the last several decades in Cleveland, (Kerr 2012; Michney 2011). However, the demolition campaigns that gained political support in the wake of the housing crisis and recession of 2007 (Rokakis 2010; Rosenman and Walker 2015) were not the first of their kind, nor was the motivation to produce value or spark a wave of investment in real estate development unique to the twenty-first century.

The most recent housing and mortgage loan crisis in Cleveland is thus only one example of the evolution of "the geographic landscape of capital accumulation" (Harvey 2011:185) as both a racial project and a process of re-embedding racial economies within urban space (Omi and Winant 1994; Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011; Wilson 2007b, 2009). It is another manifestation of the tendency for financial and spatial speculation to prioritize capitalist accumulation over social relations (Harvey 2011; Polanyi 1944). Capital's need for mobility and constant reinvestment (Marx 1976) leads to changing socio-spatial (and racial) configurations of capitalist accumulation – capital's "spatial fix" – with impacts within and across urban regions (Brenner 2004; Harvey 1985; Martinez-Fernandez et al. 2012; Schein 2012; Weber 2002). The intensification of racialized poverty though geographically concentrated foreclosures in black neighborhoods has resulted in these communities – black ghettos – being seen as hopelessly lost to violence, disorder, and destruction. Black subjects, in turn, are cast as desperately in need of management, control, and "re-molding for the civic…good" (Wilson 2007b:103), while simultaneously being treated – like the spaces in which they reside – as pathologically lost to chaos, abandonment, and destruction.

Attempts to manage both people and space can be seen across the history of Cleveland. Garden Valley, where I did ethnographic research, serves as an example of the protracted impacts of a racialized politics of urban renewal, redevelopment, and revitalization. The first federally-funded urban renewal projects in the Cleveland took place in Garden Valley in the 1950s. Urban renewal of the 1950s and 60s and the contemporary iteration, revitalization, were key parts of Cleveland's urban development strategy within the city's low-income communities, especially communities of color, to mobilize increased real estate development (Michney 2011; Weber 2002). Urban renewal policies stemmed mostly from the Federal Housing Act of 1954, and are now largely interpreted as disguised projects of racialization and segregation. They were also motivated in large part by the economic recession of 1958 that catalyzed widespread loss of housing value (and also rental profits for landlords) across the city (Kerr 2012). Despite discursive attempts to cast it otherwise, urban renewal of the 1960s was initially intended to recast the preceding the more overtly racialized concept of "slum clearance" through the construction of public housing (Michney 2011), often intended for middle class black families; however, these projects often intensified spatial patterns of concentrated poverty and racial segregation.[18,19]

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[18] Sixty years after the first urban renewal projects began in Garden Valley, female-headed households, rates of incarceration, unemployment, low literacy, children in kinship care, violent crime including domestic abuse, high school dropout rates and poor educational indicators, and high rates of new HIV/AIDS diagnoses all describe the neighborhood to the greater Cleveland community. Approximately 94% of residents are African-American, and as of 2013 had a median household income of $14,000 (U.S. Census). The unemployment rate in Ward 5 (a political delineation) which includes Kinsman, was 27.7% according to 2000 census data, compared to 6.4% across the City of Cleveland. Only 2.9% of the population of Ward 5 has attained a college degree. About 84% of the housing is rental, and this area has one of the highest concentrations of both vacant land and vacant and abandoned properties (due in part to foreclosure) in the city (WRLC 2015), representing both a liability in terms of violence and crime and an opportunity to reimagine both space and urban development. I footnote these statistics instead of including them in the main body to avoid "identifying the 'where' of [b]lackness in positivist terms" thus "reduc(ing) [b]lack lives to essential measurable 'facts' rather than presenting communities that have struggled, resisted, and significantly contributed to the production of space" (McKittrick and Woods 2007:6).

[19] The entirety of the Kinsman neighborhood, including Garden Valley, (as well as most bordering neighborhoods) was completely redlined, indicating an area where banks would not make loans for home purchases or improvements. Across the city, black neighborhoods were consistently redlined, mixed black and Jewish neighborhoods were either marked in red (D) or yellow (C), and white neighborhoods

Central to most racial projects inscribed in space, creative destruction is an intrinsic, albeit unpredictable part of the capitalist spatial fix: a reworking of capital across space that "thoroughly transform(s)" landscapes for the purpose of reinvigorating capital accumulation (Brenner and Theodore 2002:355; Jenkins 2001; Michney 2011). The Garden Valley Apartments, built in the 1960s, were an abject failure. Two years after construction began, the apartment complex was described in the Cleveland Press as "an out-and-out eyesore, with all the appearance of any Scovill Avenue tenement street" (quoted in Flamm 2005), an area "largely barren of grass" but with detritus, garbage, broken windows, and broken playground equipment littering the surroundings (Michney 2011). Residents protested that the projects were noisy and dangerous. They also protested the tragic death of a child during construction, actions that were violently repressed. When the private developers struggled to secure funding to complete the project, undeveloped land was taken over by the Cuyahoga Municipal Housing Authority (CMHA) in 1962. Garden Valley was renamed Rainbow Terrace in 1969, but was subsequently foreclosed upon in 1973; it remained under the "mismanagement" of CMHA until 2001, when it was taken over by a private housing developer with help from FHA and HUD bonds and grants, a construction loan from the City of Cleveland, and other funding sources (Flamm 2005; Michney 2011). The initial goal of creating an economically integrated middle-class neighborhood never took shape. On the contrary, middle class black families were propelled by the disrepair and lack of maintenance to leave Cleveland altogether, moving to neighborhoods within inner ring suburbs such as Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights.

Building demolition was accomplished not only by bulldozers and wrecking balls, but through arson – both state-sponsored, and state-sanctioned. Beginning in 1965 with then-mayor Ralph

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were given a green (A) or blue (B) rating. C–and D-rated neighborhoods were consistently denied mortgage and home improvement loans as well as homeowners insurance.

Locher's "home burning ceremony," four homes in Hough were burned to the ground (Kerr 2012). Locher termed this state-sanctioned arson a "ceremony" to emphasize his excitement over ridding neighborhoods of unwanted or unused properties, to cut back on service provisions, and make space for future investment. Over the next two decades, tens of thousands of homes burned as a way for property owners, facing decreasing profitability of their real estate investments, to "squeeze the last bit of capital" from their dilapidated and neglected properties (Kerr 2012:349). This approach to urban renewal was state-sanctioned in the sense that the City began to cut back on firefighting services to neighborhoods with high levels of arson – Hough, Glenville, Fairfax – as well as the resources to investigate and prosecute arsonists. Arson at this scale achieved several tacit goals of the state, and of the mostly white property owners in these majority black neighborhoods. Property owners were able to disentangle themselves from insolvent rental units with impunity – while also collecting on the insurance; simultaneously, low-income black residents were forced out of their homes and neighborhoods, clearing the land for future redevelopment.

By the year 1980, the neighborhoods of Hough, Glenville, Fairfax, and St. Clair-Superior had lost upwards of 17,500 housing units to arson alone; over 80,000 people had left these majority black neighborhoods, representing 46 percent of the city's population loss during the preceding decade (Kerr 2012). The urban fires are a clear example of how white property owners were complicit in the "negro removal" (Baldwin 1963; Willhelm and Powell 1964:3) aspect of urban renewal,[20] opening up land for future potential development.

[20] In a 1963 interview, James Baldwin recounts a conversation he had recently had with a young black teenager who told him, "I got no country. I got no flag" (Baldwin 1963). Baldwin commented that he had no evidence to prove the boy wrong: "They were tearing down his house, because San Francisco is – as most northern cities are – engaging in urban removal, which means negro removal" (Baldwin 1963). "Urban renewal is negro removal" – whether it originates from Baldwin's quote – has become a well-known black protest chant, especially in contexts of spatial displacement.

On the other hand, housing projects such as The Garden Valley Apartments represent what geographer David Wilson describes as the "ethno-confine[ment]" of black bodies, or the production of ostracized "universes moored in a complex of inferior schools, decrepit homes, isolated social spaces, and glaringly underfunded institutions" (2007:13,74). Historian Daniel Kerr also describes the implicit purpose of urban renewal as an attempt to "contain the African American residential areas" within Cleveland (2011: 129), to allow for urban (re)development within or near to these neglected spaces. "Containment," another way of managing, disciplining, and surveilling black subjects, resulted in the concentration of low-income black residents within housing developments. While the Garden Valley project was intended to create housing in an old, intensely polluted brownfield in an area called Kingsbury Run, urban renewal did not always entail the construction of new housing units. Indeed, even as thousands of houses and apartments were lost across the city, only a small number of new residences were constructed.

These developments were not intended to directly benefit current residents; rather, they were built for middle-income (not poor) black residents. In actuality, these projects produced areas of concentrated black poverty where renters cycled in and out of over-priced housing that they could not consistently afford; middle-class black residents were in the process of moving out of such inner-city neighborhoods, and thus not interested in new housing developments (Michney 2011). Garden Valley is now home to more than a third of all Cleveland Municipal Housing Authority's (CMHA) public housing units, numbering over 4,000, and some of the highest poverty indicators in Cleveland.

Bob Jessop and Ngai-Ling Sum describe this as an accelerated "flow of abstract (money) capital through an increasingly disembedded space" (2000:346). Urban geographers (Brenner 2004; Brenner and Theodore 2002; Harvey 1985; Sassen 2000; Smith 2008) contend that financial capital – in its need for continual movement and liberation – moves through and touches down

in urban space as a way to valorize itself (Jessop 2000). The production of materials, reliance on wage labor, the establishment of service economies, and associated infrastructure are all ways in which global capital temporarily fixes itself in cities. Such reorganizations of territory and inscription of development projects across urban space are highly unpredictable and speculative practices with little to no attention to the resulting social conditions. Mobile financial capital does not discriminate between one place or another; indeed, the need for homogenous spaces of investment is crucial to capitalist growth, where cheap labor, available materials, and technological innovation, rather than human or ecological wellbeing, are prioritized.

Geographer Neil Smith (2002) argues that uneven but concentrated urban development has become a strategy of the neoliberal state that allows for globalized capital to circulate. In an era of economic globalization, cities compete to become attractive to capital. Investment targets spaces with potential (in the form of existing resources, fixed capital, tax incentives, available land, acquiescent labor) for economic or market growth, an approach that is almost completely disembedded from social relations, local culture or history. Capital, in seeking out spaces with the greatest potential for growth, becomes part of a larger process of displacement within low-income communities, thus deepening the historically racial divide between labor and those who own the means of production. Urban spaces of neglect, abandonment, and disinvestment play an important market role in this spatial fix in providing a sort of economic "blank slate" upon which capital can inscribe itself, to allow for continued growth, expansion, and accumulation, at least until something more profitable comes along (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Harvey 1989; Jessop 2000).

The production of this economic "blank slate" has been underway in Cleveland for several decades. The more than ten years of concentrated arson in majority black neighborhoods across Cleveland was a twentieth-century enclosure of urban land: land (albeit private land) that had

previously been occupied by residents of color, was rid of both structures and people, and brought under the control of the state for the purposes of future real estate development.

From the perspective of many of Cleveland's city planners and community development professionals, the foreclosure crisis in Cleveland, much like the fires in the 1970s and 80s, provides the opportunity to welcome outside investment (personal communications 2015, 2016; Sheldon et al. 2009). This illustrates Harvey's (1985) understanding of how capital both destroys and regenerates landscapes at particular junctures in space and time: "Capitalist development must negotiate a knife-edge between preserving the values of past commitments made at a particular place and time, or devaluing them to open up fresh room for accumulation" (Harvey 1985:150).

New investment over the last decade has introduced a degree of revitalization to some neighborhoods of color; however, many residents feel that these transformations do not impact their own quality of life. For example, the planned Opportunity Corridor is a $306 million project that will build three miles of road to connect a highway interchange on Cleveland's east side with the affluent University Circle area. Funding for the Opportunity Corridor comes from both local and state sources, and has contributed to some street-front improvements on Kinsman Avenue (which runs through Garden Valley). These improvements have brought in new businesses to the neighborhood, but no significant economic or employment opportunity for local residents. Simultaneously, the Opportunity Corridor has been described as a new iteration of urban renewal, using eminent domain to displace residents and business owners in order to transport non-residents through Kinsman, without encouraging them to experience the neighborhoods or patronize its businesses.

Similar to the urban renewal of the 1960s, the Opportunity Corridor project represents the enactment of spatial policies that strive to manage and direct the movement of different groups of people and capital though the city. It is not lost on Kinsman/Central residents who the ultimate beneficiaries of this project are. The newer food businesses on Kinsman Avenue are generally not patronized by neighborhood residents; for instance, many research participants from Kinsman or Garden Valley indicated that the Bridgeport Café, owned and managed by the local community development corporation (but has since come under private ownership as the Sunshine Café), was both too expensive and did not serve food they were interested in. However, these establishments are patronized by Opportunity Corridor construction workers, CDC and non-profit staffers, and other people working (but not residing) in the neighborhood. In my experience doing research and grant work, this café was used by community development professionals as an example of what a health-food business looks like in a neighborhood often labeled a "food desert." The several times I ate there were part of an attempt by either the CDC or a not-for-profit to showcase Bridgeport Café to outside investors as an economically viable healthy eating establishment in Kinsman. However, the lack of community buy-in and investment in the café persists.

Another similar aspect of the Opportunity Corridor construction project – and many other iterations of urban development – includes street-front improvement projects that aim to beautify or "stabilize" specific areas of neighborhoods with dilapidated and abandoned buildings. These projects do not always take into consideration much beyond what is aesthetic or pragmatic for the purposes of the project. Eleanor, who worked as a community engagement fellow on a neighborhood stabilization project through Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, characterized some of the more rudimentary of these projects as "aesthetics," initiatives that would "clean up the street edge, fix the edge so that people didn't feel like there was a missing tooth." Another research participant questioned the decision of the Opportunity Corridor

planning team to tear down the building of a business that had been in the neighborhood for decades. She asked, "Was that the intended result of the Opportunity Corridor? To take a business that's been here forever and ever and that's stable, and tear down their building and move them?" In other words, managing the public gaze as it moves through "ghetto" areas (Wilson 2007b) becomes a unspoken and yet central part of such development projects, as it has also been for analogous policies of the past.

Urban renewal, large-scale transportation projects, and the mortgage and housing crisis can all be interpreted as similar "racialized moments" in the history of Cleveland (Schein 2012). The former City Treasurer described the demographic trends associated with the housing crisis as "blowing the doors out" on economic and racial segregation in Cleveland (Rokakis 2015). Because of drastically lowered housing values in suburban areas, a larger contingent of the population could now access housing outside of the city. However, this further segmented the poor communities of color in Cleveland, where segregation and concentrated poverty became even more intense (Massey and Fischer 2000), with the added challenges of vacancy and abandonment of foreclosed-upon houses. In 2016, long after the foreclosure crisis was supposedly over, the number of new foreclosures in Cuyahoga County was more than twice the average from before the Recession (Lebovits 2016). While most suburban communities were at times impacted by high rates of foreclosure and drastically diminished housing values, many of the most impacted urban neighborhoods continue to experience the lasting fallout of the housing crisis, including population loss, housing demolitions, and very little reinvestment. Many east side neighborhoods in Cleveland were left with property vacancy rates of between 20 and 40% and property values at a small fraction of their pre-crisis levels (WRLC 2015), while the majority of previously foreclosed-upon houses in suburban communities have recovered their value.

According to a report written for Case Western Reserve University's Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development in Cleveland (Coulton et al. 2008), 84 percent of housing foreclosures in Cleveland between 2004 and 2008 can be explained by the incidence of high cost subprime loans. These high-risk lending practices were racialized (Bocian et al. 2006, 2010). Indeed, a black resident looking to secure a mortgage was two to four times more likely to hold a subprime mortgage, which was then more than eight times more likely to go into foreclosure (Coulton, Schramm, and Hirsch 2010). As of 2006, an estimated 11% of African-American homeowners nationwide had lost their homes, and black communities had accumulated losses of nearly $200 billion between 2009 and 2012 (Bocian, Li, and Ernst 2010). Following national trends, black people at all income levels in Cleveland took on a disproportionate share of high risk subprime mortgages (Coulton et al. 2008, 2010),.

The concentrated impacts of vacant and abandoned properties, vacant land, and lower population density within predominantly black neighborhoods persist to this day. Parcels of vacant land in the city have historically been the starting point and a crucial resource for both formal and informal practices of urban agriculture. And yet, would-be urban gardeners and farmers do not have consistent access to vacant land because of a planning paradigm and governance strategy that – despite favorable legislation and the support of some city officials – are still enmeshed in a particular understanding of growth and development (See chapter 3). The patterns and histories of creative destruction, demographic change, and socio-natural transformation that the housing and foreclosure crisis represent (including cycles of growth and decline, deindustrialization and neoliberalization of urban space, and a growth-based politics of land management, assembly, and development) have shaped a specifically black agrarianism within Cleveland. These will be expanded upon at later points in this dissertation, but I mention them here as part of the larger historical geographical context this chapter establishes: namely the racializing patterns across space and the politics of land management, assembly, and reuse

over the last several decades of decreasing population density in Cleveland. The protracted trauma of these patterns and histories are central to understanding the black geographies of Cleveland's urban gardening and farming movement.[21]

III. BLACK BODIES IN WHITE SPACES

Accounts of police violence and excessive use of force, the fear of such, or frustration with what is perceived as the over-policing of black neighborhoods came up organically in more than a dozen interviews, as well as in more casual conversation and participant observation. This finding is not surprising in a city that has had two Federal Department of Justice investigations into the inappropriate and unprofessional comportment of police officers. In 2004 and 2014, these investigations found that a significant proportion of the cases of use of force by the Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) "fell short" of a "respect for human life and human dignity, the need to protect public safety, and the duty to protect individuals from unreasonable seizures under the Fourth Amendment" (DOJ 2014). Gladys, an elder in the community gardening movement, frequently referenced the widespread perception of heightened police presence in predominantly black neighborhoods in Cleveland and police violence against black bodies within and outside of black communities. She lamented, "We're just trying to stay alive," and went on to describe her vision of creating safe neighborhood spaces including gardens and other green spaces within communities – "oases" that might create safer communities, with a less intense (perceived or real) demand for police presence.

It is important to note that Tamir was shot and killed in a public space, participating in what is generally considered normal kid behavior. He was playing outside with other children in a city park. He was waving a toy gun that a friend had lent him when a neighborhood resident called

[21] I use the word 'movement' loosely, and do not characterize urban food provisioning or urban agriculture practices in Cleveland as a cohesive or organized movement. Rather, the idea of a movement signifies shared ideology and objectives across much of the community of black growers.

911. The caller described Tamir as "older looking" and said he was "acting gangster" (Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department 2015:9). He also told the dispatcher that it was possible the boy was a juvenile, but in a later interview with the sheriff's department, he described Tamir as a "big boy," and said he had thought he was closer to 20 years old because of his size (Ibid.)

This description of Tamir focuses the lens on questions about the kinds of bodies – raced, classed, and gendered, among others – that are welcomed in or even allowed access to public spaces and those that are found to be suspicious or out of place (Mitchell and Heynen 2013; Peake and Schein 2000; Slocum 2007). This moment also brings into relief the extent to which racialized spaces influence how behaviors are interpreted and handled in those spaces by residents, police officers, and other agents of the state (McCann 1999; Soja 1980; 2009). The west side of Cleveland is historically dominated by white bodies and the hegemonic white geographies that govern those spaces dictate how bodies are perceived, and what is allowed and not allowed, like "acting gangster". White geographies, or what Katherine McKittrick refers to as slave and post-slave geographies, supersede and destroy any "black sense of place" (2011:947) even on the grounds of a community center where black children regularly gather to play (Kobayashi and Peake 2000; Lipsitz 2006; Slocum 2007). Tamir was occupying this space in ways that did not align with the established ethic of whiteness, and his killing joins a long list of racial violences that deeply influence the "black sense of place": how black subjects move through, appropriate, react to, and produce space.

Geographer Don Mitchell highlights the contradictions and tensions embedded within public space "as a legal entity, a political theory, and a material space" (1996:155). The "contested concept" of public space – what it constitutes and how – is tied up in a "dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, order and disorder, rationality and irrationality, violence and peaceful dissent"

(Ibid.) that changes over time.[22] Notwithstanding changes in cultural norms and socio-spatial practices, the racialized, gendered, and classed tendencies of public spaces – especially in urban areas – engender a power dynamic that does not allow individuals to "confront one another … as subjects on an equal footing" (Ruddick 1996:134). The black male body, "constituted through fear,"[23] is continuously represented as deviant in public spaces, and Tamir – constituted as a deviant, "gangster", black male, rather than as a normative (white) child – was no exception.

Tamir Rice: Cleveland's Young King[24]

Tamir's death is important as a historical geographical analytic because of what it represents about socio-spatial relations and racial politics within Cleveland. The presence of a black body in a public city space in a mostly white and Hispanic neighborhood on the predominantly white west side of Cleveland is a good example of how difference is encountered within communities constituted by difference (Ruddick 1996; Young 1990). The encounter of difference within this particular space – particularly the lack of empathy through asking questions or engaging in conversation – ended in a violent encounter that has reified a racialized urban spatial politics of isolation. Tamir's death confirmed for many that black bodies are not welcome in white spaces. At the very least, they are expected to behave and look a particular way that differs from their

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[22] Women, people of color, the homeless or otherwise socially disadvantaged people have been historically excluded from public spaces. Their struggles for recognition in the United States during the twentieth century in particular, have worked to change common sense perceptions of public space as much more inclusive and diverse. That is to say, women are no longer confined to the home or to being accompanied by their husband (or another acceptable male); people of color are no longer legally prevented from using separate facilities in southern states, and the public discourse around segregation depicts it as a relic of historical social patterns.

[23] In an exploration of the various power dynamics embedded in public space, Valentine and Sheffield (1996) outline two dominant and somewhat overlapping discourses that emerged in the late twentieth century on the relationship between public space and children. The first was around children's safety and the threat of violence in public space, dominant in the 1980s and 90s (Pain 2000; Valentine and Sheffield 1996). The rhetoric of 'stranger danger' constructs a space in which certain bodies – young, particularly female, and white – are seen as potential victims, while other bodies – especially black and brown male bodies – are painted as perpetrators. The second emergent discourse plays off of the first, wherein public space is seen to be taken over or occupied by deviant youth, especially adolescents of color, who threaten to disrupt its usage for women and the elderly in particular (Valentine and Sheffield 1996:206).

[24] In this context, "young king" is a way to lift up and celebrate a young black male. Black residents of Cleveland often refer to Tamir as "King Tamir," a young king, or Cleveland's young king.

white counterparts. In a short volume written as a letter to his black son, author and long-form journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates' (2015) words explain this sentiment:

> … I feared not just the violence of this world but the rules designed to protect you from it, the rules that would have you contort your body to address the block, and contort again to be taken seriously by colleagues, and contort again so as not to give the police a reason. All my life I'd heard people tell their black boys and black girls to "be twice as good."

About twenty-five percent of the population living in the neighborhood surrounding the Cudell Recreation Center, and a full fifty-three percent of the City of Cleveland, is black; and yet, it is governed and policed by largely white social norms, and a majority white political, disciplinary, and security apparatus.

Furthermore, after his death, Tamir – as other black subjects before him (Muhammad 2016) – was portrayed by many as responsible for his own shooting. In response to a lawsuit filed by the family against Officer Loehmann and the City of Cleveland, the defense stated that "injuries, losses, and damages complained of, were directly and proximately caused by the failure of [Tamir] to exercise due care to avoid injury" and were further "directly and proximately cause[d] by [Tamir's] own acts, not this Defendant (Loehmann)" (Rice v. Loehmann 2015).

While this case is especially jarring because of the age of the victim, the narrative supported by city officials and the CDP works to discursively takes away his youth – and with it, the presumption of innocence, – by blaming his appearance, and how he was playing, for his own death (see Brahinky, Sasser, and Minkoff-Zern 2014). The former president of the Cleveland police union, Steve Loomis, said that "Tamir Rice [was] in the wrong" (Peterson 2015), painting a picture of Tamir that would reaffirm that narrative: "He's menacing. He's 5-feet-7, 191 pounds. He wasn't that little kid you're seeing in pictures. He's a 12-year-old in an adult body."

Loomis went on to defend Loehmann, the shooter, whose qualifications as a police officer were put into question when it was discovered that he had previously been forced to resign from another Ohio police department for emotional immaturity and lack of proper qualifications: "This Timothy Loehmann thing, this is a sideshow. Nothing in Timothy Loehmann's history would have made him ineligible to be hired. The [CDP] Select Committee recommended him unanimously."(Quoted in Schultz 2015). Loehmann was fired from the CDP in 2017 after it was discovered that he had lied on his employment application to cover up his employment history (Fortin and Bromwich 2017). Loomis' depiction of events represents a depiction of black men as "thugs and criminals [which] seemingly justif[ies] their deaths while simultaneously shifting blame away from law enforcement" (Smily and Fakunle 2016). The portrayal of black bodies as deviant, out-of-place, or even responsible for any harm done *to* them is consistent with the widespread use of isolating and exclusionary language that constructs "public space" as raced and classed – that is, white, wealthy, orderly, and obedient (Ruddick 1996). The tragic irony, of course, is that Loehmann did not belong: the dishonesty, imposition, and violence of his presence at the Cudell Recreation Center is what resulted in Tamir's untimely death.

Portrayals of Tamir as a menacingly large (black) man, rather than as a young boy playing with other children in an outdoor space, not only racialize Tamir as a social deviant, but play into deeply ingrained fears about the threat that black male bodies pose in these spaces. As Slocum points out, white space is not about counting the number of black or white bodies in a particular space, but rather how bodies act and are interpreted "in a particular context, and the socio-spatial processes with which those tendencies are linked" (2007:521). More recently, there have been campaigns in majority black neighborhoods to retrieve toy guns from children. The Rid-All Green Partnership Farm sponsored toy gun buyback programs in December 2014 and June 2015, where they gave away grocery store gift cards (to parents) and comic books (to youth) in exchange for toy, pellet, or replica guns. While many participants in these programs concede

that toy "guns are not good for kids" in general, the implicit message here is that this type of play puts young black boys, in particular, at direct risk of police retribution.

Tamir was shot just two weeks before the public release of a Department of Justice report accusing the Cleveland Division of Police of a "pattern or practice of using excessive force against individuals and engag[ing] in unlawful searches and seizures of individuals" (US v. Cleveland).[25] In a letter to Mayor Frank G. Jackson, the Department of Justice cited "structural and systemic deficiencies and practices — including insufficient accountability, inadequate training, ineffective policies, and inadequate engagement with the community" as "contribut[ing] to the use of unreasonable force" (USDOJ Civil Rights Division 2014:1). While the City of Cleveland agreed to address the allegations, they did not agree with the allegations of the report.

After Tamir was killed, protests erupted in Public Square, the downtown public transportation hub, lasting for several days. These protests received less attention in the national media and were less fraught with violence and police repression than those after the shooting of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida or Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; however, they were also fueled by the non-indictment in Brown's case, which had been issued two days after Tamir was shot. In 2015, when a grand jury failed to indict either of the officers involved in Tamir's shooting, protests again erupted across Cleveland.

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[25] On May 26. 2015, as a result of this report, the City entered into a Consent Decree Agreement with the DOJ. The Agreement outlined new training protocols and internal policies intended to instill a "commitment to building community trust, utilizing community and problem-oriented policing, ensuring bias-free policing, and incorporating the concept of procedural justice" within the CDP (US v. Cleveland 2015:78)
https://www.clearinghouse.net/chDocs/public/PN-OH-0008-9000.pdf
https://www.clearinghouse.net/detail.php?id=14333).
This investigation into the CDP, which began in 2012, was the second such investigation into the CDPs practices in just over 10 years. In 2004, the City of Cleveland came to a "memorandum of agreement" with the DOJ over an investigation into deadly and non-deadly use of force, and allegations of a "pattern or practice of unconstitutional conduct" (DOJ 2002)
https://www.clearinghouse.net/detail.php?id=5535.

The Department of Justice report mandated reform within the Cleveland Division of Police, specifically regarding excessive use of force, improperly or insufficiently trained officers, ignoring resident complaints against officers, and failure to de-escalate potentially violent situations (United States v. City of Cleveland). While the DOJ report did not specifically find racial bias or racial motivations in the charges of excessive use of force, they did note that "many African-Americans reported that they believe CDP officers are verbally and physically aggressive toward them because of their race" (DOJ 2014:49). This finding is underscored by scholarly literature which suggests that race (at both the individual bodily and the neighborhood scale) is a strong indicator of negative experiences with the police force. Policing in neighborhoods of color is more likely to include aggressive, coercive, and violent force (Brunson and Weitzer 2002; Durr 2015; Mastrofski, Reisig, and McClusky 2002).

IV. POLITICS & PROTEST OVER TIME & SPACE

Over the last several decades of Cleveland's history, black political action (both overt and more tacit) has sought to reclaim and produce public space for the use of all people, especially historically marginalized people and communities of color. Historical police presence and violence within predominantly black neighborhoods, coupled with racial animosity from white business-owners and other economic figures, helped to produce racial formations within Cleveland (Omi and Winant 1994; Wilson 2009). These spaces of racialization and marginalization partly define the urban spatial fabric of the city: whether one is avoiding those spaces or seemingly trapped in them. "[N]eighborhoods of exile" (Wacquant 1993:369) have been produced and reproduced by continual economic and spatial restructuring both within Cleveland and in the global economy more broadly (see Chapter 4; Brenner 2004; Michney 2011; Wilson 2007b, 2009). Or, as David Delaney writes, "race … is what it is and does what it does precisely because of how it is given spatial expression"(2002: 7).

Racial and economic segregation, however, are only part of the racialized urban experience in Cleveland. Urban racial formations in Cleveland are deeply embedded within both racial economies and geographies, which produce not only the material conditions of existence for groups within Cleveland, but also representational meanings (Finney 2014; McKittrick and Woods 2007; Omi and Winant 1994; Wacquant 1993; Wilson 2007, 2012). Wilson describes racial economies as racialized political economies – or "assemblages of institutional practices and social relations […] tinged by racialized sensibilities" – that attain meaning and validity through performativity (2012:940).

Racist spatial practices are imbricated in the formation of racial economies, and extend beyond physical structures such as housing or the crystalizing of white spaces, where black bodies are out of place or excluded (Lefebvre 1991; McCann 1999). The colonial-racial economy branded black bodies as "without land or home"; it "normalized black dispossession [and] white supremacy" (McKittrick 2011: 948-9). Embedded in the persistence of historical plantation economies, which also exist and take hold outside of the historical slave-holding south (Woods 1998/2017), colonial-racial economies and plantation epistemologies are implicated in the very formation of a "black sense of place", and thus in the production of black space (in both a positive and a negative sense). Housing policy and spatial segregation in Cleveland map black bodies onto particular neighborhoods within the city and produce meaning about what those black spaces represent. These spaces have become "dead-end universes" (Wilson 2007b:19. The combination of racial segregation and concentrated poverty – or the cordoning off of black bodies into physically or figuratively walled off spaces – marks particular areas as targets for increased surveillance and racialized practices of governance and policing (Wilson 2007b).

Eruptions of Frustration

The two moments outlined in this chapter that contextualize current black political activism in Cleveland also do not exist without their own historical context. The protests after the killing of Tamir and the ongoing struggle to access property (including land) draw upon the legacy of anti-racist and social justice movements in Cleveland as well as across the black diaspora. Like many other cities across the US, racially motivated agitation including riots and protests took place in the 1960s across Cleveland. The national Civil Rights Movement had a strong presence in Cleveland, as did Black Power organizations such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Black Panther Party, and the Revolutionary Action Movement (Nissim-Sabat 2007). Indeed, the presence of an organized and radical black resistance has often been blamed for igniting the violence in neighborhoods such as Hough (1966) and Glenville (1968). But the presence of black radical groups was less important to the violent demonstrations than was a general frustration with and anger over racial segregation, poor treatment of black residents, and lack of economic opportunities for black Clevelanders in areas of concentrated poverty and segregation.

Both the Hough riots in 1966 and the Glenville shootout (and subsequent violence in July of 1968) can be understood as attempts to contest the hegemonic whiteness within particular spaces of the city (see Appendix). Both of these were catalyzed by particular incidents, but can be better understood as responses to the conditions of black people in Cleveland at the time. The Hough Riots broke out as a reaction to the mistreatment of several black Hough residents by a white bar owner, and resulted in an intensely militarized response from the CDP as well as the National Guard. The destruction brought on by the riots, including widespread arson of primarily white businesses as well as vacant and abandoned properties, contributed significantly to perceptions of the neighborhood as a "ghetto" not worthy of reinvestment. The violence

within Hough was often interpreted as further proof of the need for racial "containment" rather than as evidence of racial projects across space (Hanson 2014; Wilson 2007b). The 2007 foreclosure crisis was intensely felt in Hough; housing values plummeted, and by 2015, almost 10% of the properties in Hough received a D or F grade in a city-wide property survey, meaning that buildings were dilapidated, and often abandoned or condemned (WRLC 2015).

In neighboring Glenville, a 1968 shootout between Fred Ahmed Evans, the young leader of a Cleveland-based black nationalist group, and the Cleveland Police in Glenville, sparked several days of riots, which can also be understood as a form of spatial resistance to police repression or as the (re)appropriation of black spaces. Like Hough, Glenville suffered from divestment, housing and population decline, and increasing violence for decades after the riots. These neighborhoods were also among the most heavily impacted by both arson in the 1970s and 80s, and the housing foreclosure crisis of the 2000s. The fires set during the riots received extensive and negative media attention and widespread criticism. Conversely, the narrative of state-sanctioned property arson discussed earlier is much less well-known. In the aftermath of the riots, media portrayal of the riots and increased white fear of violence in a black neighborhood both contributed to significant declines in housing values in Glenville and Hough.

Harlell Jones, the leader of another black nationalist group Afro Set in Cleveland, described the goals of black nationalists in both economic and spatial terms: "We are trying to create black business, a black police force, *a city within a city* and *a nation within a nation*" (Jones 1969, emphasis added). Ahmed Evans believed in the self-defense and the militarization of black radical groups, representing a demand for the rights to "inhabit, appropriate(e), and participat(e)" in urban space in Glenville (Vasudevan 2017). The response of rioters in Hough to the assertion of hegemonic ideologies of whiteness within a majority black neighborhood, the militarized declaration of the right to self-defense in one's home and community, and Harllel

Jones' articulation of an implicit "right to the city" embedded in the goals of black nationalism are all representative of how socio-natural patterns are continuously worked and reworked as a part of political change (Loftus 2009). This theoretical approach can be seen today in the socio-natural and spatial organization of an emergent black agrarianism amongst urban growers in Cleveland, which is also deeply embedded in black Clevelanders' southern agrarian roots.

V. CONCLUSION: BLACK GEOGRAPHIES OF EXCLUSION & ENGAGEMENT

Growers' drive to produce a different kind of urban space in Cleveland is inspired by a thickly woven web of moments across time and space. Tamir Rice and the housing foreclosure crisis are two such moments that remain raw for black residents. During a conversation about political organizing, one member of the nascent Black Food Justice Collaborative (BFJC) insisted on the importance of retaining and spreading knowledge of black political organizing of the past, especially among black youth:

> Like we did in the sixties, you know, we … in the basements of churches, we trained folks! "Look: this is how you go out and register voters, this is how you go out and you talk to people." And they didn't have the [internet] videos back then, but we do have access to that right now. To give our young people a contextual knowledge base. There's even stuff coming out that I never knew about. About those leaders – Fannie Lou Hamer – all those folks who contributed. Ella Baker, you know. And books, too. We should be reading certain books like *Collective Courage* by Jessica Gordon Nembhard.

The production of space is motivated by this collective memory or consciousness around black nationalist movements like the Black Panther Party or the Nation of Islam. Many of the cooperative farms and organizations that emerged in the 1960s such as Fannie Lou Hamer's Freedom Farms and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives continue to inspire residents in asserting their own ways of "knowing and writing the social world" through a "material spatialization of 'difference'" (McKittrick 2006:xvi). Figures like Fannie Lou Hamer – or George Washington Carver, and Ella Baker – are powerful in the sense that many growers mention them as "heroes and sheroes," part of the collective diasporic ancestry of influence.

Gordon Nembhard's book, *Collective Courage*, outlines the long history of cooperative economic engagement within the black community in the United States.

During the late 1960s and 1970s in Cleveland, CORE partnered with the HADC (and, over time, had overlaps in leadership and personnel) to build black economic power through cooperative business ownership, including a McDonald's restaurant in Hough. The "Target City Project," piloted in Baltimore, Maryland, embraced collective ownership – not solely among employees, but for community members as well. Residents were able to purchase stock in the McDonald's franchise, and could put in sweat equity to earn stock if they did not have the money to buy stock outright. In her book on CORE in Cleveland, historian Nishani Frazier (2017) asks (rhetorically) what purpose a business has in a community if it only serves to provide income for the employees. In other words, why would the surrounding community be invested in such a business and support it, if the business is not also invested in the community?

The epistemological frames that black growers draw upon today are informed by these local histories, including historical demands for black space, black economies, and black self-determination. Local histories, as this chapter has shown, are also deeply implicated in the experiences of the broader diaspora. The southern ancestry and heritage of Cleveland's black community, including family members who still live in southern or more agrarian regions of the country have also been incredibly impactful. Direct and indirect ties to southern agricultural and black political organizing of the 1960s and 70s, including black nationalist groups with a powerful presence in Cleveland continue to shape how black subjects strive to produce space.

The ideals of Fannie Lou Hamer's cooperative Freedom Farms are present in the drive towards cooperative ownership and community–based economic engagement among black growers in Cleveland. And like on the Freedom Farms in Mississippi, migrants to northern cities rejected

the oppression many of them (or their ancestors) experienced in states like Mississippi, Arkansas, and Alabama. Gladys, an urban gardener whose story is woven across multiple chapters here, draws connections between the lack of land ownership in Cleveland and the oppressive labor conditions for black farmers in the South:

> I was standing up [at Ward meetings] and saying things like, "We need to own this land! I'm working this plot right now but we need to find a way to own this land! There are 3,300 vacant acres – I had all the statistics! And my councilman gonna stand up and says, "Well you know we won't sell you the land, we'll let you lease it." […] So it showed me his disconnection to the whole thing. That you would stand up publicly (and say) "Oh no we not goin' let you own the land, you can lease it." I don't wanna sharecrop for the rest of my life. You need to be supporting us in owning this land.

Land ownership – and access to vacant land more broadly – is a rights claim that growers across the city continuously make, whether explicitly, as Gladys does,or in more subtle, tacit ways. A vacant land reuse project called ReImagining Cleveland (explained more in depth in chapter 3) gave temporary access to land to several dozen residents beginning in 2011, for "greening projects" including farming and gardening. Residents believed that they would be able to renew their land leases after the initial year (a belief encouraged in part by Cleveland Neighborhood Progress (CNP), the organization that facilitated ReImagining). However, many of the projects did not have their leases renewed, contributing to residents' sense that "the wool was pulled over their eyes, and that they were tricked into investing their own time and money into something that was not theirs" (personal communication 2016). Eleanor, who worked for a time at CNP as an intermediary between project leaders, had heard the same analogy being made to describe exploitative land/labor practices: "It's sharecropping all over again. 'We don't own the land; we're just investing in it.'"

Black geographies across history thus comprise both positive and negative motivations for the current spatial practices and strivings of black urban growers. The collective black consciousness and memory help to create a vision for what black subjects do want as much as

what they do not want. For many black growers, the influence of a childhood in the south, or stories from their parents or grandparents, influences their re-envisioning of the kind of life possible in Cleveland.

Southerners brought agriculture with them, and along with that an agrarian vision that transcends urban and rural binaries. Louise, an elder who now gardens on almost two acres in Cleveland recounted how things were in rural Mississippi: "Everyone had a garden in the front yard and a garden in the backyard. You shared with your neighbors and grew what you ate" (personal communication 2015). The instantiation of a southern agrarian heritage in the city is more complex than bringing rural landscapes into an urban space; black agrarianism in Cleveland enacts a different production of space entirely (Lefebvre 1991; McKittrick 2006). It draws upon alternative understandings of what the city is and can be, including the valuation of land and the meaning of community development. Growers are explicit about their vision for imparting value into land as well as how that value can extend and take root in their community. Both as a rejection to northern industrial urban aesthetics and economies and as an extension of the right to the city, black urban growers claim the right to difference. This claim asserts the right to produce black spaces within hegemonic white geographies that "expand how the production of space is achieved across terrains of domination" (McKittrick 2006:xiv).

CHAPTER 3: THE LAND QUESTION OF URBAN FARMING: POLITICAL ECONOMIES OF (DE)INDUSTRIALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

> The reinvigoration of the agrarian ideal in postindustrial black America suggests the resilience of the search for a place where black people could be made whole.
> Russell Rickford 2017:960

I. INTRODUCTION

Gladys has lived in Cleveland for most of her life. Her parents originated from different states in the American South, and came to Cleveland in the Great Black Migration before Gladys was born. "[My parents] brought agricultural knowledge with them to the city, and, like others in the city, we had a plot of land that had some food on it." Gladys lives alone in the childhood home in the Hough neighborhood on a block where over a quarter of the parcels of land lie vacant. Gladys uses the kitchen to prepare food for her small catering business. Her son and daughter also live in the city, and her son has recently started using part of the front room as a makeshift barber shop. The entire house is filled with the trappings of a life where nothing is wasted: bags full of clothing or cloth, old furniture in need of repair, magazines, and Tupperware that Gladys mostly uses for her small catering business. The front porch is similarly covered with pots – some with plants, some with only soil – old furniture, clothing, toys, and more. Gladys remembers the postwar era:

> when a lot of houses were town down... Every time you turned around, there was a house being torn down instead of getting rehabbed. So, we decided, those of us who were interested in creating a food system, we decided, 'Let's farm on these lands.' And that's what we did.

In her neighborhood, Gladys farms on between two and four urban parcels, using found materials such as tires, old buckets, and reclaimed wood to build the infrastructure she needs to grow food. Referencing the supermarket redlining and disproportionate property abandonment that has impacted the majority of Cleveland's black neighborhoods, Gladys commented, "We

saw the handwriting on the wall. I decided to start an initiative to community garden." In bringing together community members and drawing upon limited political resources, the sustaining impetus for Gladys – as well as many others – is to create a resilient food system outside of the dominant system. Rather than remaining beholden to grocery stores and an indifferent government, people are building community gardens and farms "to sustain ourselves"(personal communication 2015).

Mansfield, another Hough resident, is well known in both agricultural and political circles Cleveland for the uniqueness of what he has done on the land as well as for his political engagement around prisoner reentry. Mansfield owns Château Hough, an urban vineyard, and grows grapevines for wine on about a half-acre of the land he stewards. He also built a wind turbine for power and a Biocellar for education and experimentation. For Mansfield, urban farming is deeply connected to the politics of land within his neighborhood. Vacant houses awaiting demolition number in the tens of thousands in Cleveland and he would like to see those houses rebuilt or reused for other purposes, "like we did here. Rather than [be] torn down, why not take some of them, make them into biocellars?" Other urban farmers around him have installed high tunnels (also called hoop houses) on the land that they farm, to extend their growing season. While those structures are less durable than a glass-paned biocellar, the USDA will cover up to 90% of the cost for historically underserved applicants, including beginning farmers and minorities. Most high tunnels need to be partially rebuilt every three to five years. Gaining access to the land is a crucial first step in establishing these kinds of farming infrastructures that allow for a longer growing season, or more efficient food production.

In neighboring Glenville, Amina has been growing food for most of her life. The struggle to access the necessary resources – land, water, and healthy soil in particular – makes it difficult to grow enough food for herself and her community, despite widespread vacant land in her

neighborhood. The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD), which has recently undertaken a massive project to rebuild and upgrade the city's gray water infrastructure, has a vested interest in the vacant land. The NEORSD signed a consent decree in 2009 with the Environmental Protection Agency to mitigate combined overflow, reducing it by four million gallons. The agency needs access to land to install stormwater runoff infrastructure, as well as to create temporary sites for the management of construction projects, which are ongoing. These infrastructure projects present obstacles to growers in accessing lots, and takes precedence over alternative land use projects such as urban agriculture. It has caused some growers to lose land that they had been working on.

> [The Sewer District] made these people jump through hoops for over a year. You know they want the land. And these people have shown you, they presented everything they could, and they still don't want to help them. And that's not right. For three or four years, you're cleaning up the lot. You're paying out your pocket. [Building a] structure is one thing, but you can't count on people's efforts and the volunteering. A lot of stuff went into developing that site, and the Sewer District is like, "Oh, no biggie." And I don't think that's right. People could accept a lot better – you need this to do something, it's about business of the city. But could you compensate me so that I could at least, even if I have to scale down, I could scale down with a little help. And they need to [work with the people] – they need to do that more.

The challenge of securing and sustaining access to resources, especially land, is central to the experience of many urban growers in Cleveland, even those who are not living in developing or gentrifying neighborhoods.

This chapter focuses specifically on the political economy of growing food in the city, with an emphasis on land, land value, and the black agrarian imaginary more broadly (Chen, Wang, and Waley 2019). I begin with the perspectives of three black urban growers as a way to emphasize how black agrarianism in Cleveland informs a specifically black epistemology around land, its value, and the possibilities of the urban form. I then describe in more detail conflicting epistemologies of value, land, and space (and the development of such). These conflicting epistemologies across Cleveland can be represented heuristically as the tension between use

value and exchange value, with embedded layers of access and ownership. These are overly simplistic categories, and also not binary opposites: use values of course impact exchange values, and urban agriculture can result in (or be used as a means to) increase the attractiveness of particular spaces, especially in processes of development (Kato, Sbicca, and Alkon Forthcoming).

I use theories of the state, the city, and land to show how neoliberal governance structures operate within space. At the same time, such theory allows for a model of urban sustainability that includes opportunities for alternative land use, such as urban agriculture. Theorizing the state as a process rather than a static structure helps to better elucidate the ongoing negotiations inherent to urbanization processes. Attending to the dynamic nature of both of these (state formation and urbanization) avoids essentializing either the state, the city, or their relationship to land. I conclude by discussing urban land in Cleveland as a state-led racial project, borrowing from Omi and Winant's seminal work on racial formations (1994).

II. ACCESS TO LAND IN CLEVELAND

There are many common elements to the goals of Gladys, Mansfield, and Amina for their community. Theirs is not an uncommon vision amongst farmers and gardeners in Cleveland, and is one that ties directly into the epistemic tensions outlined in Chapter 1, as well as to Cleveland's black historical geography described in Chapter 2. Growers in Cleveland work and exist on a common historical geographical terrain; they deal simultaneously with the priorities and paradigms of city officials, including city planners, as well as other institutions across the city with more power to obtain and develop land. As Chen and colleagues note, understanding how state-led development projects undermind residents' urban visions (2019:3) is essential to the question of how the right to the city plays out in an urban context. The "alternative

envisioning" in the work of black urban growers is beholden to the degree of flexibility allowed by the dominant state/capitalist system of valuation of land in Cleveland.

The most commonly cited challenges among black urban growers that I interviewed were complex and difficult-to-understand bureaucracies when trying to access land and other resources. These frustrations also illustrate many of the themes of this dissertation that are important to understanding the political economy of land in Cleveland – more specifically the politics, processes, and associated ideologies of land acquisition and reuse. A perceived opacity in processes of land access results from the disjuncture between discursive support for alternative land use projects within the City of Cleveland and the few, often confusing, mechanisms to actually push them forward in a systematic way. Patterns of racialized development across space produce and crystalize socio-spatial and political inequity within the city. In Cleveland specifically, investment in development is prioritized in select areas: the downtown central business district (CBD), certain west-side neighborhoods including Ohio City, Tremont, and Detroit Shoreway, and in pockets across the east side where universities, hospitals, and the Opportunity Corridor, a major transportation project that will service these institutions, all exist. Notwithstanding, vacant land in economically neglected and disinvested areas is under the same governance; that is to say, despite any immediate or future plans for development, complex bureaucracies of land access still obtain. Such development projects across the city have made it more difficult for growers to obtain land. Politics of land access are intimately related to the spatial politics of race in Cleveland, and can partially be explained by the epistemic tensions around value and development.

The enclosure of vacant urban land for use by the state or to be operationalized in the capitalist market for profit directly opposes epistemologies of land value among black growers, inhibiting their enactment of a specifically black agrarianism. In Cleveland, vacant land that has been

"skipped over by capital or left fallow in its retreat," while city officials and real estate development professionals await investment dollars that might never arrive (McClintock 2010:200). Meanwhile, an alternative urbanism remains stymied. Land has consistently been cited as a crucial element in efforts towards sustainable urban agriculture projects, as well as in enacting a black agrarian imaginary. The persistence of black agrarianism in Cleveland and throughout the black diaspora (over time and space) is due in part to the struggle for liberation through the land.

Within many (disinvested) neighborhoods such as Hough, black agrarian traditions and knowledge have instilled a vision for land, community, and urban space that does not always align with more conventional urban development that is rooted in the capitalist paradigm of continual growth (Pothakuchi 2018). Additionally, even as political discourse and academic interest in Cleveland tend to paint a picture of the city as an example of one where "urban agriculture has proven durable during both boom and bust periods" (Masi et al. 2014). however, as Robert Gottleib and Anupama Joshi observe, gardens and farms exist as more than just use value, and are more likely to see their property values increase because of an increased desirability for development (2010:147). This vulnerability is evidenced not only in literature describing alternative land use as both temporary and contingent upon particular political economic configurations (Drake and Lawson 2014; Németh and Langhorst 2014; Pothukuchi 2018; Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014), but also in the experience of growers across the city whose attempts to access land have been delayed or obstructed entirely by burdensome bureaucratic processes, and new development projects, actual or planned.

Support from city officials in accessing vacant lots is inconsistent, and assumes that alternative vacant land reuse is temporary, and is not generally included in the long-term vision of city officials (Lawson 2004). Officials often describe urban agriculture as an important aspect of

urban development, but one with a specific (and delimited) time and place in the landscape of any city. Urban agriculture has indeed (re)emerged as a popular practice within cities across the country. This is common during times of economic downturn (Drake and Lawson 2014; Németh and Langhorst 2014) which characterizes not only the period during and after the 2007 Great Recession, but really the last several decades for communities in Rust Belt cities like Cleveland. Residents turn to food production as a resilience strategy, and are encouraged (at least in part) to do so by the state as a way to ease the state's responsibility for its citizens' welfare, namely the alleviation of deepening poverty and unemployment, and to mitigate the withdrawal of public and private services (including food retail).

Cleveland is often celebrated for its innovative zoning ordinances and demolition campaigns that have "freed up" land across the city (Meenar et al. 2012; Pothukuchi 2018; Rosenman and Walker 2015). There are several large-scale urban agricultural projects in Cleveland, as well as the Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone in Kinsman, that earn Cleveland outside attention from community developers, urban planners, and sustainability experts. In February of 2011, the City Council passed a resolution endorsing the creation of a "Healthy Cleveland," legislating a collaboration between the four hospitals and the Mayor's office that guarantees, among other things, that every resident be within walking distance of a city garden by 2020. In the Connecting Cleveland 2020 Citywide Plan (CWP), community gardens figure prominently as a part of a strategy to achieve healthier communities, with a "neighborhood-based structure [that] ...focus[es] holistically on each City neighborhood" rather than on the city as a whole. The CWP proposes to "provide basic needs services within walking or cycling distance of residents," including community gardens and grocery stores; it also promises to "promote community gardens, youth gardens, and urban market gardens in neighborhoods," with the assumption that these will contribute to economic stability, enhance community, and promote environmental sustainability. To make this possible, the CWP includes provisions to reserve land for the

installation of either temporary or permanent community or urban market gardens in "every neighborhood throughout the City".[26]

An unpublished report from 2016[27] about vacant land reuse in Cleveland characterized the City's reaction to the growing inventory of vacant land as lacking vision:

> the policies still read as if vacant land reuse is simply an exercise of civic creativity on scattered sites to be temporarily accommodated until the real forces of the market return — even though aggressive demolitions continue, high rates of housing vacancy still threaten neighborhoods, and historical data suggest market forces won't rebound to meaningfully absorb this growing inventory of land. (Abdelazim et al. 2016:9)

While the ideals of the CWP align with the vision of many black urban growers across the city, they remain elusive. Most black east side residents do not perceive any meaningful change in

[26] These quotes are retrieved from the Cleveland Planning Commission Website. The City Wide Plan is accessible at planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/cwp/planIntro.php

[27] The report was based on a study completed in 2015 and 2016 by the Center for Community Progress (CCP) through a Technical Assistant Scholarship Program (TASP) grant of which the City of Cleveland was a partner recipient, along with the ReImagining Cleveland Workgroup (convened by CNP). The Reimagining Workgroup sought out the partnership of CCP and applied for a TASP award with the following two objectives: "1) A comparative analysis of the economic impacts of different greening interventions carried out under the Reimagining Cleveland Initiative; and 2) Explore opportunities to better align and coordinate local funding streams for a more impactful approach to greening vacant land in the City" (Abdelazim et al. 2016:4). The draft (unpublished) report focused mostly on the second of these two goals, with the intention of circulating the report among members of the ReImagining Workgroup before the completion of a final report. The draft TASP report was highly critical of the City's approach to vacant land management, with a focus on the City's tendency to hold land, rather than fully support reclamation efforts. Initial findings were rejected by City administrators, who, according to several sources, did not agree with the pessimistic assessment of both an increasing accrual of vacant land and anemic demand for private real estate development. The draft report followed the agreed-upon premise and scope of work. However, according to a source at CCP, the partnership initially began between the ReImagining Workgroup and CCP, with the City coming on board as a supportive entity, rather than a full partner from the beginning. As a result of the reaction from the City, researchers eventually published a report that focused almost exclusively on the economic impact of the ReImagining project within the City, with only passing references to improving strategies for greening initiatives and vacant land reuse. The rejected draft report has not been made public, although it has been widely circulated among community development professionals. I received a copy of it from a former employee of the Cleveland Planning Commission, on the condition of anonymity. The decision to withhold this report from public release, and to change the focus of their research for the final draft was based in the realization that the working relationship of members of the ReImagining Workgroup (who continue to pursue vacant land reuse strategies) to the City would be damaged if initial findings were to be released. Both research participants and my initial source believe that the City rejected the initial report for a few reasons: 1) because of its critical portrayal of the land management practices of the City of Cleveland; 2) the observation that City policy and practice have not kept pace with the accumulation of vacant land; and 3) for the implicit suggestion that prospects for future development in Cleveland will not create sufficient demand for the tens of thousands of vacant parcels throughout the city.

the urban landscape as it pertains to agricultural land use, and simply installing city gardens through the CWP elides resident engagement and empowerment, and doesn't change the politics of resident access to vacant land. Research participants that I spoke with desire access to land in their own neighborhoods in order to enact *their* vision, not the City's. While residents struggle to access land, many CDCs have been more successful in land acquisition and assembly. In Kinsman, the CDC Burten, Bell, Carr Development, Inc. assembled 28 acres of land as an Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone. In a 2009 article about this acquisition written by a staff member of the CDC, the development corporation is intended to "promote the district, attract resources, plan and prepare for future development, assemble privately owned properties, and act as a unified voice for the entities operating within the zone" (Burten, Bell, Carr Development, Inc. 2009). The CDC, in this instance, becomes the manager of this land, with the power to make decisions about and direct its future development.

Most city planners recognize urban agriculture as a legitimate, if time bound, use for vacant land. But conventional real estate development will always take priority over these alternative land uses. The city planner whose footprint includes several majority black east-side neighborhoods explains that this hierarchy of land use priorities exists "because of the fact that we are concerned with maintaining our tax base, which is necessary for us to function." However, she notes that "at the same time, [it's important to] provid[e] opportunities for people to garden and to improve their own quality of life" (personal communication 2016). Neighborhoods such as Hough and Kinsman where properties have lost upwards of 75 percent of their value, contribute much less to the tax base than other areas of the city. Not only do these spaces remain impoverished, but they are often described as not contributing to the desired "renaissance" of Cleveland. Development projects, such as the Opportunity Corridor (see Appendix) that will cut across the east side of the city, invite investment into spaces that have been "lost" for being unproductive and underutilized.

The city planners I interviewed recognized the importance of both the economic and social implications of land use decisions. The concept of people "improv[ing] their own quality of life" discursively exists alongside the need to maintain the tax base; this pairing represents different epistemologies of both value and of development. While city officials tend to understand the value of land in terms of investment potential or tax revenue, urban growers are much more likely to represent land value through its role as a community asset. The concept of development, when deployed by city officials, most often refers implicitly or explicitly to capitalist development. That is, it includes financial investment or an increase in taxable value on property within the city. On the other hand, residents' perspective on development most often indicates a vision for community transformation rooted in social change, and opportunities for improving community members' lives. These two interrelated epistemic divides are central to the political economy of land in Cleveland, particularly to the politics of and contestation over processes of metabolism and transformation across space.

Regulation and codification of processes of land acquisition have hindered residents' access to land. City councilmembers hold much of the power in deciding which parcels of land can be leased or purchased, and after city planners and Community Development Corporations (CDCs), often have the final word on particular requests for land. Many of the anchor institutions within or adjacent to east side neighborhoods – Case Western Reserve University , the affiliated University Hospital, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Cleveland Clinic, to name a few – have both the capital and the power to expedite and influence the process of land acquisition. According to Gladys, their position as economic developers within the city gains them the support of those in power. She explains:

> I know that certain entities are coming in and buying up land. I learned that Case has a couple of plots on my street. That's what's going on. There's a land

> grab going on. It's just unfortunate that we – the indigenous people – are not in the position to stave it off. I don't have the money to stave it off.

Gladys is clear about her desire to own land, both within her neighborhood and across the city, in order to build an urban food system. Kima, who passed away in 2016 but used to operate a farm in the Buckeye neighborhood, had a different perspective on land ownership:

> Owning [land], to me, is not all that it's cracked up to be. Because you have to pay taxes, and as long as you have to pay taxes, we as people really don't own it. Because at any time they can go up on the taxes to where you can't afford it. Or they can rezone it, and say this is now a place where you can't grow food – say this is a business district – so to me it really doesn't mean anything to say that I own something from the City, as long as they're requiring taxes.

These two perspectives on access to land reflect a discontinuity in the praxis of black growers, as well as the potential for a self-determined, black-led urban food system to comprise a variety of forms of access to land. Research participants have described multiple relationships to land use including ownership, long-term leases, 'guerilla' access or squatting on the land, and cooperative land ownership.

Mansfield's experience with the bureaucratic processes of City Hall illustrated to him the difficulty in accessing vacant land - whether to lease or own. TJ Dow, the former councilperson for Ward 7, which includes Hough, was often described during his tenure as unsupportive of, even hostile to the initiatives and projects of residents looking to acquire land for agricultural production. When Dow rejected his application for a building permit to construct the biocellar, Mansfield went ahead with the project regardless of its legal status. Gladys also contends that Dow did not do nearly as much for the community as she and other growers have over the years, including summer employment for youth, improving parcels in the neighborhoods, providing sustenance for the community, and criticized his lack of support for their work to create a self-determined urban food system.

At a community information session in February of 2017 about access to vacant land, Lilah Zautner, the Manager of Special Projects and Land Reuse at the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation (the County Land Bank, or CCLRC), explained that "gardens used to be based on a handshake, a wink, and a nod." Codification of access to vacant lots through the CCLRC as well as the Cleveland Land Bank was intended to harness the enthusiasm for urban agriculture, and formalize it through water, zoning, and other related policies, "so that everyone had access." However, the formalization of policies around land access has had different impacts across groups. Mansfield was unequivocal in his belief that it hinders people from obtaining parcels of land to farm on. He added, "But it's real simple to get around. Go ahead and start doing it. [If they ask] 'Where's your permit' [you respond], 'Oh, I filled it out. Go to City Hall and find it!'" He explains that he is not generally disrespectful of the legal system, but that when the system does not work, he will work around it:

> We're trained to respect authority, especially in the black community.... Most black folk are law-abiding people. They wanna do it by [the law], you know, and they put their faith in government. It's what won the Civil Rights, and they changed the rules. And it works sometimes. When it don't ... I would love to work within the rules. But I'm not going to wait for the rules. On the other side of this wall, there's a lot [where] I have a wind turbine, I have solar panels, and I don't own it. 'Cause I applied, and I'm tired of calling. So the hell with it, I'm gonna use it.

Formal processes and codes are often seen as complications – red tape or bureaucratic hoops – that people have to navigate. Marlisha, who has been gardening in Cleveland for decades commented that "back then," before the two land banks were founded and policies around acquisition established, "it was kind of cut and dry – easier to get parcels. [Now] there's a lot of red tape. The hoops that you have to jump through! It shouldn't take a year to figure out whether or not you can actually access a property."

The Value of Land: An Epistemic Tension and a New Spatial Ontology

More than 3,300 acres of vacant land (by some estimates, closer to 3,700 acres), equal to around 30,000 vacant parcels,[28] are owned by one of two land banks, and managed or controlled by a (somewhat obscurely) organized network. The network includes city planners, councilmembers, CDCs, Cleveland Neighborhood Progress (CNP), a major convener of the thirty-one CDCs operating in Cleveland, and other not-for-profit organizations. The CDCs in Cleveland merits a brief explanation, because they are somewhat unique to this city. These organizations are a modern-day iteration of resident-led community and grassroots organizations (by the same name) that emerged in cities across the country in the 1970s. The initial growth of CDCs coincided with scalar shifts in power away from the federal and toward the local (usually city) scale (Brenner 2004; Brenner and Theodore 2002; Davies 2013; Walker 2002), with municipalities coming to shoulder a much larger burden for community development. These community organizations in Cleveland experienced significant transformation in the 1980s and 90s as part of a neighborhood-based governance strategy reflected more recently in the 2020 CWP (Coppola 2014) and have largely adopted epistemologies of development that align with the state and state officials. This shift in power away from the grassroots also represents a fiscal change toward a neoliberalized "growth-oriented" urban development, rather than the socially embedded community change that most black growers strive for.

Neoliberalism in the postindustrial city "represents a process of market-driven social and spatial transformation" which coalesces – as "neoliberalization" – with ongoing and evolving

[28]According to the US Census, there were over 40,000 vacant property units in Cleveland in 2010, an increase of 63.3% since 1990. Between 1960 and 1990, an estimated 1,358 structures were demolished. The demolition of vacant and abandoned properties can stem foreclosure within intensely impacted neighborhoods, as well as protect the value of remaining houses (Rosenman and Walker 2015). As a result of the research and political lobbying of the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, federal funds were recently made available allowing for a dramatic uptick in demolitions over the last several years (see chapter 2). A May 2018 press release from the Office of the Mayor stated that during Mayor Jackson's tenure (he was first elected in 2005), the City demolished almost 10,000 structures).

urbanizing processes (Brenner & Theodore 2005: 102). According to Brenner, Peck, and Theodore (2010:329-330), neoliberalism, or neoliberalization, can be conceptualized as a "historically specific, unevenly developed, hybrid pattern tendency of market-disciplinary regulatory restructuring" that "prioritizes market-based, market-oriented or market-disciplinary responses to regulatory problems" often mobilizing financialization or speculation in various spheres to open up new markets. Neoliberally-oriented, economically-disciplining policies have been designed to promote capital accumulation through a strong business and entrepreneurial presence, the free flow of goods including agricultural commodities and foodstuffs, and by attracting capital back into urban areas that have long suffered a loss of population and wealth (Brenner & Theodore 2002; Brenner et al. 2010; Alkon & Mares 2012.

If current rates of demolition and housing construction remain constant, the number of vacant lots in Cleveland will increase considerably in the coming years. Indeed, in thirteen east side neighborhoods where demolitions are more concentrated, the percentage of vacant land increased from 26 percent in 2015 to 32 percent in 2018. Even if the pace of new housing construction increases, and the demolition campaign slows, the City will not be able to (and has no current strategy or plan to) absorb a significant proportion of these vacant lots through housing development or other development ventures.

The epistemic tensions explored in this chapter highlight differences in ways of knowing, experiencing, and evaluating the concept of land value and development between black growers, and the various arms of the state that they encounter on a regular basis, including city planners and other city officials, often perceived by black subjects to be aligned with the interests of private developers. While there is sometimes a discursive alignment between black residents who grow food and work the land, and the officials that represent them, the black

agrarian imaginary constitutes an alternative epistemic frame regarding urban development and the valuation of land.[29]

Enacting a black agrarian imaginary hinges upon residents' ability to access land garden or farm; however, in this vision, land is more than just a commodity (cf. Polanyi 1944). Black subjects need to be able to innovate in food production, and to engage in everyday practices that establish an immanent value to land as an embodiment of people, community, history, and culture (Gramsci 1971/2014). Vacant land in Cleveland represents an opportunity for *autogestion*, Lefebvre's concept of radical grassroots democracy, especially within communities where the dominant modes of governance and land management do not serve to improve quality of life. The production of space and transformation of nature (human and nonhuman) through the lens of the black agrarian imaginary promotes the well-being of historically marginalized communities in the face of constant threats to their capacity to thrive. This ontological and epistemological standing sits in opposition to the paradigm of city planners, other city officials, and the major tenets of political economy (as they dictate and define value).

On the one hand, the formalization the bureaucratic processes that guide access to vacant parcels of land can democratize its governance and increase access to land (Lefebvre 1996, 2009; Scott 1998). However, many black subjects – especially growers – perceive these processes as contributing to the opacity of the bureaucratic structure, to the detriment of residents trying to access land. Formalization and codification can also be interpreted as attempts to strengthen the legibility of land and land use in the eyes of the state (Scott 1998). Both of these latter interpretations align epistemically with the production of land as a

[29] The struggle over geography exists both between and within the various epistemically distinct groups. That is to say, there *are* overlapping interests between city officials and urban residents, and not all city officials (planners, councilmembers, community development officials), community development practitioners, or residents operate in the same way across the same spaces.

commodity and resource for increased state profits (Alisa and Kallis 2016). The creation of land banks, the maintenance of vacant land databases, and the formalization of processes that govern land access create a state-managed market for land (see Polanyi 1944:73-77). Parcels of vacant land are produced as fungible and homogenous under the governance of the land bank structure (cf. Lefebvre 1996, 2009).

The practice of cataloguing and maintaining vacant parcels of land illustrates the concept of state space – space that is necessarily devoid of social relations.[30] Urban parcel size is codified, and no structures or improvements are allowed on parcels within the land bank governed by the City. Any qualitative differences between parcels are masked by the assigning of parcel numbers rather than descriptors of the land. These spaces are produced by the state as blank slates on which future development will hopefully take place, a ready container for capital investment.

Homogeneity of space, following Lefebvre, is essential for its commodification and exchange. This "abstract space" is produced not only as homogenous, but as asocial and ahistorical such that the flows of power and capital are not hindered (McCann 1999:164). The creation of a "space which is at one and the same time quantified, homogenous, and controlled – crumbled and broken – hierarchized into 'strata'" is in part what constitutes the state system and its "relations of domination," its "power to constrain its citizens and ... paralyze all their initiatives" (Lefebvre 2009:130). Thus, the legibility of process masks the opacity of access: information about which forms to fill out, who to contact, and which steps to follow is widely available,

[30] Henri Lefebvre defines state space as previously chaotic spaces that "the State attempts to impose an order on … through diverse institutions. What kind of order? That of a homogenous, logistical, opticogeometrical, quantitative space" (Lefebvre 2009:238). The concept of state space is further explained by Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden in their edited volume of Lefebvre's writings as "homogenous, the *same* throughout, organized according to a rationality of the identical and the repetitive that allows the State to introduce its presence, control, and surveillance in the most isolated corners (which thus cease to be 'corners')" (Brenner and Elden 2009:227).

whereas the residents' end goal of long-term (or permanent) access to parcels of land within the city remains elusive.

The stymying point thus becomes the perceived need for city officials to prioritize a certain form of urban development for the purposes of revenue growth. Cleveland's population and tax base are shrinking, and decades-old cycles of decline in population and revenue persist. For urban planners and other city officials, therefore, the expansion of the tax base is paramount. This is a vision oriented towards future growth of the city (see Coppola 2014). In other words, planning and development – as a whole – does not happen for those currently living in Cleveland, but rather for future potential residents who, presumably, bring wealth, purchasing power, and tax revenue to the city. The paradigm upheld by city planners is dominated by the dogma of "highest and best use," most often attached to exchange value, tax revenue, and future development potential.

That said, the somewhat abstract neoliberal objective of achieving the highest possible value for land often occurs at the expense of alternative land use projects, and is "a heavy burden for movements concerned with use value" (Purcell 2008:21). When asked, most city planners will readily support alternative land use projects, and recognize the huge potential of land, especially for low-income residents, but only insofar as those projects do not disrupt the potential for current or future real estate development. A former director of the City Planning Commission explained that "support for urban agriculture as the highest and best use was because the market was so weak for development that it truly was the highest and best use, and maybe the only productive use" (personal communication 2016). After offering that "community gardens and urban farms have a value even beyond being just a placeholder for land that [doesn't] have any development opportunity at the time," he qualified that statement by saying, "you wouldn't want urban farms in an area where you see the future of the neighborhood as being walkable, mixed

use, high density … a true urban neighborhood" (personal communication 2016). On the other hand (and representing a different urban imaginary) many growers insist that, with sufficient access to resources, including land, they could grow enough food to feed the city. While studies show that not all of the vacant land in Cleveland is suitable for food production (8 uses for vacant land), under specific conditions of intensive production, urban agriculture in Cleveland could produce up to 100 percent of the produce needs of the city, as well as 94 percent of poultry and eggs (Grewal and Grewal 2012). Urban apiaries could also meet all of the demand for honey.

Another city planner who works in and with many of the predominantly black neighborhoods in this study comments on the paradigm of "highest and best use," capturing many of the tensions I have described:

> [W]e have something called the "Sustainable Development Pattern Map" – we look at certain areas where density is important... those are areas where we say we would rather not do side yards. It's not to say that we wouldn't, but that's not the preference. In those particular areas, as a way to hold [land], we have allowed people to lease for community gardening, with the understanding that if development comes, we would need to utilize that land.

These planners articulate a conventional vision for "true urban neighborhoods": "mixed use" and "high density" areas are signalled as the ideal-typical urban development, where residents and businesses co-create urban relations that contribute to the tax base.

The "Sustainable Development Pattern Map," drawn by the City Planning Commission, outlines which areas are prioritized for development and have been set aside for their potential to accumulate value through future development. Prioritized areas total 32 (non-contiguous) square miles, or 41 percent of the city's land, and include land within or directly adjacent to areas of current or future development projects, as well as areas deemed appropriate for future

development (but with no current plans for such). These areas are no longer accessible to residents.

The above quotes also illustrate the dominant vision of what does and does not belong in urban areas, and under what economic conditions. Allowing the paradigm of "highest and best use" to dictate urban land use holds residents hostage to a vision of Cleveland with little room for an alternative production of space led by residents – especially those who do not have a lot of capital, or who are not interested in traditional development projects. In Cleveland, land use policies are embedded in a system of governance that supports the continued neoliberalization of urban space – a strategic alignment of government and business interests (Purcell 2008) – that leads to a particular kind of urban space. This urban space is not made for or by marginalized and oppressed groups currently residing in the city, but rather for a potential future population (one that will pay more taxes per person) and continued accumulation of capital. Residents often see these patterns of development and enclosure as exclusionary and anti-democratic. Gladys explicitly described these practices as a "land grab". She pointed out that black growers rarely have the individual or collective resources to acquire significant land and are instead left to navigate the contours of the many institutions that exert control over the city's land.

Embedded within growers' vision for and alternative valuation of land is a demand for not just land, but the rights to land, and the right to the city more broadly. Sofie, a life-long gardener who also works for a conservation nonprofit, recalled a story about a gardener on the west side of Cleveland who was gardening on the property of a neighbor.

> She watched this property, watched this guy walk away, and move out of town... She [had worked] his garden like twelve years. She does not own that land. She stepped out on faith, and now she wants to own it, because of course her heart and soul is in it! Not to mention sweat, blood, and tears, and twelve years of time! Exactly…. There's situations like that all over the place, where

> our name is not on it but we've claimed it. And it's claiming our rights. It's the claiming part that we've been hesitant to do.

Sofie continued, emphasizing the importance of claiming the spaces that have been produced through the labor and love of growers across the city.

> At some point, I hope we open our hearts and our hands, too, to open spaces that we have a right to do our thing. A right to produce, a right to sell, a right to cook, a right to dance, sing, in that space. There's this sense that, "Can they do that?" I'm tellin' them, they can do that!

Here, Sofie evokes the right to the city as the right to difference. In other words, she asserts that (black) gardeners should have the right to enact both an agricultural and a cultural vision: to grow, cook, dance, and sing in spaces where those activities might not seem "natural" or "normal" to every urban resident.

Furthermore, as Németh and Langhorst (2014) highlight, alternative land uses in urban space – including agriculture and other ecologically minded work – are often temporary placeholders, with the expectation that real estate development will take place when the demand later arises. The physical space allotted for food production in cities (when it *is* in fact made available) is "largely a function of land value" (McClintock 2014:161). This idea is embedded in the fact that even the Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone, is subject to future development. The CWP also makes clear that any land set aside for alternative agricultural use may be temporary. Parcels are leased in one-year increments, with very few residents obtaining subsequent longer (three to five year) leases. One city planner told me that if and when "development comes, we would need to utilize that land." She recognizes that its gardeners might feel that they have "cultivated this soil, … done all this, and … don't want to [move]." She continued:

> I think there are other ways to address that, and just something that we have to explore a little bit more. I talked to someone who had suggested having the gardens on something that was portable. So then if they need to go someplace else, they could pick it up, take it, and they don't have to go through the trouble of trying to start all over from scratch.

While many gardeners do choose to install raised bed gardens due to soil contamination or their own physical limitations, the idea of a portable garden contradicts the distinctive character of land, and the individual connections that often result from cultivating the soil. One farmer described it this way:

> Every farm that you go to will have its own unique character. It's the thing that makes it taste good. It's the thing that you come and you feel, and you say, "I feel something." I don't know the ingredients but I know it tastes good... It's the secret sauce. Everybody brings their energy, and... when you are close to nature, there's automatically a spiritual connection that exists. And it's (sic) no textbook for it, no manual for it, you can't buy it off the shelf. It's not packaged or bagged, it's just so organic, it flows out of what's into you, you put it in the soil and the soil gives it back to you, so it's more like an exchange than it is something that you can replicate place to place.

The idea that a garden can be made portable, or can be transplanted from one piece of land to another suggests that all land is the same or can be made to be homogenous. That one parcel of land could be the same as any other in terms of its value to urban growers represents the dominant value of land in terms of its exchange value as a commodity.

For most black urban growers in Cleveland, urban agriculture signifies more than just growing food on vacant parcels of land. While growers certainly see themselves as producers and stewards of the land they work and live on, they also celebrate and educate their community, especially the younger generations, about how black culture is rooted in a deeply agrarian and spiritual relationship to that land. This characterization of how – and for what purposes – space is produced, partly describes the alternative spatial ontology that motivates much of the food production in Cleveland.

This ontology is rooted in the very meaning and use of space, and how space comes to be imbued with such meanings and uses. According to Soja, space cannot be understood as "an expression of the class structure," (1980:208); rather, a mutually constitutive or dialectical relationship describes the connection of social relations with spatial understandings and

interactions (Smith 2008; Soja 1980, 1989). Soja's socio-spatial dialectic, builds upon Lefebvre, who viewed the "spatial structural forces in modern capitalist society" as "decisive" and "preeminent" (Soja 1980:207). The spatial ontology embedded within the black agrarian imaginary in Cleveland builds upon the socio-spatial dialectic, connecting socio-natures, or social spaces produced by human and nonhuman relations and labor, to black histories across time and space. In other words, the spatial ontology is the building block for the epistemology of value that black growers espouse in their agrarian vision: land is valued as a part of history that traverses generations across the diaspora. The use-value embodied in the land connects farmers and gardeners in Cleveland to the endeavors of black growers in the American South (both currently and in the past), to their slave ancestors, and to generations of peasants in Jamaica, Nigeria, Ghana, and elsewhere. Put differently, the production of space by urban growers is a way to decolonize capitalist, white space, to reconnect the land with histories of black resilience, and to build a bridge to an emancipated black future. Black growers in Cleveland value land for its socially embedded value as well as its historical and cultural significance: land and space are crucial building blocks of community.

Keymah, one of the founders of the Rid-All Green Partnership Farm in Kinsman, frames this using the language of connection: "Our project connects with people who care about the rainforest in South America. Our work connects with people in Tibet. Our work connects with everybody that's positive about sustainability on the Earth" (personal communication 2016). The connection between geographies across time informs not only black relationships to the land but also the meaning behind agricultural labor itself. Louise owns almost two acres of land tucked in between a shuttered elementary school and a mosque on the east side of Cleveland. Born in Mississippi, Louise has a connection to the land fueled by ancestors who farmed around her family home, and by movements like the Civil Rights Movement and the NAACP. Black farmers have a long history of supporting black voting rights, in providing shelter and food to

black activists, and in membership in the NAACP; they were overtly punished for those actions by the USDA, which withheld loans from politically active black farmers.[31] Louise works not only to recreate the gardens from where she lived, but to use the power of food to engage more deeply with people in her community, while also connecting them to the resilience and political power that can be gleaned from the land.

A dominant thread in interviews and conversations with black urban growers in Cleveland was the power of space – as well as the land that in part constitutes it – to heal community and historical traumas through a celebration of multi-generational and pan-diasporic black agrarianism, to establish oases of safety, health, and joy within spaces that have by and large been determined by the hegemonic white gaze to be "hopelessly lost black ghettos" (Wilson 2007b:89). The everyday practice of producing these particular socio-natures is perceived to heal both long-standing trauma and physical bodies within the black community; it nourishes the people, and connects them to histories of "grandma [going out] to the backyard and grab[bing] some weeds and some different teas [so we could] heal ourselves" (personal communication 2016).

When the CWP suggests (see Haar 1955) that state resources should be spent on ensuring walkable access to gardens and grocery stores, the underlying assumption is that providing residents consistent access to healthy food will also improve health indicators. This proposal implies one of two things: either that access alone (to markets or to gardens provided by the state) can address poverty, marginalization, disenfranchisement, and political disconnect, or that food access will alleviate hunger, and other struggles within marginalized neighborhoods demand their own unique solutions. According to the majority of research participants (and

[31] See Pigford v. Glickman for more on discrimination between 1982 (when President Reagan abolished the USDA Office of Civil Rights) and 1996 (when President Clinton reinstated it).

much of the literature on the subject), access alone will not solve a situation where "people are spending too much money on food, on doctors, and on medications, and don't have the health to learn, work, etc." (personal communication 2015). On the other hand, the epistemology of land and value that informs the black agrarian imaginary addresses the entirety of the black experience.

The tension over epistemologies and ontologies of land and space is illustrated by the first round of funding of a project called ReImagining Cleveland (ReImagining). The four rounds of funding for this initiative have been facilitated by the real estate management and community development firm Cleveland Neighborhood Progress (CNP). CNP defines its mission as "foster[ing] inclusive communities of choice and opportunity throughout Cleveland" through community development and community revitalization. Beginning in 2008, CNP began funding resident-led vacant land reuse projects, including the installation of community gardens, pocket parks, and other greening projects on vacant parcels of land across the city. Joel Ratner, the president of CNP, articulated the rationale behind ReImagining at a Cleveland State University event in 2011:

> The best days of Cleveland and Cleveland neighborhoods are yet to come, and we have a really exciting agenda for greening our neighborhoods, and for making them neighborhoods of choice that people choose to live in, and can have wonderful and fulfilling lives. We know that if you live in the suburbs, land is a sign of status and wealth. And, it should be no different in the city that access to open space can provide us, can be a source of wealth and a source of enjoyment.

Mansfield, the proprietor of Château Hough, received support through ReImagining to build a vineyard on two parcels of land near his home. This first round of ReImagining money came through the 2008 federal stimulus package, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). According to Eleanor, who worked directly on the ReImagining planning team, the

timing of fund allocation through ARRA coincided with the planning phase for ReImagining, despite the organization not being prepared to roll out the program.

> There was an extended planning process with all of these different stakeholders in the city. They were really close to the point where they could switch to implementing a program that was based on all this … work. But they weren't quite there, and that's when they heard about the stimulus program....
>
> Stuff happened in a really truncated amount of time with a lot of time stress. Some things fell by the wayside that eventually – in my opinion – crippled the program. We didn't have a good evaluation system. We didn't convey that evaluation system to project leaders because it didn't really exist. So, a lot of the time they were operating under their own perception of what they thought a successful project would be, which oftentimes was great, but because we never said how we wanted to evaluate and tell the story of their projects, they weren't really empowered to meet that expectation, because it was not clear.

Questions integral to the planning and sustainability of the program such as "How do we evaluate projects?" or "How do we maintain them over time?" or "How do we build a sustainable framework?" were sacrificed in order to implement the project using ARRA funding. From the inception of the grant project, CNP struggled to identify metrics for evaluation. Nancy, a Vice President in CNP who also worked on the ReImagining project, admitted:

> We had nothing. No stated outcomes. We had outputs – improved green space, or well, improved vacant land. So, something that would have looked abandoned would now look cared for. So ultimately it was about curb appeal. Could we get some progress there? What we're really trying to figure out is how to say, "Yeah that wasn't enough. Yeah, we want curb appeal. That matters immensely.... Across three rounds, we did 150 projects. Everything from community gardens to pocket parks, vineyards, orchards, neighborhood pathways, side yard expansions, street edge improvements; we did market gardens, native plantings, rain gardens, green parking facilities, soil remediation experiments, riparian restoration. Basically, anything anyone wanted to propose. What we didn't say is, "Boy, we should focus on these [particular projects]. These are where you really get impact."

As demonstrated by these comments, leadership within CNP had only a vague idea of the intended outcomes of the project beyond "curb appeal" or basic land management (i.e. mowing the grass, a huge administrative burden for the City). According to this same interview, the goals of the City for the land in question were also not adequately communicated to project

leaders. While part of the motivation was "good PR," which the City of Cleveland did get, as evidenced by a joint national award[32] with CNP for innovation in community planning and process, the city was also motivated by

> a release of the burden of managing all of this vacant land. They were in over their heads. They have a very basic mowing program to make sure that the vacant land is [not overgrown], but it's minimal. It's not enough, and they know it's not enough. I think they were really looking for something that could take on these parcels that have some neighborhood potential, and just get them out of their system.

However, in the end, the city's perception of a "successful" program extended beyond simple caretaking:

> For [the City], they're still at reputational risk, because...they still own the property. Anything that goes wrong with the property still comes back to them, they still get the complaint, so they wanted them to be really great projects that the neighborhood was excited about. Excited that the city was enabling it. I think a lot of our projects did come in with that significant improvement. And that's what they wanted to see, "Yes – this is what we thought we were getting." But a lot of them stayed in the "moderate improvement": it's a little bit better, but it's not that much better than having it regularly mowed.

Eleanor also interfaced with many project leaders in the first round of funding. She described the disconnect between the city's interpretation of the intended impacts of the projects, and what these projects meant to grant recipients and the surrounding communities.

> The aesthetics versus the relationships is one of the big differences that I've seen with white evaluators who want to see the aesthetics, and black project leaders who are like, "I don't understand why that's your first indication. The community loves my projects; they come all the time; they see me as a resource, an educator, a mentor. That's how I measure my project success." You know? That's legitimate.

Project leaders, due in part to a lack of or inconsistent communication, were led to believe that they would get city-endorsed, long-term leases on the land they had been improving. However, the city did not relinquish control over land when projects did not show a demonstrated increase in revenue, namely through taxable value, or a significant shift in the character of a

[32] The *Re-imagining* initiative received the American Planning Association's 2012 National Planning Excellence Award for Innovation in Best Practices for Sustaining Places, which is the APA's highest honor.

neighborhood and its attractiveness to outside investors. Nancy reflected on the failures that project leaders faced in renewing leases:

> We (CNP) don't own the land, you know, it's – we don't even get to make those decisions, the City does… We ended up organizing a whole process with the City.... We organized with them last year a process where they would start lease renewal. I checked in about a month ago. They have not renewed one lease.

Ratner's comments above about CNP's agenda for greening neighborhoods, together with the haste with which the ReImagining project was implemented illustrate both the recognized importance of alternative land use and the demonstration, by CNP and other ReImagining Workgroup members, of institutional self-sufficiency rather than cross-sectoral collaboration (including with residents). These interviews also reveal the important role of epistemic divisions in dictating land use. Even though "greening interventions have significant value independent of their measurable impact on real estate markets [and] utilize lots in ways that are likely to be beneficial to the community," the paradigm of highest and best use remains dominant (Mallach, Steif and Graziani 2016: 4).

Governance and Bureaucracy

Part of the rationale behind the ReImagining project was to help the city to manage the growing inventory of vacant land in Cleveland (20 percent of the land area in 2018) which, for city officials, is increasingly overwhelming. But across the city and within predominantly black neighborhoods on the east side in particular, growers' experiences show that obtaining long-term leases or ownership of plots of land for use other than real estate development is challenging. This is true for a number of reasons, not least that the complex bureaucracies that regulate the conversion and sale of land are understaffed and underfunded.

Research participants often express frustration about the bureaucratic processes associated with the two land banks,[33] and make direct connections between their capacity to do their own work and the opacity of the state. For example, determining whether a parcel is owned by the City or the County can be difficult for a resident who does not have a good understanding of the internal functioning of each institution. One participant explained her experience:

> If I come to you, and I want to get a parcel of land…the initial steps are just so cumbersome. They want you to sit down and submit a plan, and then they want you to go through all this written stuff as far as what you want [to do]. And when we identified a spot – and it was already a garden, already fenced! And guess what they told me when we came to put in our permit? "It's going to take about a year."

The time delay between locating a vacant parcel and securing it for use is a common frustration among community residents aspiring to obtain land for food production or other alternative uses. However, beyond these delays, there is little understanding of the inner-workings of the complex bureaucracies that one must traverse to obtain a lease, or to get the necessary information about a particular parcel (to learn if it is either available or not to residents). Residents do have a sense, however, that there are competing spatial and economic interests at play that are not always disclosed, which can be another source of frustration given the city administration's expressed commitment to urban food production and alternative land use policies.

[33] The legal and procedural distinctions between the City and County land banks remain unclear to most residents, and even city officials cannot always explain their separate roles. Notwithstanding, there are a few definite ways in which they are different. The County Land Bank, formally known as the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corps has the power to clear a land deed of back taxes and acquires land with a structure on it either to demolish or resell. This land bank is the newer of the two, and has much more expansive legislative power. It acts as a clearinghouse for both land and properties, and, as a matter of policy, prefers not to hold on to properties or vacant parcels for more than three years. By contrast, the City Land Bank , established in 1976, will not hold land with a structure on it. The City Land Bank generally has the first right of refusal on land being sold by the County Land Bank, and if they choose to acquire a parcel, the City Land Bank can hold the land indefinitely for the purposes of future development. Despite differences in legislative capabilities and function, both land banks hold vacant parcels in their stock.

The same participant explained, "You know, the CDCs work with the council people. A friend of mine came to me late winter. She says, there's a garden over on E. 74th or whatever and Union. Girl, I called, and I called... I sent them an email... I have yet to hear from these people." Referencing a different parcel in another neighborhood, she said, "I had been told that this parcel – these two parcels – split by a little alleyway… I been told that that area is slated for dwelling, and anything that doesn't fit in with that [plan]...there's also this situation where in the next parcel, there is an old gas station with an old tank up under the ground. Now, really? Y'all going to put new construction next to an old deserted [gas tank]?" The insinuation is two-fold. First, there are vacant lots sitting empty that have caught the interest of CDCs or councilmembers, and are thus unavailable for use by residents, despite the fact that real estate development might not happen for several years to come. Secondly, there is skepticism about the potential for these specific lots to be developed for housing, given their proximity to potentially hazardous infrastructure and toxic materials.

The political-spatial governance of Cleveland, including of vacant land, has produced a city carved up into territories – like the turfs of different gangs, only politically sanctioned – that receive separate Community Development Block Grants from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, and compete for community development money in the form of grants and allocations from both City government and the many foundations operating in Cleveland. The City of Cleveland currently has 17 elected councilmembers, who govern the 17 wards of the city. By comparison, Columbus, Ohio, whose population is more than twice that of Cleveland, has only seven councilmembers. In the 2017 local elections in Cleveland, most incumbent council members retained their seat; however, three new officials were elected.

Relationships within the wards (and between councilmembers) reinforce the notion of political "turfs" that are sought out and then defended from perceived threat of loss.[34]

In addition to the ward-council system, there are currently 31 Community Development Corporations in Cleveland, funded through federal community development grants (especially Community Development Block Grants), local community foundations, and the Community Development office of City Hall. While Cleveland has been called the "comeback city" by some (Keating 1996; Wilson 2007a), this moniker only applies to very select areas and projects in the city: the downtown sports arena development and Central Business District, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on Lake Erie, and select west side neighborhoods experiencing intense gentrification. In addition to the uneven investment, the CDC structure can also reinforce uneven development, both because of the discretionary nature of how funding is allocated to CDCs, and the varying levels of effectiveness at which CDCs operate (Abdelazim et al. 2016).

[34] The larger trend in Cleveland, as in other cities in the Rust Belt, is one of retreating institutions, together with economic structural shifts that have contributed to the neglect of the most marginalized and historically oppressed groups (Sugrue 1996; Wacquant 2004). CDCs, initially designed to respond more holistically to the needs of residents, gradually shifted their strategy to focus more on physical and housing development (Coppola 2014). Famicos, one of the most well-resourced CDCs in Cleveland, was initially a real-estate development corporation before it was brought into community development. In the context of austerity politics and the need to locate financial support, market-rate housing and strategic investment brings CDCs more closely in alignment with the growth model of urban development espoused by a state seeking increased tax revenue. Walker (2002) observes that compared to public services, "CDCs often are the only institution with a comprehensive and coordinated program agenda." This points to the power of CDCs to set the programmatic and development agenda for communities, and – importantly – to situate themselves as a strategic intermediary between residents and the state, or between communities and the market.

Areas targeted for revitalization, or redevelopment zones, are often far removed from low-income or impoverished black communities, and are positioned as "icons for what their cities can and need to become" (Wilson 2007a: 3). The juxtaposition of these zones of capitalist investment to areas of concentrated poverty not only further marginalizes the urban poor but also distracts the public gaze away from sites of urban decline. This particular strategy represents a restructuring of capital away from welfare and social programs to capitalist investment and the creation of "landscapes of consumption, pleasure, and affluent residency" (Ibid.). What Wilson (2007a) terms a "privatopia of wealth" relies specifically upon homogenously produced space that is uniformly attractive to capital.

CDCs are financed through many different avenues. Competitive grants made available through City Hall are intended to support housing projects, the removal or prevention of blight or deterioration in housing, and other projects that "serve an urgent need" (Cleveland Department of Community Development 2017). CNP, founded in 1988, the same community development funding intermediary that funded the ReImagining Vacant Land Use grants is another significant source of funding to CDCs in Cleveland. CNP allocates community development grant money across the city. In addition to millions of dollars that CNP has distributed to CDCs since its inception, CNP allocated $4.2 million in strategic investment to be distributed among 12 of the 31 CDCs across the city between 2017 and 2020. This latest funding is the continuation of "ReImagining Cleveland," the small grants project described earlier (see Mallach, et al. 2016 for a more in-depth study). The shift in financial allocations from residents to CDCs indicates that the CDC structure is seen as both an appropriate and efficient way to reach residents. A Senior Vice President at CNP described the process of distributing applications in the first two rounds of the "Reimagining Cleveland" grant, which involved residents directly:

> We are very connected in Cleveland. I don't mean Neighborhood Progress, but the community development industry is very well networked. And we are linked [to them], and now they are part of our organization, and we are very closely linked to the trade association for CDCs so they just issued a request for proposals and it went out to the CDCs and it went out to all the block clubs, and then we put it online so if you weren't in a block club but you heard about it.

CDCs, councilmembers, and city planners all have ideas and objectives for what they would like to see happen in their neighborhood, and all rely heavily on the CDC structure to have their "ear to the ground" to incorporate the needs and desires of residents. Using the CDC structure to facilitate resident engagement is common practice across the city, but it is often met with skepticism by residents who do not feel connected to or included in the various CDC projects. Additionally, different CDCs operating in different neighborhoods have different levels of trust and reliability. The level of resident engagement varies among CDCs, and many residents feel

that the CDC structure is not equipped to truly integrate the perspective of neighborhood residents in decision-making processes. If the level of engagement, as it is in Kinsman, consists of "large community plans" every five years, "and then sometimes on a smaller project level, we'll do more community engagement," as it was described by one CDC staff member, it's easy to imagine why residents might become frustrated. When asked whether CDCs do a good job connecting resident needs or desires with their own agendas and those of the councilmembers and City Hall, Amina responded:

> We have a funny CDC situation. Even though you do have [some good staff] that do help – but even them...it's not as robust as it used to be. I don't really know what's going on. It would be nice to see – what are their plans to help us with [gardening and farming] – it seems like everybody's going in the direction of building houses for people who can afford them, and it's not us. We just wanna stay where we're at. But you know, something's goin on, different. You know, like, further down. They have those houses [that] are $250,000. That's nice. Not me. But that's not what it was before...What are they really trying to do? Do you really want us here, do you want us out?

While this particular resident is especially concerned with issues of sustainability, urban gardening, and access to land, her frustration with the community development agenda extends into the epistemic realm. The lack of response of CDCs to the needs of lower-income residents striving for a more sustainable and self-sufficient lifestyle, in favor of building real estate for (the potential to attract) more affluent residents speaks directly to the privileging of urban development and future tax base expansion, at the expense of community-based development and change for the direct benefit of current residents.

III. THE STATE AND STATE SPACE

The spatial ontology asserted through the praxis of the black agrarian imaginary includes social and historical relations both between people and to the land. It allows for the production of community space, and thus creates the possibility of a community-managed urban commons (Braun, Hinchliffe, and Whatmore 2018; Colding and Barthel 2013; de Peuter and Dyer-

Witheford 2010; Eizenberg 2012; Ginn and Ascensão 2018; McClintock 2010; Mies 2014; Tornaghi 2014, 2017), or other non/anti-capitalist relations of production stemming from the non-commodification of land (cf. Polanyi 1944). The agency of everyday production of space by residents exists alongside the capitalist mode of production as counter-hegemony and in opposition to the homogenizing rationality of state space (Lefebvre 2009:187-188, 211, 223, 227). The ontological shift produces space with the potential to heal past traumas and current violence, and that works to heal struggling communities as a whole; it establishes spaces like Rid-All and myriad other community gardens and public spaces of production, which have helped heal, educate, and build community among those who have spent time in these spaces. Marlisha's experience is indicative of the praxis-oriented spatial ontology and how it conflicts with the difficulty of accessing land:

> I began to look at ways in which to help the neighborhood heal. [The question was] how could we bring healing to a place that's broken. The scab is laying there bare.[35] You understand.
>
> … I was blessed to be able to make a little bit of a dent in that area because [the CDC president] was kind enough to give me a parcel of land. … I was like, "I can't wait for them to "employ" me. I gotta create something." … Back then when I first started, it was kind of cut and dry. Easier to get parcels, but still. There's a lot of red tape. The hoops that you have to jump through! It shouldn't take a year to find out whether or not you can actually access a property. ... You know, you got bare land, it's not doing anything. Why does it have to take a year. Why do I have to kiss a councilman's ass to get them to sign off for it, and all the rest of it?
>
> … You get a parcel of land. How much are you really going to spend on this parcel of land to improve it? Capital improvements, I would call it, on a spreadsheet of expenses. So, they want to track you for three years to see what kind of capital improvements – or improvements – whether or not you're actually going to operate this business, at the end of that time, you're gonna take a piece of parcel, that really wasn't worth shit when you look at it, because what? It wasn't producing anything, had no real value.... Why should you expect me to spend my time, spend my income, put money into something, so that at the end of three years, you could sit back there and say, "Oh yeah, that's great. Gimme $35,000 and it's yours." Really? I'm just throwing that figure up there, you understand. But you go from nothing, to whose valuation is going to

[35] Marlisha is referring to the serial killing of 11 black women, and other violent crimes, by Anthony Sowell, who was arrested in 2009 when several bodies were discovered buried on his property and in his house in the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood of Cleveland.

> say? What is that actually worth, when your blood, sweat, tears, and income, is going into it?

In other words, residents are being asked to pay twice for the land: first in the work they do to raise its economic value and again in its subsequently increased market price. Marlisha's main frustration is with what she called the "policies and procedures" of city government – how bureaucratic procedures interfere with the services that city residents expect from their elected officials. Research participants have an understanding that bureaucracies are comprised of the people who work there, the "policies and procedures" those people are instructed to follow, and the particularities of various contexts in which the latter are implemented. The ongoing negotiations between growers and state officials in trying to overcome the roadblocks to a counter-hegemonic production of space, including negotiations over land value and aesthetics, demonstrate how the state (and associated strategies and structures of governance) exists as a process (Brenner 2004; Harvery 1973; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1980, 2000).

Lefebvre's emphasis on meeting inhabitants' needs points to the supremacy of use value and access (not only for individuals but for a broader community of urban inhabitants) that is directly contradicted by the enclosures of city land through land bank structures, the reluctance of state officials to systematically adopt alternative land-use practices, and the production of space for capitalist investment or development. Appropriation of space "includes the right of inhabitants to physically access, occupy, and use urban space" (Purcell 2002:103); and includes both rights "to occupy already produced space" and "to produce urban space so that it meets the needs of inhabitants," (Ibid.) a more radical (political, social, and spatial) transformation of both the urban form and of state power through everyday resistance (Lefebvre 1991, 1996, 2009).

Deploying a socio-spatial dialectic to understand both state and urban processes – a spatial turn in attention to power and authority – brings together a proliferation of scholarship on the multiple scales and levels of state practices, as well as the changing location of state power and authority to both subnational and supranational levels (Brenner 2004; Jessop 2000; McCann 2003; Soss, Fording and Schram 2011; Swyngedouw 1997). The constant movement of capital is necessary for its survival (Harvey 2008; Marx 1992), and the adaptations of capital to prevailing political, economic, and spatial conditions of society are mirrored in the constant change and scalar morphology within various apparatuses of the state. This is relevant to cities' need to attract and secure capital as it moves across space. In Cleveland, the 'banking' of vacant land can be understood as a way to adapt the city to the needs of global capital: to offer up state space a part of the "spatial fix" of capital.

Urban space indeed plays an important market role in this "spatial fix" whereby capital roots itself, at least temporarily in space, to allow for continued growth, expansion, and accumulation[36] (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Harvey 1989; Jessop 2000). Conversely, the everyday contestation of capitalist relations through appropriation and the production of space has the potential to contest or partially displace a neoliberalized capitalist system that privileges economic growth within a particular space to the detriment of social relations. For Lefebvre, the urban is a key site where the state materializes to both shape and be shaped by the everyday lives of urban inhabitants (1991, 1996, 2009); it is where the activities and living conditions of denizens continuously confront the state in both small and large ways.

[36] While for Marx, systems of production and politico-capitalist apparatus exist within "'natural space"' and do little to change it (Lefebvre 2009), Lefebvre theorizes space as both socially produced and produced through state power for the purposes of capitalist production. Social space goes largely unaccounted for in Marx's writings; however, Marx did develop a spatial understanding of the crises of capital as they are exacerbated by the separation of "biophysical crises in one box, and accumulation crises in another", or what Marx called the metabolic rift (Moore 2011:1; see also Bellamy Foster 1999; Loftus 2011; Smith 2008).

That being said, Lefebvre's right to the city – the privileging of socio-spatial relations – remains abstract, whereas the reality of increasing neoliberalization and a politics of austerity continue to pressure low-income residents to take responsibility for their own well-being. In this process, low-income residents and residents of color, viewed as not-quite-full-citizens (cf. Somers 2006; Wilson 2007b), are prevented from becoming more sovereign subjects. In other words, the right to the city demands a reckoning of citizenship practices, including through the epistemic lens of what it means to produce value in the city.

In this context, the pursuit of urban agriculture (specifically) or the production of more just spaces (in general) are only partially effective in resisting a hegemonic market-dominant and globalized approach to urban development (Jessop 2000; Sassen 2000; While et al. 2004). Nor have alternative urban land uses succeeded in truly shifting patterns of economic investment at either the local or the global scale. However, many current enactments of Lefebvre's right to the city can be seen as resistance against homogenized urban space (Lefebvre 1991, 1996). In some cases, philanthropic dollars allow for creative and collaborative placemaking to increase the artistic and cultural draw of a neighborhood, and engage community residents on creating and enacting their vision for space. Investment in placemaking can contest or partially displace a neoliberal capitalist system that privileges economic growth to the detriment of social relations. This supports a more expansive and holistic paradigm of neighborhood change, supporting a production of space that allows alternative visions of the urban to be enacted from a grassroots perspective (Angelo 2017; Lefebvre 1991). However, placemaking can also contribute to the market fundamentalist paradigm of development, as it becomes the responsibility of residents and community development agencies to continue this work, often through continued solicitation of grant funding to both perpetuate investment and attempt to equalize uneven investment. In other words, placemaking risks becoming an empty discursive tool of development rather than an actual shift in the power dynamics.

IV. CONCLUSION: LAND AS A RACIAL PROJECT

The enclosure of land through Cleveland's mechanisms of governance, includes the City and County Land Banks, other institutional arrangements that hold or process land, and the CDC-as-gatekeeper structure. Spaces are implicitly privatized – enclosed – by a legal structure designed for the accumulation of future value. These enclosures create value through artificially produced scarcity of land in Cleveland, while also erecting barriers to access or ownership among growers. As a result, racialized demarcations between areas of growth and development and areas that have been historically redlined, segregated, disinvested in, and disciplined are reinforced (Dwyer and Jones 2000; Soss 2013; Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011; Wacquant 2008). The material implications of the dominant epistemology of land valuation by city planners and other city officials together with historical socio-spatial patterns of urban development and disinvestment constitute a land-based racial project in Cleveland. The counter-movement to this racial project reclaims land value as use value, thereby re-embedding social relations into economic relations (Polanyi 1944).

The black agrarian imaginary asserts a vision for the black community that contests the production of racialized space, or the racial projects of land and development (Omi and Winant 1994). What are often assumed to be either "natural" or unintentional patterns in urban development emerge as the products of powerful socio-spatial forces. Awareness of how these racial projects have impacted the black community is deeply embedded in the black agrarian imaginary. As this chapter has explained, spatial patterns of growers' access to land in the city are also quite uneven.

In Cleveland, gentrified areas and areas of heavy investment "have been designed and regulated to systematically exclude particularly poor blacks" (Wilson 2007a:37). Scalar shifts in both

power (such as CNP's ReImagining grant) and capital (the "spatial fix") have only worsened trends of uneven growth and decline across urban space. Chapter 2 deals with the foreclosure crisis as an important part of the historical geography of Cleveland; the loss of real estate value – almost 90% in some predominantly black neighborhoods (WLRC 2015) – points to a vicious cycle over history that, in part, drives the epistemic rift of value.

Land and property in some of the most impoverished neighborhoods in Cleveland are "more strenuously subject to market rule" (Wilson 2007a:38). This signals a disciplining of poor spaces (and people) that threatens a simultaneous abandonment of social services and hyper-surveillance through mechanisms of the carceral state, including overpolicing (as described in Chapter 2) (Gilmore 2002; McKittrick 2011; Wilson 2007b). Under the logic of discipline, neighborhoods are triaged: there are those that are successfully growing, those that are actively gentrifying, and "discipline[d] … to revalorize" (Wilson 2007a:38), and those that are areas of concentrated poverty and segregation, the "black ghetto". For these latter neighborhoods, the situation is different. They are, as described by former Cleveland city planner Chis Jenks, often written off as "barely on the map" (Ibid). Seen as "culturally failing and productively inept," these spaces are discursively and politically constructed as "landscapes of disaccumulation" (Ibid), where both private and state investors hesitate to provide capital and yet residents are expected to conform to the logics of neoliberalism, namely in becoming self-sufficient, responsible, and productive urban citizens.

The authors of the unpublished report described earlier in this chapter strongly encouraged the City Planning Department to "[r]ecognize intentional, long-term, multifunctional green spaces as essential elements of resilient, equitable, economically vital neighborhoods" (Abdelazim et al. 2016). While they do not directly address race or racialization as factors in the management of land, the question of equity is deeply embedded in many of the challenges facing growers as

they navigate access to land and other resources. When land is understood through the lens of a racial project and from an alternative epistemic valuation, it represents "the right of African Americans to find dignity and material well-being in [the] environments they encounte(r)" (Rickford 2017:957).

Conversely, the vacant land in Cleveland also represents a great managerial burden for the city of Cleveland, hence the advice to "[b]e more strategic about holding properties" (Abdelazim et al. 2016:6). According to this perspective, while the Sustainable Development Pattern Map[37] is potentially a useful tool for both urban development and transparency regarding land access, it needs to be further refined, with less of a broad strokes approach.

One step towards asserting an alternative valuation of land in the city would be to integrate "long-term, multifunctional green spaces" (Ibid.) as part of the city landscape and city planning practices (Knuth 2016). This would also represent a positive step towards racial equity in land use and planning decision-making, contesting the racial project imbued in city land. The City and County Land Banks currently manage vacant land through the principle of "highest and best use." A structure such as a community land trust, on the other hand, could begin to shift the power dynamics by helping to democratize access to land, including through long-term leases and land ownership (Turnbull 2017).

The practices of black urban growers are partly in response to the perceived neglect by and deep-seated mistrust of the (local) state. Growers are cognizant of the racialized histories and geographies of uneven development across Cleveland. Cleveland is a city notoriously on

[37] The Sustainable Development Pattern Map mentioned earlier by an urban planner in an interview outlines parts of the city set aside and prioritized for future development. This map comprises 41 percent of city land, including the entirety of the Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone. This same report suggests establishing high-priority zones within strategic areas of prioritized development, and recommends that the vacant holdings of the City Land Bank be narrowed to those select areas.

decline over the past several decades, meaning there has been widespread population loss, and the exodus of industry and business. The narrative of decline, however, is oversimplified; it does not truly illustrate the extent to which this city, as a site of post-industrial transformation, has experienced intensely uneven development and investment across space. The very selective redevelopment of particular areas of the city results in less state investment in predominantly black and low-income neighborhoods. Furthermore, black subjects within these high-vacancy communities report heightened pressure to sell their homes and move to more densely populated areas to allow for increased efficiency of service provision. Food production alone cannot fill all of the gaps of a retreating state or private sector service providers. But nor is urban agriculture food production alone, which is why it represents a pathway toward increased community resilience and solidarity.

Epistemologies of Value, Development, and Economy

The epistemic tension presented in this chapter around the valuation of vacant land is not isolated from other challenges to enacting the black agrarian imaginary. The worldview of black urban growers regarding land, its use, and the deep connection between black subjects and the land they steward is central to the black agrarian imaginary; however, the latter is comprised of much more than relationships to the land. The production of space, how communities develop and change over time, and their (social) relationships to the economy and entrepreneurial engagement are also central to the vision held by black urban growers in Cleveland. The question of value, as a contested and malleable concept (Knuth 2016; Weber 2002), is central to the contested power dynamics that play out across the urban terrain. My research has shown that the City's understanding of land value in Cleveland includes both current and future potential value, but with no clear timeframe for future development, who it would directly impact, or to whom the benefits would accrue.

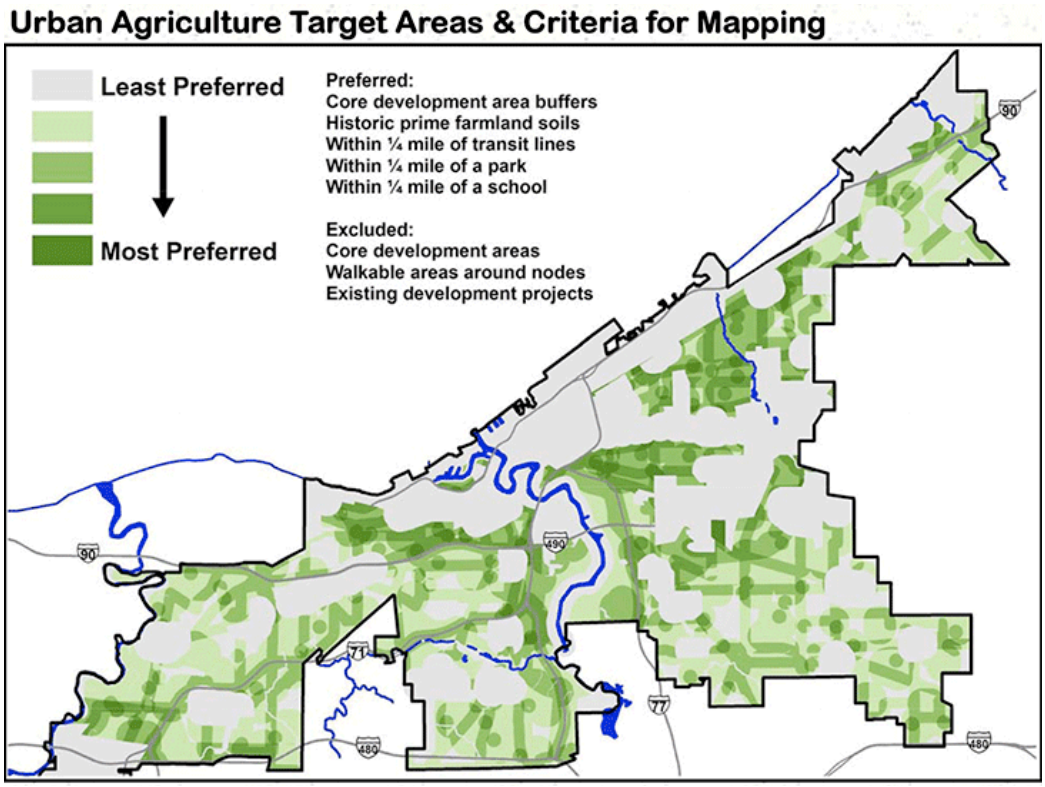

Figure 1: Retrieved from http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/oh/programs/?cid=nrcs144p2_029508

CHAPTER 4: BLACK ENTREPRENEURIALISM IN THE CITY

I. EPISTEMOLOGIES OF COMMUNITY BENEFIT

In Cleveland, black growers are continuously negotiating and renegotiating their relationship to the city – to the urban space, the political arenas, and the economies (both alternative and hegemonic) that help to constitute the city. Spatially, the drive for ownership over and use of land, or other means of long-term access to land is evident. Many growers have been involved in some form of self-provisioning for decades, including what has colloquially become known as "guerilla gardening," which endeavors to "reclaim land from perceived neglect or misuse and assign new purpose to it" through unsanctioned use (Metcalf and Widener 2011:1242). Growers also describe barriers to greater permanence in food provisioning, including regarding land access. Politically, growers' engagement around land and food happens through Ward meetings, Block Club meetings, and in interactions with the various Community Development Corporations. These venues are often discursively framed by officials as opportunities for residents to voice their perspectives on political processes – including spatial processes, such as neighborhood and city planning listening sessions. As I have shown, however, the CDC system is often perceived by residents not as a listening ear for their voices, but either as an arm of the City administration or as independent, with its own agenda.

The economic pursuits of Cleveland's black growers are an extensive web of interrelated activities adapted to the lives of these urban inhabitants. Entrepreneurialism among black growers, the focus of this chapter, represents a drive to create something that can sustain, or even regenerate communities, while also being profitable. Black entrepreneurialism among growers is motivated by a strong community-embedded ethic. Associated ideals of self-determination and self-provisioning among black entrepreneurs stem not from a neoliberal individualism, but rather from the drive to build power within the black community as a whole

through ownership and control over resources. In a footnote to his famous *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci quotes Engels on' discussion of the withering away of the state: "With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously the mastery of the product over the producer" (quoted in Gramsci 1971/2014:257). This quote highlights not only a theorized process of the transfer of state power to a larger collective of citizens (a scalar shift in state power, also described by Lefebvre's theories on *autogestion*), but also effectively describes much of the motivation for black growers in Cleveland. Entrepreneurialism among growers is deeply rooted in non-alienated relationships to production, an emphasis on community benefit and inclusion, and the de-commodification of both food and labor.

For black growers in Cleveland, the desire to create something that is both profitable and socially regenerative from their agricultural pursuits is strong. During a meeting of the Black Food Justice Collaborative (BFJC), one of the members emphasized the vision to create "a society inside a society," or a space for the black community to "create our own structures," rather than allowing businesses or entrepreneurs to "come into our community, collect our money, and then leave" (personal communication 2016).

In a city where land is a site of contestation, subject to different epistemologies of value, the ways in which this commoditized use value is economically deployed is also a complex negotiation. Just as city planners sometimes recognize the importance of alternative land uses, most black growers do not reject capitalist economic relations altogether. Indeed, this is a productive point of engagement between growers and city officials. The majority of growers would like to be paid for their work, want access to resources and markets (including farmer's markets, grocery stores, restaurants, and catering services), and would like to see more philanthropic and government investment in the work they do on the land. In other words,

growers often work towards a degree of self-sufficiency. But they do not want their work to be valued through an exclusively market dominant lens. Their entrepreneurialism is embedded in and prioritizes community needs, not just profit. . The model of capitalism and entrepreneurialism cultivated by growers in spaces across Cleveland eschews classical and neoliberal ideals of individualism, as they prioritize social relations and community benefit above profit: their vision for self-sufficiency is through self-determination and control over the processes that govern their lives.

As a standalone strategy for development and neighborhood change, entrepreneurship does not promise a shift in power dynamics at any scale, whether within a particular community or the city more broadly. Power relations exist within social space, which is also produced by social relations and social interactions. The production of space, therefore exists *in relationship* with the constitution of state/economic structures and power relations across space, as they are continuously mediated and (re)negotiated. As such, entrepreneurialism risks becoming a tacit expansion of neoliberal individualism and belief in personal responsibility at a hyperlocal scale, as black entrepreneurs negotiate relationships as members of a community but also as economic actors. Their endeavors – largely framed as for community benefit – risk devolving responsibilities of the state as it retracts services within communities, transferring those responsibilities to individuals within communities, along with the ancillary ideological shifts.

The entrepreneurial endeavors and objectives of black growers are not entirely anti-capitalist, or completely outside of the capitalist economy. Rather, the entrepreneurialism represented by most black urban farmers in Cleveland exists as a tension between the desire for market access and the ability to earn profits – even livelihoods – from growing food, and the historically embedded desire to establish something different. While black entrepreneurialism does risk expanding the neoliberal logic, black growers engage economically not as individuals, but

rather as a part of the larger black community. Entrepreneurial endeavors are often linked to historical struggles and traumas experienced over generations including slavery, sharecropping, and segregation, and emerge as a strategy for a production of space that is healing to the collective memory of these experiences. Gardeners and farmers talk about ownership, self-determination, and self-sustaining within communities as both a reaction to traumatic histories of exploitation and as a pathway to liberation from a marginalized and displaced spatio-political positioning.

Global Economic Restructuring

Over the last few decades, and especially since the financial and foreclosure crisis of the early 2000s, Cleveland has come to be governed through economic austerity and intense spatial management. Geographer Jamie Peck describes economic austerity as a federally imposed strategy of "fiscal retrenchment" that is "often targeted on city governments, and on the most vulnerable, both socially and spatially" (2012:626). Cities are often the "victims of economic restructuring," "processes of globalization [that] make their fiscal tax base particularly vulnerable to the effects of financial instability" (Donald et al. 2017:5). This assessment is particularly salient in Cleveland, which was for a long time globally competitive in industry, and at one point the fifth largest city in the United States. Now it competes with other mid-size and shrinking cities in new sectors such as health, education, and innovation.

Amid deindustrialization and other economic changes that have negatively impacted Cleveland's economy, the City has been renegotiating its footing as a productive urban center, trying to reposition itself as globally competitive or as an attractive site of capital investment (Cameron and Palan 2004).[38] One actor in this process is Global Cleveland, an organization that

[38] The "rolling out" of state and governance mechanisms to enable the free movement of capital includes both heightened national economic control and deregulation of trade between national states, as well as a

strives to attract a global population to the city in order to "transform Cleveland into an international hub of innovation" and "promote globalization and regional prosperity" through engagement across sectors and geographies (globalcleveland.org). Both the Mayor of Cleveland and the County Executive[39] sit on the Advisory Board of Global Cleveland. The impetus to reestablish itself as competitive and prosperous, even as it struggles to maintain its population (and therefore tax base) may explain some of the policies and practices of the City regarding vacant land management and other areas of governance. Institutions such as the Cleveland Clinic, the University Hospitals, Case Western Reserve University, and several technology firms boasting innovation and efficiency in production are all striving for an increased footprint in the predominantly low-income and of color east side of Cleveland.

The narrative of a future renaissance for Cleveland – "the comeback city" – helps to perpetuate and rationalize widespread enclosure of land to the detriment of growers' alternative epistemologies of land use. As outlined in the previous chapter, the misalignment of value propositions between the City and its residents is a barrier to the effective co-production of the city by both residents and the administrative apparatus, even as it encourages an alternative epistemology of the urban among growers. Economically, growers' relationship to the City and to urban space is in continual flux, in part because of intense spatial land management, globally informed politics of austerity, and the relative neglect of entire areas of the city and segments of the population.

This chapter explores the extent to which the economic endeavors of black gardeners and farmers exist within a traditional, even neoliberal, capitalist paradigm, and how – if at all – their economic pursuits tap into an alternative economic relationships, informed by a specifically

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proliferation of offshore or extrastatal economic organizations not rooted in particular places or confined by territorial boundaries (Cameron and Palan 2004; Peck and Tickell 2002).

[39] The County Executive is the head of the executive governing body for Cuyahoga county.

black agrarianism. This line of inquiry sheds light on the concept of black entrepreneurialism, as it has been named and described by growers in Cleveland, and how it strives to be profitable *at the same time* as it contests capitalist ideology, working towards an alternative vision for community development and the value of land.

While much of the literature on rural and urban neoliberal restructuring portrays urban areas as increasingly reliant upon market access to goods and services, in Cleveland, entire segments of the population are excluded from reliable (or affordable) market access (see also Chapter 2). Demand for provisioning through the market system is partly a function of neoliberal restructuring (Madanipour 2018), but specifically among black residents in the city, it is also related to dispossession from land over time (Gilbert, Sharp, and Felin 2002; Mitchell 2001; Rickford 2017). Black residents (especially "second generation" migrants to the city) have commonly engaged in more monetized economic relationships. Major factors in the rejection of agrarianism were the framing of rural agrarian practices as backward (see Zeiderman 2006), and a collective memory of other hardships that previous generations endured under the plantation logics of slavery, sharecropping, and tenant farming. The Great Migration is often described in mostly economic terms: the opportunities of cities in the industrializing north pulled black Americans away from their rural, agrarian lives in southern states in favor of the modern amenities and lifestyle available in cities. However, scholars of history and geography often describe how the push factors from the south included terroristic behavior on the part of white landowners asserting a white supremacist plantation ideology (Kelley 2002; Woods (1998/2017; Wilkerson 2010). Many who left the south did not have specific ties to any particular city or place, but rather were fleeing oppression. Given that context, the rejection of subsistence lifestyles as laborious and demanding is quite rational.

Notwithstanding, engagement in urban food production - especially among elders and youth - is robust. Cleveland is a city with great potential for using urban agriculture as a pathway towards increased community resilience, food sovereignty, and community health. As described in chapter 3, urban agriculture is often a response to downturns and instability or fluctuations in the economy (Drake and Lawson 2014; Lawson 2004), and because of this, is often only considered to be temporary or contingent land use (Németh and Langhorst 2014;). Many urban subsistence practices, including agricultural production, are partly a reaction to the longer-term economic and spatial shifts that have occurred in different periods of global restructuring of capital (Araghi 2008; _____). While white terror was a major motivating force, the growth of industrial production in the north and the mechanization of agriculture in the south, did help to catalyze the massive migration of black Americans from southern states to cities in the north throughout much of the twentieth century (Woods 1998/2017). As I have already discussed, continued shifts in the economic and spatial organization of production systems have included the massive exodus of industry from Cleveland (and other cities like it) and the establishment of different sectors of production. In today's era of neoliberal capitalism, the increasing movement and liberation of capital occurs to the detriment of long-term investment in place (Loftus 2006): jobs and even industries are no longer tied to a city or a region, resulting in widespread decoupling of the historical labor supply from the demands of the economy. In other words, the skill set of labor in Cleveland does not match the needs of the industry and other employment opportunities in the city.

Widespread shifts in economic structure, or the increasing penetration of capital in all corners of the globe, are often analyzed in conjunction with questions about the persistence of agrarian production in the face of capitalization (Kautsky 1988; Watts 1996). Araghi writes that this process has caused the "elimination of nonmarket access to the means of livelihood for millions of people" and notes that the number of people who rely on agriculture for subsistence or their

livelihoods declined by a third of a billion people around the turn of the 21st century (2008:146). Simultaneously, Philip McMichael (1997, 2016), professor of global renown, Jan Douwe van der Ploeg (2010), and others (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010; Moore 2010; Weissman 2014) seek to account for the persistence of the peasantry, and even the reemergence of peasant production. McMichael interprets new agrarian social movements as resistance to the increasing neoliberalization of a corporate food regime and other globalization and development projects of the twenty-first century. Araghi (2008) indicates that, whereas in rural areas, food may or may not be available through markets or other mechanisms, within urban areas, food is generally available . Similarly, Marc Cohen and James Garrett at the International Food Policy Research Institute observe that "[u]rban dwellers have to purchase almost all their food as well as other goods and services" (2009:3). However, food for sale in pockets of the urban environment (particularly low-income neighborhoods of color) may not be easily accessed, affordable, culturally appropriate, or nutritious, which encourages many urban residents to pursue urban food production. This yields two interrelated questions: firstly, to what extent does the uneven penetration of capital into a racialized urban terrain lead to increased reliance on agriculture; and secondly, how do market relations amongst the most marginalized and neglected urban populations respond to or accommodate these practices, if at all.

The literature on questions of access to food in marginalized urban spaces is clear on the answers to the first of those two questions (Clendenning, Dressler, and Richards 2016; Galt, Gray, and Hurley 2014; McClintock 2008, 2014; Tornaghi 2017). In times of economic downturn and in spaces of concentrated poverty, residents turn to and the state apparatus encourages participation in urban food production. The second question is addressed by this chapter, which examines the ways in which the subsistence practices of growers also represent more long-term economic ventures, as well as the ideological and epistemic underpinnings of those entrepreneurial engagements.

This chapter is the second of three that explore the epistemic tensions within and between groups of growers and the administrative or state apparatus of the City of Cleveland. Chapter 3 explored the competing valuations of land in Cleveland, and the associated implications for those attempting to establish alternative spaces of production and consumption within a predominantly capitalist city in decline. The production of spaces of alternative land use exists largely in the interstices of dominant capitalist relations, with many growers articulating a tension between the desire for access to capitalist markets, and a rejection of what those markets represent (particularly for black populations). In other words, black growers recognize that they have not been well served by the dominant racialized capitalist system, and often express a desire to build alternative economies with social protections that contribute to community well-being and resilience (see Fraser 2012). As this chapter articulates, the drive towards alternative models of economic relations, and the motivation to establish "a society within a society" that brings "black food to black plates" is, and has historically been, strong among black growers in Cleveland (Galt, Gray, and Hurley 2014; Gordon Nembhard 2014; personal communication 2015). What I call *black agrarian entrepreneurship* describes alternative economic relationships rooted in agricultural production that emphasize social protections rather than exploitation and resource extraction.

II. BLACK AGRARIAN ENTREPRENEURIALISM

In the early 1900s, black farmers owned more than 16 million acres of land across the United States; by the early 2000s, that number had fallen to less than 2 million, with fewer than 20,000 black farmers remaining (Edge 2017; Gilbert, Sharp and Felin 2002), constituting less than two percent of total farmers in the US. In 1982, the US Commission on Civil Rights predicted that black farmers in the United States would disappear by the year 2000 (US Commission on Civil Rights 1982). But black farming in the United States persists in the face of deepening

neoliberalization, discrimination (instantiated over time by a lack of access to loans, unfavorable land heritage laws, land theft, and white terrorism), and racist patterns of displacement (both from the south and within the north). Given this context, and the continued difficulties facing black farmers in both urban and rural areas, it is notable that the number of black farmers is currently rising. Black farmers still only comprise a very small fraction (less than two percent) of farmers across the United States; however, the numbers are growing – due in part to a significant increase in urban farming within the black community. According to Leah Penniman, a self-described BIPOC[40] farmer outside of Albany, NY, the rise in black farming is due in part to a reliance on "survival strategies inherited from their ancestors," including not only food growing practices but also "collectivism and commitment to social change" (Penniman 2016; see also Reese 2018).

Many black farmers and gardeners in Cleveland envision stewarding an alternative economic relationship to specific urban farmers markets and to a more abstract "market" (cf. Gibson-Graham 1996/2006). While urban growers have a desire to be included in the capitalist market, and would like access to farmers markets or other outlets to sell their produce, they also strive to establish separate economies designed to serve an exclusively black population through a more community-oriented approach. Mansfield, who owns an urban vineyard and Biocellar in Hough, considers himself a businessman, and aims to earn profits from the wine he sells. However, he has created something that exists outside of a purely capitalist system. He employs men restarting their lives after carrying out prison sentences. As a formerly incarcerated person himself, job creation within the community is at least as important to Mansfield's agricultural venture as what he grows. He quips, "create crops, create jobs" (personal communication 2016).

[40] BIPOC is an acronym for Black and Indigenous People of Color, and is a relatively new term used to signify racially oppressed and marginalized groups and individuals.

Additionally, his Biocellar[41] is mostly an arena for education, where he experiments with different kinds of plants, and teaches those who work for him how to grow. As a business and a jobs program, Mansfield's operation aligns with conventional capitalist ideologies; however, he intentionally works with a particularly vulnerable, mostly of color, and extremely neglected segment of the population.

The persistence of (collective) self-provisioning among black urban growers has to be understood in the context of a dominant capitalist market, that, according to many predictions, should have eliminated peasant modes of production as well as black farmers in the US – and indeed, very nearly succeeded. Market dominance creates a near-complete commodification of all aspects of the food system (including land), discouraging alternative economic engagement, including subsistence practices. In this vein, urban food production represents a rejection of (historically white) hegemonic market forces and a demand for more room for individuals, families, and communities to provision themselves with food. At times, the desired economic structures replicate white capitalism, but are structured explicitly to accrue benefits to the black community by keeping black money in black neighborhoods. Other economic structures represent a rejection of capitalist relations altogether through the establishment of alternative economies that support community growth and development, such as cooperative and collaborative ventures, and economies of sharing.

Angela, a young black entrepreneur involved in youth programming that includes urban agricultural education and music production, articulated a desire for increased ownership within the black community. Her vision entails the creation of a specifically black economy – one that exists within the black community, and, to an extent, mirrors white capitalism. However, rather

[41]A pyramidal glass structure built into the ground to create a warmer and wetter climate for crops and fruit trees that would otherwise not survive the winters in Cleveland.

than a market dominant economy, her vision for a black economic structure would explicitly benefit black community members: an economic structure embedded in social relations, built by and for the benefit of the historically marginalized, disenfranchised, and economically excluded. AJ, an entrepreneur and farmer who leases a plot of land in Garden Valley and also works with youth, explained:

> We don't point our fingers at anyone; we just solve the problems. That's what an entrepreneur does. Stop looking outside, like, "everything's not going my way;" become an entrepreneur. That's what entrepreneurship is all about. That's what America is all about: solving problems and creating solutions for your community.

The entrepreneurial ethic described by Angela and AJ is neither purely neoliberal capitalist nor anti-capitalist, rather – like many black entrepreneurs – they aspire to succeed financially and to own something that exists for the advantage of the black community as a whole. When I asked AJ whether entrepreneurship could provide solutions for many of the structural, historical, and racialized inequities facing the black community, or whether the state had a role to play, he responded:

> I feel like entrepreneurship plays a big chunk of that, but then the assistance from the state will be a boost from the higher end. Get it going, [and then] with the state and the government, like I said, we support that. Because they have all the resources, so we need to build some type of relationship with them.

Black urban growers, like the peasantry in many rural agrarian spaces, seek to engage with markets on their own terms, diversifying their entrepreneurial engagement to avoid relying on only one source of income or funding, but also embedding community care and economies of reciprocity into their entrepreneurial visions.

Entrepreneurialism as Counter-Hegemony

This alternative market ideology is the least cohesive component of a counter-hegemony among growers (theorized in chapters 3, 4, and 5). It is thus perhaps the most illuminating example of the negotiations that growers undertake (and the tensions that exist) in their relationship to the city, to entrepreneurialism, and to the food movement. While almost every grower I interviewed

had a slightly different vision for economic engagement, what they share is a desire to establish their own sense of community belonging through food provisioning: a way to be black, produce black spaces, support black economies, and grow and eat black foods, within this city. Many were interested in (or had previous experience with) collaborative or cooperative economic structures; some farmers wanted better access to already existing markets (such as the historic West Side Market, or one of the many regular farmers markets across the city, all of which attract a largely white and affluent consumer base (cf. Slocum 2007)). Many were interested in creating jobs for youth, for returning citizens, or for other community members. A few small farmers expressed a desire to aggregate products with other growers in order to amass enough to sell to restaurants, catering companies, or institutions across the city, such as the Cleveland Clinic. The common thread across all of these disparate visions for economic engagement was a desire for increased economic capacity or entrepreneurial engagement designed explicitly for community benefit.

In St. Clair-Superior, a neighborhood in the northeastern part of Cleveland, Dawn and Lou obtained a lease for two parcels of land directly adjacent to their family property, which includes the house where the brother and sister lived with their elderly father. A third parcel lay next to the first two; however, the lease approval had not yet come through on this piece of land. They were told by someone in the land bank that the application that property had been filed improperly. Dawn and Lou envisioned installing a hoop house on the third parcel using grant money from the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and the USDA. They wanted to purchase the land, but the response from their local CDC was that community gardens were not considered to be appropriate long-term use for this land. Dawn and Lou completed the Master Gardening program through Ohio State University Cooperative Extension, as well as a Master Composting class; their knowledge was deep, and sanctioned by the prevailing municipal authorities on urban gardening. Their garden was well organized, and included raised beds, a

mandala garden, and a keyhole garden.[42] Although they were only able to obtain a short-term lease for all of the parcels, the pair was committed to investing in the land and stewarding a vision for the future of their community.

The seeds and seedlings that Dawn and Lou used for their garden came from Summer Sprout, a community gardening program operated through the Ohio State University's Cooperative Extension services (OSUe) and financed by the City of Cleveland. Seedlings as well as other services and supplies (soil, lumber, trainings, etc.) are free; however, gardeners who participate in this program cannot sell the produce that they grow. Amina, who gardens in Glenville, remarked that because the City of Cleveland pays for the seeds, if gardeners were to turn around and sell their produce, it would be like "double dipping." She continued, "with our market garden, we don't use any of the Summer Sprout stuff. I pay out of my pocket for that stuff. I know the difference. I don't cheat like that." An OSUe extension agent explained her understanding of the City's restriction: "Once you put a price tag on something, it becomes inaccessible to someone in the community."

However, another perspective on this limitation is that it prevents people from profiting from their own labor.[43] Summer Sprout's policy was brought up at a meeting of the Black Food

[42] A mandala is an artistic practice of meditation, usually a circular drawing or painting (sometimes with sand) that contains repetitive floral or spiral patterns within it. Following this idea, a mandala garden is designed to be a meditative space: it is generally a circular arrangement of beds, with smaller circles or squares nested inside it, often with walking paths carved strategically around the beds.. The keyhole garden uses found objects (bricks, stones, branches) to build a layered bed featuring a small, contained, compost pile in the middle which replenishes and gradually leaches nutrients into the soil where crops are being grown.

[43] Other sources of free seeds (but not seedlings) across the city (including the Cleveland Seed Bank, and seed libraries within the Cleveland Public Library system that) do not have the same restrictions on what growers can do with their produce. For example, The Hummingbird Project, which sources seeds for the Cleveland Seed Bank and Seed Libraries, has a stated goal of "building regenerative ecological systems and empowering individuals in resource poor locales" (clevelandseedbank.org). While the main objective of this organization is to promote seed saving, they are working specifically with farmers (across the world) to alleviate reliance on chemical fertilizers and other resource-heavy inputs to help farmers achieve greater (economic) resilience and sustainability.

Justice Collaborative (BJFC), where one of the members explained how it restricted economic development.

> The community garden [program], you can only give that food away. If we're looking at economic development… unless we buy the land. If we go through the City's community gardening program, we cannot sell the food. But we don't have to go through them. We know enough – and plus, they give us substandard stuff.

Another BFJC member highlighted the tensions that arise when Summer Sprout community gardeners want to transition to an entrepreneurial model:

> Ohio State manages the grants – the City of Cleveland pays for that stuff. That's the old Cleveland Gardening program that we had at the [public] schools. The problem is that you can't sell food you grow; you've got to give it away. But if you want to go from a community garden to a market garden, they make you dump a lot of the food. Community gardeners can't sell the food unless you jump through all these hoops. You eventually can become something other than a community gardener, but there's been a couple of people that we know that the city made it hard. I don't know why, but they made it difficult.

Within Cleveland's community of black growers, the drive towards an entrepreneurial model of gardening and farming in Cleveland is strong. However, the ideal model of entrepreneurialism – what some of my research participants term "black entrepreneurialism" – is far from a *pur et dur* capitalist model of enterprise.

> [F]or the black community, [it's] reclaiming a history of being able to work the land, enjoy green space, and knowing how to cook, and making money doing that. We've gotta get back to that entrepreneurial spirit. It's been lost, in some cases, in the city. We've been able to do some things suburban-wise, but the core city, and you know the reality is that – just like in DC and other places where black people have been pushed out to the suburbs and the whites come back into the city – and it's the high rent district again. That's where we're headed.

These comments were from Sofie, who does community engagement work in black neighborhoods in Cleveland. She describes the endeavors of black residents as constrained by "unemployment, blight, illness, crime – all those negative things," but insists that by providing a roadmap, especially to community leaders, to access land and to engage economically can effectively empower black residents.

Angela, a young black entrepreneur involved in youth programming that includes urban agricultural education articulates a desire for increased ownership within the black community following a vision of the creation of a specifically black economy – one that exists within the black community, and, to an extent, mirrors what she and others often refer to as "white capitalism." However, rather than a strictly market-driven economy, her vision for black entrepreneurialism entails black economic structures that would exist explicitly for the benefit of the black community: a black economic structure embedded in social relations, built by the historically marginalized and for the benefit of the disenfranchised, and economically excluded. Angela evoked a deep sense of pride that comes with ownership in the black community. She observed that, when it comes to ideologies of empowerment and self-actualization, that there is a huge difference "between hearing it from the man, and hearing it from within your own community." The implicit message here is that the former encourages an individualist pursuit of profit, while the latter leaves room for alternative business structures and motives. Her own business acumen has flourished in the music industry, which for her was deeply interrelated to food-growing: "there is no disconnect, really. Food, arts, and culture go together. Music is a part of everything. In this ecosystem, food is looked at as an art – something to savor, an identity you are building." Her vision, as a self-identified entrepreneur, is to build something to both share with her community and to pass on to her future children.

> People complain about capitalism, but it pays to be an owner. Ownership comes with pride. Black people have been here longer than anyone, except Native Americans, but own the least percentage of businesses. Black people have built this economy, but they are told they are too lazy to bootstrap. As a people, we are incredibly industrious, [but we] have been boxed out. There's no black ownership in the black community – so what is the legacy there? If they sell out and go to a big box store, what can they leave to their kids?

In this version of entrepreneurship, individual success and community success are intimately bound up together, sustaining each other: "It seems individualistic and boot-strapping, but it's also feeding the community." For the black community, negotiating economic engagement

within the terrain of dominant capitalist relations represents a tension between "want[ing] the proverbial 'piece of cake'" (La Rue 1975:37) and a rejection of capitalist relations entirely.

Her desire to build up black economies stems from the perceived economic impact of integration during the twentieth century. Prior to integration, black money stayed within the black community and supported black businesses; the spatial exclusion of black people from white spaces ironically helped to support black businesses. While rents and other economic benefits sometimes did accrue to white landowners or creditors, black business owners had control over their own ventures. This allowed capital to circulate for a much longer period of time within black communities than it does today (Anderson 2012). One young farmer evoked the concept of circulating money to emphasize the need for black ownership in black communities:

> You have everyone that comes in to our community [to] collect our money, and then leave. There's a statistic that says, the Jews – their money flows through their community for seventeen days. Black people, it only flows through our community for six hours. That's because we go to these stores, and they get our money. And we think they're staying in the community and giving it back, they're not giving it back. They just come into our community, take our money, and go into their [own] community and build their communities.
>
> Of course we have to own land, grocery stores… everything in our community we should own. Because everything in their community they own. [But] then you go into our community and the Arabs have the convenience stores, Koreans have the nail salons, the white people have the grocery stores. You see what I'm sayin'? We're the only people not taking charge of our communities.

The end of legal segregation in southern states brought with it an economic integration that diluted the power of black dollars across the entire economy. The statistic cited above, that a black dollar only stays within the black community for six hours, whereas a white dollar might remain as long as a month. While the original source of this statistic it not known, research participants hold on to the idea that black dollars escape easily from the black community – ultimately supporting economic ventures in other communities. Similarly, according to a study

known as "The Empowerment Experiment,"[44] out of over a billion dollars in spending power within the black community, only three percent is spent at black businesses.

In a conversation with the BFJC in Cleveland, facilitated by Malia, an organizer of the National Black Food and Justice Alliance (NBJFA), the question of ownership within the black community became central. One of the younger members of the group commented:

> We [black people] want to create jobs, create wealth… personal wealth within the community. That's what we need to do. Also take back the community, no longer allow outsiders to come in and take over. We need to be the ones that have that say-so. What I mean by that is gaining access to resources that we don't have, getting land, getting jobs, grocery stores. In the future, we need to have our own. How do I say this… we're protesting, but we're still paying bills! In the future, we need to have our own. Basically, we have to create like a society inside a society, our own society. We have to create our own structure.

Malia articulated this idea through the call to action, "How can we get black food to black plates?" To emphasize the importance of specifically black institutions and structures, Amina, who was in attendance, commented, "We're always displaced."

III. AGAINST BLACK CAPITALISM

In the mid 1960s – the era of Black Power – the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was trying to realize their interpretation of the emergent concept of Black Power through political and economic organizing in Cleveland. Black Power, first evoked in 1966 by Stokely Carmichael during a student march, came to be interpreted differently by different black nationalist and political organizations. For CORE (and others), Black Power came to mean black economic power. Working alongside one of the more radical and grassroots CDCs in Hough, CORE brought their Target City Project to Cleveland. The Target City Project was a Black Power program focused on cooperative business ownership. Cleveland CORE established a cooperatively-owned maintenance company, and even purchased a McDonald's where

[44] In partnership with Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management

employees had partial ownership and community members could buy or earn stock, in order to have ownership in the business as well. Cleveland historian Nishani Frazier asks, "If you have a business that only serves to provide income for its employees, why should the community care? What is the investment of the community in that business?" (Frazier 2019).

At the same time that CORE was establishing cooperative ownership structures in Cleveland, members were also meeting with President Nixon and his administration to try to expand the models being piloted through national legislation supporting community development. However, somewhere during those conversations, President Nixon's interpretation of collective and collaborative ownership was translated from "black economic power" to "black capitalism," with associated ideologies of individual capitalist engagement and profit. These ideologies, which persist today as the foundation of neoliberal economics, were wielded to engage black communities in capitalism. Black capitalism, needless to say, is therefore very different from the models of black entrepreneurialism evoked by many of my research participants, and the historical models that once existed in Cleveland.

Self-determination was a central and key concept across the various platforms of the Black Power movement. The "Black Woman's Manifesto," a 1975 pamphlet distributed by the Third World Women's Alliance, asserts that "[r]acism and capitalism have trampled the potential of black people in this country and thwarted their self-determination" (1975:2). In April of 1964 in Cleveland, Malcolm X spoke at a church on E. 105th Street, delivering a version of his famous "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech. In the speech, he called for political, economic, and social self-determination, as well as community control over resources (Williams 2015). Cleveland black nationalist leader Harllel Jones expressed a similar idea at the City Club of Cleveland in 1969, describing black nationalism as "black people trying to do for themselves what white people have failed to do – get them out of poverty and misery."

Historian John T. Edge explains that, for Black Nationalists who wanted to reestablish black communities in the aftermath of segregation, "[t]hey aimed to leave the system. Separatism was not just about living apart. It was about finding purpose in the absence of whites" (2017:71). Many black entrepreneurs working towards self-determination and self-provisioning of food in Cleveland envision their future in these terms. While economic engagement among black growers does not follow a uniform model, the individualism of Nixon's black capitalism does not resonate as a dominant strategy for economic empowerment. Some growers are working towards a more productivist entrepreneurial model; others only sell small quantities, while leaning more heavily either on their own unpaid labor or on small community-based grants to support their work. However, all of my research participants shared a commitment to working for and within the community, and to establishing economic relations solidly embedded within that community.

Creating a Black Economy

Rooted in a race-based consciousness of the working-class black community, black-led economic ventures are central to the visions and theories of change held by many black growers, and contribute to a sense of empowerment and resilience. A specifically black entrepreneurial spirit is embedded in the epistemologies and practices of several of the urban farmers across Cleveland's east side. The entrepreneurial aspects of their agricultural ventures stem in part from the experiences of these growers in community development and applying for grants. Non-profit and especially philanthropic funding have replaced a significant proportion of state funding in low-income communities over the last several decades (Ghose and Pettygrove 2014; Mitchell 2001). Entrepreneurship is framed in part as a mechanism of sustainability so that reliance on outside (grant or philanthropic) funding becomes secondary or entirely unnecessary. In this way, black entrepreneurialism serves to replace state investment in the

community, in part reinforcing the importance of market-based growth within community development, but also building community economies and resilience in the face of continued neglect by conventional streams of investment.

This approach demands that communities support the black entrepreneurs whose businesses are designed for their benefit. In a conversation about whose responsibility it is to find solutions to some of the challenges facing neighborhoods like Hough, Gladys commented, "the city's not going to do it. It's the people who have to do it." The "it" she is referring to encompasses the political, the economic, the social, and the spatial:

> Organize, and decide that it's what we want to for our community…. In Hough, we could organize, to say, "Okay, we're going to develop a food system," which I talk about this all the time. We're going to develop a food system that supplies the needs of the people in our Ward....If our capacity reaches higher heights, then we could be able to sell to restaurants, actually the businesses in the Ward. If you've got a restaurant in the Ward, you should be buying greens from me if you're selling greens. If you're eating lettuce, you need to be buying it from me. That's the loophole I'm talking about, and maybe not necessarily a national – although our co-op wants to be national – and we've got connections in Africa and Jamaica, but just that loop – where, okay, you have a restaurant, if you're selling greens, you can buy them from me. Period. You know, that would help me as an entrepreneur and a business owner to be able to keep this money in the community. Because that's what wrong with our communities is that the money doesn't stay there. That type of entrepreneurship, that's what I'm talking about. If we have the capacity to grow greater than that, yeah! Ultimately, I would like to be able to take some of the money from big ag.

Entrepreneurialism is a way to fill an economic vacuum in otherwise economically and spatially marginalized neighborhoods. In an era dominated by neoliberal urban development practices (Clement and Kanai 2015; Weaver 2016), ideologies of entrepreneurialism and market-based growth are deeply ingrained (Pudup 2008), even in communities who have taken on much of the underinvestment and exploitation inherent to this model. As part of a strategy for community change, entrepreneurship can easily be critiqued as reinforcing neoliberal strategies of governance, enabling the retreat of social services and state investment in particular neighborhoods (Derickson 2014; Brenner and Theodore 2002). AJ, one agriculture

entrepreneur, provided a different take, however. His vision for entrepreneurship is not only to benefit the black community, but also to establish economic structures that can attract and manage (eventual) state investment:

> People have this illusion that the government is so corrupt and racist. But if you really dissect it, it's just that [black people] don't have the information to get there. It's a lot of black people in high positions now that have access to resources that can help, but the foundation is not structured for them to send money [into black communities] and really have an impact in the community. That's where [entrepreneurs] come in, to changing the foundation, so that when the money comes in, it can sustain and circulate itself.

Entrepreneurial engagement is a demonstration of residents' agency in the face of structural shifts (Redding, James, and Klugman 2005; Sewell 1992; Sugrue 1996). Some entrepreneurs also see their work as pushing back against those shifts in economic and governance structures. While the latter (state institutions, government offices, administrative apparatuses) often seem asocial and impervious to change, the very structures that shape social relations and the practices of urban residents are, in turn, constituted by and reproduced through the actions of those urban residents (Massey 1995; Sewell 1992). Examples from the literature show poor, black, brown, and Latinx people, single mothers, the un(der)employed, and other vulnerable and historically oppressed groups engaging as individuals and as communities in ways that create huge ripples and in less overt – even illegible – ways to express their dissatisfaction and make claims on the urban structures that inform their lives (see Levenstein 2009; Patillo 2007; Susser 1982/2012; Young 1990).

Some of the structural changes that provoke urban residents to act or harness their economic agency have been born of the rolling back of the Keynesian welfare state and emergence of neoliberal policies in the 1970s, including the ideologies and policies behind President Nixon's black capitalism. Privatization of services together with the widespread retrenchment and reconfiguration of the state system under the Reagan administration in the 1980s (Wacquant

2008; Wilson 2007b) led to structural changes within the city and many fewer resources for the urban poor. These changes were not limited to the political right; federal welfare reform under President Clinton's administration had further implications for the urban poor (Purcell 2008; Wilson 2007b; Young 1990), representing a deepening neoliberalization, and offering layered historical context to differing degrees of political action and non-action amongst impacted groups (Sugrue 1996; Susser 1982/2012). That is, the historical and geographical context is essential to understanding the ways in which race- and class-based consciousness develops within oppressed groups, and how this does or does not translate into legible political action (Susser 1982/2012). Global economic integration, state-support for "free" markets, and simultaneous deregulation and regulation of the growth of global finance interact on all scales. These interactions create many of the conditions that reinforce the perceived need for entrepreneurial and capitalist engagement at a local and community scale to build community resilience, self-sufficiency, and economic viability.

Thus, the vision for and theory of community transformation represented by urban agriculture (and self-provisioning in food) is not unproblematic, nor does it completely eschew capitalistic tropes of hard work, self-reliance, and entrepreneurialism. Entrepreneurial and resilience-based strategies risk reproducing not only patterns of neoliberal governance and austerity, but as a corollary, the same patterns of uneven economic development that many low-income neighborhoods of color have been subject to for decades. Black entrepreneurialism represents a complex epistemology in itself: it simultaneously reinforces the importance of market-based growth while also building alternative community economies – often communities of care (Sundin 2011) – and black resilience in the face of continued neglect by traditional investment streams. Black entrepreneurialism in practice does not promise a reversal of hegemonic neoliberal tendencies across urban space nor does it guarantee greater equity in investment or

community development. I present these arguments as a way to demonstrate that entrepreneurialism, as an ideology, is rarely neoliberal all the way down.

Participants express a desire to participate in the capitalist economy, but also to push back against it or establish something apart from it. Black cooperative enterprise, for example represents a vision for a "black economy" that occupies its own (community oriented) space, while still participating in a market structure. Rather than replicating the tenets of "white capitalism" black subjects envision an economic structure built explicitly to support community growth, resilience, and empowerment.

Similarly, black subjects envision a production of space that contests the disciplining presence of the state, while also responding to community needs in the context of retreating state services. Informed by incidents like the death of Tamir Rice, and other similar killings in Cleveland, participants express a desire to produce spaces that would not need such constant and heavy police presence, indicating a desire for the retreat of at least part of the state apparatus (Purcell 2008). Entrepreneurial agrarianism thus represents an attempt to produce self-managed community spaces – spaces of economic, political, and socio-spatial *autogestion* (Lefebvre 1996, 2009). Agricultural entrepreneurial ventures, as economic and spatial projects, are ways to contest the terms of everyday intervention by the state in the lives of black subjects, including the policing of black neighborhoods, reliance upon welfare or other social programming, and the state-led development of urban spaces. They represent an attempt to increase the security and self-actualization of black subjects.

In marginalized communities, entrepreneurs are responding to the of a need to build amenities such as medical clinics, restaurants, and lodgings. Black Wall Street and the Harlem Renaissance represent successful, albeit time-bound, examples of black entrepreneurship that

supported the creation of local economies while maintaining control over intellectual property and building both community power and a specifically black class consciousness. Arts and culture were central to these endeavors, as was placemaking and rootedness in place. Artists generated income and became upwardly mobile without government support. These examples represent entrepreneurship based not in individual economic achievement but rather in community empowerment, bolstering black economies, and in resisting dependence on a racially oppressive state (Brahinsky 2013; Massey and Denton 1998; Massey and Fischer 2000).

Gladys' remarks about the kind of entrepreneurship she envisions communicate that she does not trust the (city) government to intervene effectively. Other growers also consistently spoke about entrepreneurialism not as an individualist approach to economic gain or even necessarily as a replacement for state investment, but as an economic strategy to produce community benefit. In other words, entrepreneurial engagement in black communities has the potential to complement the radical remaking or "creation of everyday life" (Loftus 2012:x). An intentionally community-based approach to entrepreneurialism can be a powerful tool for equity and sustainability in community development, a "critical spatial practice" with the city as the means of production (Ibid.)

Black entrepreneurship, as I have explained and contextualized it, negotiates between, on the one hand, a desire to have access to markets, to profit from one's own labor, and to engage in capitalist relationships, and, on the other, a desire to engage economically in non/anti-capitalist ways, especially through community-based ventures and cooperative or collaborative economics. These economic ventures can be understood as an extension of the production of space and the right to difference: both exist within and in relationship to the terrain of dominant socio-spatial and structural relations. McCann (1999:180) writes that the production of space can be interpreted as a "continual struggle between the state and capital" as it endeavors to

produce "homogenous [and] abstract space, on the one hand, and subaltern groups" who are attempting to assert an alternative or "counter-space" on the other.

For the black community of growers in Cleveland, the sense of continual displacement, fracturing, and marginalization motivates their specifically black entrepreneurial engagement described in this chapter. Black entrepreneurship represents a claim not only to the city *writ large*, but to spaces where "we can be unapologetically black" (personal communication 2016). The (re)production of social and economic relations around food in the black community in Cleveland (Allen 2010; Block et al. 2001; Ghose and Pettigrove 2014), recenters the possibility for different avenues to resident and citizen claims on both the rights to the city and the right to difference (Marcuse 2010; Shillington 2013).

IV. CONCLUSION

Freddy Collier, the director of the City Planning Commission told me that "community gardens won't change the [broader] economic conditions" (personal communication 2016). Like many of the farmers and gardeners I spoke with, he described the agrarian practices of black subjects as "part of a program, a healing activity to re-establish community, a tool to move things in a better direction." Similar to the epistemologies of land value described in chapter 3, one of the main objectives of a black agrarian entrepreneurialism is to help communities heal from present and historical traumas: to thrive rather than just survive. This perspective recognizes that diet-related disease, other health indicators, educational attainment, employment, and most economic, social, political, and cultural issues are both interrelated and have roots that extend beyond the social context of a particular community and the individual choices of residents. Residents participate in small enterprise as a way to create beautiful spaces, to produce urban space differently (Ekers and Loftus 2012; Torreggiani et al. 2012), to reclaim and reshape their own agricultural histories in non-oppressive ways, and, often, to disembed the production of

space from the capitalist economy, re-embedding its production in social relations (Heynen et al. 2006). Growers are striving to shift the dominant negative perception of their neighborhoods, which means addressing the entire socio-natural context: the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the community, as well as the economic conditions.

Black entrepreneurship is embedded in the ideologies and practices of growers across the city, whether they have already established successful enterprises, or simply envision an urban farm where youth can learn about indigenous foods, or a grocery store cooperative where they can sell their produce. Rooted in a historical consciousness of the trauma of marginalization experienced by the black community, black-led enterprises are central to the theories of change held by many residents for the future of their community, and contribute to the vision residents articulate for their communities. Understanding and supporting the particularities of a neighborhood's histories and geographies is central to successful transformation, including in entrepreneurialism. According to Freddy Collier, while gardening is an important tool for change within disinvested communities, it's nowhere near enough to revive and revitalize a community or "create" food justice. An economic impact is still important and necessary.

Geographer Nik Heynen and colleagues (2006) argue that the struggle for liberation will be played out in cities such as Cleveland. Community-embedded enterprise represents one front of that struggle. From interviews, community meetings, and other interactions with residents, it is evident that this kind of an economy touches down in very real ways for many black Clevelanders. Black subjects are aware of how they have been excluded from federal programs such as the New Deal and USDA loans to farmers. Research participants repeatedly articulated their belief that "social welfare systems largely support the white poor, not blacks" (personal communication 2016). Black entrepreneurialism among growers emerges as a community-

embedded, social justice-oriented approach to achieving greater social, economic, and environmental equity within the city.

Strategies of economic development from the City or community development structures include establishing new businesses, bringing (undifferentiated) jobs to a particular area, or increasing foot traffic through a neighborhood to help businesses grow. As one black city official articulated, "The current economic, social, and political model is extremely effective. How do we flip that? How do you counter a [white] supremacist policy?" Resident-driven transformation is holistic, cross-sectional, and rooted in place, because the historically embedded inequities and oppressions facing the black community are so deeply entrenched that grassroots economic empowerment alone cannot replace equitable investment in place.

Freddy Collier sees the "corporate economic model [as] extremely parasitic – it goes and sucks out resources and then moves on." By contrast, the economic model that black growers work towards is sustainable and supportive of community. Mansfield described his own interpretation, as it is enacted in his own business:

> Wealth should stay in the community. Grown in the community, sold in the community, taxes and profit then go towards community corporations to see what benefits [there are], and then decide what you want to do…to help your community with the money you're making in your community.

As I have already described, Mansfield's urban vineyard and educational biocellar is also a jobs program. His business model is to create a successful re-entry program for men returning from prison. He sells his wine, participating in the capitalist economy, however, he is simultaneously providing jobs for a group that has been rendered particularly vulnerable to the swings of the capitalist economy.

The objectives articulated by Mansfield and others emphasizes the need to enhance "human capacities available to create and maintain social bonds" including "reproducing the shared meanings, affective dispositions, and horizons of value that underpin social cooperation" (Fraser 2012:4). Under the disciplining logic of neoliberal capitalism, economies of care, the affective, and non-commoditized social interactions remain peripheral due to their lack of market value. Drawing upon alternative epistemologies of value (broadly conceived) and economic engagement, the black agrarian imaginary recenters the social and spatial relations within communities and their economies. With an emphasis on the hyperlocal community and concrete communal benefits, black agrarian entrepreneurship is more than agricultural economic engagement: it is central to the counter-hegemony enacted through the black agrarian imaginary.

CHAPTER 5: POLITICAL ECOLOGIES & THE MARGINS OF THE CITY

> [A]n image of a world where the human and the non-human are disconnected [is] a fiction that remains so stubborn a part of our modern reasoning that it is as difficult to unimagine as it is to picture a world without patriarchy or class.
>
> Paul Robbins (2012)

I. THE FORGOTTEN TRIANGLE

In the early 2000s, the City of Cleveland built a playground in the so-called Forgotten Triangle[45] within the Kinsman neighborhood near where the Rid-All Green Partnership Farm (Rid-All) is now located, sometimes referred to in planning documents as Fort Higbee. The park was built before any other remediation or clearing of the land had taken place, in this once densely-populated urban area that had evolved over time into a dumping ground for toxic materials such as paint cans, cars, abandoned refrigerators, and even dead bodies. Otter Park, the site redeveloped by the City with the playground, was surrounded by hazardous waste and the violence that often accompanies abandoned land (Greenberg et al. 1993; Han 2017; Whitaker and Fitzpatrick 2011). While the playground represented a step in the right direction, the City did little to the surrounding land to increase its appeal to community residents. "People didn't want to use this park because they felt like something bad was going to happen to them – that's the way it was" (Forsche, quoted in Hampshire 2018). The playground was not particularly effective in remediating or altering the surrounding spaces, which were indeed unhealthy (toxic soils) and untamed (including overgrown lots, crumbling houses, and unkempt trees and vines).

During the preparation and planning of the 2006/2007 City Wide Plan, this particular area of the Forgotten Triangle became the focus of many planning and community development conversations. In the Ward 5 Forgotten Triangle Master Plan (FTMP), it was suggested that

[45] The Forgotten Triangle in Cleveland is most well-known for a fire that burned down over 60 houses in 1976. See chapter 2 for more on the history of fires and arson in Cleveland.. The Forgotten Triangle is an especially impoverished area in Kinsman, which has declined since its industrial heyday. It is a sparsely populated high-vacancy neighborhood, and has been a site of illegal dumping for many years.

"some of the vacant land in the Fort Higbee are could be used to grow street trees for the City of Cleveland [which would] help to remediate environmental pollutants and create an attractive setting for existing housing and future development" (UDCNEO 2007). While this endeavor would not have been able to produce sufficient trees to "reforest" the lost tree canopy of Cleveland, once called Forest City, the section of the FTMP that advocates for a tree nursery in this area argued that "[h]ousing is sparse and scattered" and the "area has become remarkably green and wooded, seeming almost rural in places… providing residents with a feeling of being out in the country, while in the middle of the city" (UDCNEO 2007:12). The FTMP further states that a tree nursery would "help to remediate the polluted soils of former industrial sites while maintaining the wooded character residents value" (Ibid.)

A tree nursery represents urban nature with a particular aesthetic – logical and functional. As is written in the FTMP, "a tree nursery is an orderly, well-cared for landscape, one that looks intentional, rather than haphazard. This appearance of order…would help to discourage dumping and other illegal activities, while establishing an attractive residential setting" (UDCNEO 2007). Additionally, he presence of nursery employees would act as surveillance for the surrounding, presumably disorderly, spaces, while the intentionality built into the landscape would establish a precedent for appropriate behaviors and activities as well as an accepted environmental aesthetic. The description of this neighborhoods refers to the history of this area, and calls for a production of nature that is both tame and legible (cf. Scott 1998), economically productive, and promotes a sense of safety.

The playground was not particularly effective in producing a safe, welcoming space; and the tree nursery was seen by some to be less accessible or useful to current neighborhood residents. Rather than producing a tree canopy with little vision for inclusive articulation with residents and the surrounding community, Rid-All was founded with the goal of producing urban natures

for both humans and nonhuman natures to articulate and produce space collaboratively. The view promoted by Rid-All was rooted in the idea that what you do with (or grow in) a space can produce healthy communities as well. For these farmer-residents, the health of the community is mirrored in the health of the soil:

> It's about giving back to life and… creating a fertile area for people to be in, for plants to live in, because we live in an ecosystem. We're all a part of it. We share the same air every day, we share the same sunlight, and the conversation has to be more about how do we become more connected than we do divided. (Personal Interview 2016)

Informed by this view of mutually constituting social natures, the founding members of Rid-All began clearing out toxic waste and contaminated soil in 2009. They replaced what was removed with a thick layer of wood chips, which would continue to break down, providing important nutrients to the soil that had been depleted and contaminated by decades of industry and illegal dumping. A barrier layer was placed on top of this carbon layer, followed by several feet of topsoil produced in an on-site composting operation that (at that time) was gleaning food and yard waste from food businesses, grocery stores, and other sources around the city.[46]

The large greenhouses lined up on the main site are impossible to miss. Music can often be heard playing from the first greenhouse, where students and other visitors learn about the pH of water and soil, fish aquaponics, or wetland remediation. Tucked away behind the main site almost underneath a metro line are three enormous wooden stalls piled high with compost at varying stages. This site of transformation embodies the ideals of what Loftus describes as "reworking the socio-natural relations through which everyday environments are produced and

[46]Rid-All's composting facility is one of the largest in the city of Cleveland. Rid-All sells a cubic yard of compost for about $85, with other specialty products (including rich black soil, or "black gold," produced through vermiculture) selling at premium prices. The income from their composting services (the collection/transformation of food waste and the production of soil) fund programs for neighborhood youth.

experienced" (2009:326). The composting operation at Rid-All creates economic profitability for the business and, as an illustration of the black agrarian entrepreneurialism described in Chapter 4, the production of "black gold" allows them to focus on education, youth leadership, and community transformation. Beyond production or profitability, teaching about the regenerative impact of agriculture on both human and nonhuman natures is the main purpose of Rid-All.

This anecdote about the operations of the now 7-acre urban farm highlights many of the important themes in this chapter. The production of marketable healthy soil through the breaking down of surplus foodstuffs (namely, composting) is a clear example of how metabolisms within the natural environment are intimately implicated in human social interactions and structures. It also shows how capitalist relations can be reworked within an urban agrarian environment, enabling urban farmers to engage in and negotiate market relations (at least partially) on their own terms. The urban tree nursery would have appealed to discursive boundaries delineating a particular urban aesthetic whereas the Rid-All farm both complicates and challenges prevailing conceptions of what belongs in a city and what urban spaces look like. The farm also provides an intentional space of learning, transformation, and regeneration within one of the poorest and most hypersegregated neighborhoods of Cleveland. Keymah, one of the founders of the farm, commented that just the farm's presence in this neighborhood – the past and present acts of continual production of space, or what Loftus (2012) might term "everyday environmentalism" – is an achievement.

> If we didn't do another thing, I think we achieved what we're after. About putting this footprint here, getting the kind of buy-in from the community. I think we've made our statement; now it's just, how big can your foot get. What else can you offer, what else can you guys do? One thing about being on the farm, it allows you to use your imagination. As big as we can dream is as big as what we can do.

The way that Keymah speaks – using the ideals of imagination and dreaming – evokes the surrealist underpinnings of the black agrarian imaginary described in the introduction. Keymah ended our interview by saying something that stuck with me for the remainder of my field research, and that aligns with the surrealist vision embraced by poets, artists, and musicians across the diaspora: "It's a blank canvas here. You can paint anything on it that you want to, anything that you can imagine." In a neighborhood where more than half of residents receive federal food assistance, and maternal mortality rates are among the highest in the "developed" world, this truly represents the surrealist ideal of "lessening the contradictions between everyday life and our wildest dreams" (Kelley 2002:158). Surrealism, like Clyde Woods' blues epistemology (1998/2017), represents a "struggle against the slavery of rationalism, a means to allow the imagination to run free" (Kelley 2002:160).

The founders of Rid-All can all trace their ancestry to the American south. As with other black growers across Cleveland, demographic trends and patterns of migration from southern states to Cleveland have had a strong influence on the black agrarianism practiced and taught at the farm. The founders of Rid-All consider their agricultural work not only relevant to the local scale (Garden Valley, Kinsman, Cleveland), but to be woven into a global diasporic fabric of food production and land stewardship; they have built relationships in places as diverse as Wisconsin, Israel, and Ghana. One of the original founders explained the farm's philosophy and activities, as "what we call ‘placemaking’. It's more than just a farm. It's extended out to the broader community" (Personal Interview 2016).

Outline and Organization

This chapter continues to explore the tensions and contradictions central to chapters 3 and 4, with a focus on two components of a counter-hegemonic ideology negotiated by black urban

growers, although not always articulated as such. The first is a conceptual extension of chapter 3, and analyzes the revival and production of marginal and neglected urban spaces by black farmers and gardeners. This analysis builds upon an urban foodscapes framework with particular consideration of how race and geography articulate together with the production of space/nature (Brahinsky, Sasser, Minkoff-Zern 2014). This framework shows how urban food production is part of the process of "chang[ing] life" and "chang[ing] society" (Lefebvre 2009:186), concepts which, according to Lefebvre, "mean nothing if there is no production of an appropriated space" (Ibid). I focus on the drive for food production by black growers that persists in spite of the barriers these growers consistently face. This focus provides a lens on how black residents produce (urban) nature and space as a response to the increasing dominance of capital and capitalist logic. Producing counter-hegemonic black spaces, especially in the city, (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Isakson 2009) is contextualized by the "historically unprecedented processes of concentration and centralisation of capital on a world-scale" (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010:177-178) described in Chapter 4.

Secondly, I consider the influence on the production of space of a southern agrarian heritage amongst black urban growers in Cleveland. This southern agrarianism helps challenge commonly-held conceptions about what does or does not belong in urban spaces, and informs the production of (black) spaces that strive to collapse dichotomous thinking about urban and rural spaces. The production of a specifically black space – or, producing black spaces differently – is a significant motivation for many black growers in Cleveland, and is influenced by growers' experiences and collective memories of growing up or spending time in rural southern agrarian spaces. Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and South Carolina are the most common states mentioned in interviews. The majority of participants mentioned parents or grandparents that migrated to Cleveland, but a few were born in southern states and moved to Cleveland, usually as children. Among those born in Cleveland, influences are either direct (that

is, skills taught and learned from a parent, relative, or "elder"), indirect (for example, an ancestor who was a skilled gardener providing motivation), or part of a collective memory (the knowledge that black Americans share an agrarian past: bonded labor in the United States; agricultural knowledge and practice across the global black diaspora; or more recent practices such as sharecropping, tenant farming, subsistence farming, cooperative farming, or other agrarian endeavors). This heritage is quite influential not only in the decision to engage in urban food production, but also in the black agrarian vision deployed by urban growers. These residents work to build community, create safe, beautiful, healthy spaces that provide mental, emotional, physical, and nutritional nourishment to the people who inhabit them.

Throughout the chapter, I show how the production of alternative urban natures represents both a politics of difference and a set of claims on the right to the city, while it simultaneously contests dichotomous or exclusionary understandings of urban and rural spaces. While I do not claim that a peasant class is emerging in low-income communities of color in Cleveland, the ancestral influences on black growers – histories of slavery, sharecropping, tenant farming – are deeply engrained in the agrarian practices of Cleveland's black growers, and do align in part with "peasant configurations" in other places (van der Ploeg 2010:2).[47] Collective and individual memories of a black agrarian heritage brings form to a vibrant and potentially powerful black agrarian imaginary, drawing upon peasant histories (Moore 1966/1993; Scott 1998) in the American South. This epistemic frame invites different ways of living and being in the city in a relational way that begins to dismantle the discursively dichotomous categories of "urban" and "rural". I conclude with a brief discussion of how

[47] James Scott defines the peasantry as "includ[ing] small-holding as well as share-cropping and tenant cultivators who have some degree of control over the production process" (Scott 1977).

II. THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE AND THE RIGHT TO DIFFERENCE

Food at the Margins of the City

Modernization – of which the urbanization of capital is an important part – has consistently encouraged populations to see certain rural behaviors as premodern, including agrarian or peasant livelihoods (Classens 2015; Thompson 2010; Mayes 2014). Despite this, in industrial and modern capitalist times, urban food production has persisted as a survival mechanism. In one sense, this could be seen as a reduction of the relative cost of urban labor, the subsidization of forced underconsumption by capital. The ways in which environmental and agricultural space is created and maintained through processes of urban gardening, backyard animal production, or other various forms of agricultural activity is a tacit claim for a right to produce different natures in the city (Evans 2007) – a way of participating in and appropriating urban space to create use values, rather than exchange values, to use urban space to meet the needs and desires of marginalized and disenfranchised inhabitants.

The post-Fordist restructuring of deindustrializing economies has contributed to the production of what some scholars have termed the "hyperghetto" (Wacquant 2004; Wilson 2007b), that is, socially isolated and spatially segregated spaces of concentrated poverty (Massey and Denton facing massive disinvestment from the state (Kaplan 1999; Wacquant 2004). The racial economy perspective put forth by Wilson explains the mutually constituting relationship between economic markets and political institutions such as the state as they are "influenced by and operative through constructed notions of race" (2009:140). As described in Chapter 3, under a capitalist system, the commodification of land in both rural and urban areas plays into the conception of space as abstract physical space (Smith 1984/2008); commodification renders land both homogenous (and therefore exchangeable) and infinitely fractured or divisible into exchangeable parcels (Lefebvre 1991). In order to exchange nature or land – as space – it must be seen as commensurable to another parcel of land – devoid of social relations, divorced from

history or memory. Equitable and justice-oriented social control over the production of nature sits in direct opposition to the capitalist ideal of *domination* of nature (both human and nonhuman), and ideally results in a production of space that benefits inhabitants – both human and nonhuman – rather than capital (Purcell 2008; Lefebvre 2009).

The concept of subversive and interstitial food spaces, signifies alternative modes and networks of food production occurring either tacitly or explicitly "on the margins of spaces dedicated to 'conventional,' 'private,' authority-sanctioned, or 'normal'" (Galt et al. 2014:134) food production activities within the hegemonic capitalist industrial food system. This provides a useful frame for analyzing socio-ecological transformations within urban spaces. Envisioning capitalism as incomplete or fractured (Gibson-Graham 1996/2006), this particular lens on alternative food practices empowers political actors to make claims on and in the city, and to produce space in dissident or even destabilizing ways. This framework can be extended to theorize the subversive or interstitial production of nature, an urban political ecology that questions power dynamics over resources, access, and control. Subversive and interstitial food production systems challenge, in one way or another, dominant modes of conceptualizing nature in cities, including urban landscape management, food production and consumption, and the socio-spatial relations embedded in these processes (Galt et al 2014; McClintock 2014). Thinking about the production of the urban interstices also provides a lens through which to consider the uneven governance of the city over time: namely, the simultaneous neglect of black spaces and their position as hypersurveilled and policed spaces.

Over the last few years in Cleveland, I spent significant time with Gladys, who gardens in Hough. We saw each other during meetings of the Black Food Justice Collaborative (BFJC), planning sessions for the Race, Food, and Justice conferences of 2016 and 2018, and planning sessions for a project focused on food, arts, and culture in Garden Valley (where the Rid-All

Farm is located). I also conducted two semi-structured interviews with her in 2015 and 2016. Gladys stated unequivocally – and with emphasis – that black people "need mass land ownership, *mass* land ownership" and that while there is potential for that in Cleveland, it would likely not happen through official channels. She continued:

> In this city alone, if these stats are correct, there are over 3,300 acres of vacant land that is available for us to utilize – not contiguous plots, but sprinkled throughout; a little portion of our 40 acres is right next door. On my street, there are seven [vacant] lots. I'm claiming them, I don't care. I'm claiming… if I have to guerilla garden, I don't care. That's a food system that can be created. They're not going to build any more houses [in this neighborhood] so we can take over these plots of land, put food on them, hoop houses, a bio cellar on one, a walipini[48] on one...

Despite this vision for future development, within most of the city's historically marginalized spaces, there is little risk of gentrification as it is usually defined. While gentrification is often treated as a bad word, it also signifies a widely-held belief in the retention of value within certain disinvested spaces. Smith describes the change that occurs through gentrification as the "reversal, reinvestment, and the in-migration of a relatively well-off middle- and upper middle-class population" experienced by these spaces (1998:198). Prior to the perceived urgency of neighborhood improvement that accompanies gentrification, the lack of investment, continued population loss, and inconsistent political support for residents' transformation of these spaces renders these spaces and the people in them marginal, and even irrelevant to the goals of productivity and "renaissance" that the state apparatus in Cleveland has come to embrace.

Kinsman, Hough and other spaces of marginality on Cleveland's east side have generally not experienced, nor will they likely experience significant in-migration or reinvestment in the near future. Hough, where Gladys has lived her entire life, has experienced decline in property values similar to Kinsman (see Chapter 1), with average values plummeted from $80,000 in 2004 to under $12,000 in 2015. A combination of factors produce these, and other crises of

[48] A walipini is a kind of underground greenhouse.

capital, with very real impacts on communities. In other words, patterns of urban development under a capitalist model have produced and are intertwined with histories of segregation, redlining, and socio-spatial marginalization (Lederman 2019; Squires and Kubrin 2005), and reify racial difference as a social, spatial, and political organizing principle within processes of neoliberalization (Ghose and Pettigrove 2014; McKittrick 2006; Roberts and Mahtani 2010).

The production of space and nature contribute to and emerge from different epistemic understandings of nature in cities versus rural spaces. Differential understandings of human and nonhuman nature influence everything from the configuration and landscaping of gardens, parks, and more "wild" areas (Evans 2007; Swyngedouw and Kaika 1999), to the networks of public transportation, the quality of land, water, and air (Buzelli 2008; Monstadt 2008; Gandy 2002; Swyngedouw 1996, 1997), and the assemblage of the food system. The right to difference within systems of knowledge about nature evokes what Escobar (1999) termed an "anti-essentialist" political ecology, a recognition that "nature is differently experienced according to one's social position, and…differently produced by different groups in different historical periods" (Escobar 1999:5). Capitalist, non-capitalist, and indigenous ways of knowing, experiencing, and producing nature, while not unified or homogenous within themselves, represent different "regimes of nature" (Escobar 1999). Often in conflict, these natures coexist, embodying different modes of "articulation of the historical and the biological" (Escobar 1999:5). Deploying a political ecology frame shows how discursive formations around proper land use or "what counts as nature, and where it is allowed to be" (Evans 2007:132) is in fact an integral part of control over and access to resources. Political ecology is in many ways a normative approach, with an explicit orientation towards recognizing social justice struggles, and the rights of those who have long had them denied.

This approach provides a starting point from which to contest "the naturalness of capitalist domination" and capitalist (production of) nature (Gibson-Graham 2006:121). A specifically political analysis of ecological relations creates space to challenge the multiple hegemonies that constitute the urban food system as uncontested and politically neutral modes of agricultural production and market interaction. Through this analysis and associated praxis, industrial food and the necessity of purchasing food are epistemically displaced, allowing for self-determined agrarian relations of production, as well as the possibility of multiple and differentiated alternative food production practices (Lefebvre 1996; Mayes 2014; Wittman 2009). A consideration of foodways of the black urban poor (Alkon et al. 2013) – must include multiple possibilities for provisioning beyond market access to food.

This anti-essentialist view of urban life works to integrate groups – specifically disenfranchised urban residents – in the common struggle for social justice, rather than separate or isolate them based on differential access to and participation in urban space (see Young 1990). Dawn and Lou's brother, Miles, who often worked with them in their garden, described the increasing green space in the city that "you can see everywhere," albeit more in Cleveland's east side. Indeed, the demolition of vacant structures across the city has opened up thousands of parcels of land over the last several years (WLRC 2015, 2018). Miles commented on this growth of green space for its potential to "change ideas about how to use vacant space and vacant lots," and predicted that residents might find new purpose in their lives, realizing that they have the power to do something with their surroundings. Miles even suggested that such an awareness, and the meaning one could find in it, "might just save someone's life" (personal communication 2015). This vision for the potential of people in their everyday lives to transform their environment – to "remak[e] the world" – demonstrates the potential for (and belief that) radical changes can be born of commonplace desires (Loftus 2012:ix). In connecting transformations in the environment and transformations in people, this perspective breaks down the dichotomous

division between humans and their environment, describing a mutually constituted social nature.

The "remaking of the world" is a continuous process of transformation on multiple scales, through a diversity of agents, and with varied – and often contradictory – outcomes. If cities are understood a locus of contestation over citizenship and rights (Holston 2009; Holston and Appadurai 1999; Loftus 2012; Somers 2004), where the "conditions of possibility for sensing [an] alternative world" are most acute (Loftus 2012:x), the persistent urbanization of the US (and the world has a whole) (Knight and Riggs 2010) sets the stage for a radical contestation of hegemonic social, spatial, and political relations. Processes of global urbanization are multifaceted and complex, and deserve a more in-depth analysis than I will afford in this chapter. I will, however, briefly address here the question of global economic restructuring under neoliberal regimes of governance, and the impact this has had not only on urban populations, but on the assumptions made about what constitutes an urban lifestyle.

The Remaking of the World

As I noted in Chapter 4, the production or "remaking" of urban natures is partly a response to global restructuring of capital, specifically as it touches down at the local scale and impacts the economies, spaces, livelihoods, and politics of urban residents. Especially in the global south, but in so-called developed countries as well, increasing urbanization during the twentieth century catalyzed widespread depeasantization and land loss. In the US, the government subsidized suburbanization (Rothstein 2017) and encouraged urban sprawl, which transformed previously agricultural land while attracting rural inhabitants to a newly sponsored suburban lifestyle. Simultaneously, rural land was increasingly desirable for development (such as for the construction of prisons), which led to the further loss of agricultural land . Land loss was been particularly pronounced among black farmers, who suffered from disproportionate neglect and

discrimination by governmental agencies, especially the United States Department of Agriculture (Mitchell 2001). In the United States, almost 219,000 black farmers held just under 19 million acres of land in 1910 (USDA Census of Agriculture 1910); by the year 2012, collective holdings for black farmers had declined to 3.6 million acres. Notably, however, the number of black farmers in the US in 2012 (44,629) represented a twelve percent increase since 2007 (USDA Census of Agriculture 2012).

While Araghi focuses on the global south, global economic restructuring on rural spaces changed the possibilities of livelihoods and subsistence in the global north as well. According to his analysis, hunger is caused by "people's inability to purchase food as a market commodity and the loss of their direct access to the production of their means of subsistence (i.e., depeasantization)" (Araghi 2008:155). The migration of black southerners to northern cities brought hundreds of thousands of people who no longer had access to the production of their means of subsistence, people who carried with them generations of agrarian knowledge, but were folded into an industrial workforce.[49] Black Clevelanders rely disproportionately on federal food assistance and emergency food. The largest food pantry in Cleveland operates in Garden Valley, and feeds about 15,000 people each month (personal communication 2015), while over 50 percent of the 21,000 people living in Ward 5 (where Kinsman is located) receive federal food assistance.

Related shifts in the labor force (and thus geographies of production), finance, and trade in the twentieth century led to restructuring not only of state economies, but markets at all scales. As a result, previously subsistence-oriented populations have become increasingly exposed to capitalist market forces (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010; Araghi 2008). Agricultural production

[49] Laborers migrating to work in industry bring agricultural practices into urban areas, in part as an attempt to reduce the high cost of living, but also arguably as a way to hold onto peasant livelihoods and a sense of autonomy over life choices (see McClintock 2010; Minkoff-Zern 2013).

has been central to these transformations, with development efforts in especially low-income countries across the world imposing a market logic on peasant producers in rural areas (Araghi 2008). Patterns of induced migration among black farmers (McKittrick and Woods 2007) in the US resulted in similar trends of land loss as well as a massive shift away from subsistence livelihoods in favor of the mechanization of agriculture in the South (rendering their labor less valuable) and the industrialization of the urban north (Woods 1998/2017). Ironically, technological advancement both pushed black farmers off the land in southern states and pulled them into northern industrializing cities.

Households in urban areas operate in a "purchasing environment," with a level of market exposure that adds to the vulnerability of low-income urban populations (Cohen and Garrett 2009). Low-income groups, for whom food comprises a higher proportion of household expenditure, are particularly exposed to market forces. These include the economic factors that influence the placement of stores, the price of food, and the availability of nutritious options (Kwate 2008; Zenk et al. 2011). The average low-income person spends about 12 percent of their income on food; however, the average expenditure on food across the City of Cleveland is 13.7 percent. While the US Bureau of Labor Statistics finds that urban households earn approximately 32 percent more than rural households, in many of the predominantly black neighborhoods where this study is concentrated, urban households are extremely poor. Indeed, economist Jayson Lusk estimates that urban households with an income under $20,000 spend as much as 40 percent of their income on food (2017). In Kinsman, the average household income in 2014 was about $16,600, while in the city as a whole, the average was just over $26,000 (Center for Community Solutions 2014).

While market penetration is often theorized as complete in cities (Cohen and Garrett 2009), development processes are inherently uneven. Uneven and inequitable food geographies, areas

of food apartheid, and lack of access to the necessary means of subsistence (in part through a sparse, inaccessible, and inefficient public transportation system). Neoliberal political ideologies of individual responsibility and self-reliance have resulted in declining support of state services (_____). Changes in the socio-political landscape – namely, an emphasis on individual responsibility and self-reliance – under neoliberal models of governance have also functioned as a motivating factor for people to engage in self-provisioning.

The widespread movement of predominantly rural people into cities and city-regions brings with it many questions about what kinds of nature are produced in cities (Castree 1995; Gandy 2004; Smith 1996/2008), and – perhaps more germane to the topic at hand – which produced natures "belong" in cities, who gets to decide what is appropriate for which urban spaces, and how these beliefs (and decisions) shape urban lives. As in the FTMP, the ideal urban aesthetic is often articulated through a lens of legibility and order.

When I first visited their garden in 2014, Dawn and Lou had planted peach, cherry, and apple trees, in addition to several vegetable crops in a garden with a gently chaotic aesthetic. Fruit trees represent a vision for the long term, because they do not generally yield fruit for the first several years. Dawn commented to me:

> Cleveland used to be called Forest City. Where is that forest now? If you go through the city, you can still see where the fruit trees are… or where they used to be. You used to be able to go from one side to the other of the city, and eat the whole way there. We want to change the way the city looks… to bring some of this stuff back in.

In 2015, one of Dawn and Lou's neighbors became disenchanted with their garden, which she could see from her house, and claimed it was "ugly and messy". According to Lou, this person called her councilperson every day for over a month to complain. Lou believes that it was because of her efforts that the city did not renew their land lease; they were instead asked to dismantle all of the improvements on the land, including uprooting the trees they had planted.

Neil Smith (1984/2008) argues that nature, in an urban context, takes on two seemingly opposite positions: one good (aesthetically pleasing, a reprieve from the stresses of modern living) and one bad (unruly, unkempt, or even scary – and therefore "something to be feared, controlled, or conquered" (Classens 2015:232). The perceived unruliness of (produced) nature is often seen as opposed to the urban ideal, which is perhaps what motivated the complaints of Dawn and Lou's neighbor. On the other hand, as some growers have articulated, it is specifically the "less manicured" aesthetic that they strive for: a way of using untamed nature to disrupt the order and logic of urban space.

The space that they produced was a composite of the community in which they live – with found and donated materials comprising much of what they built in their garden. Lou observed that while, "there aren't a lot of good things in this neighborhood… there was this [garden where] people could come together and have access to this."

Today, Louise owns almost two acres of land that she and her late husband purchased in the early 1990s. The lot was originally used for overflow parking for a nightclub they owned, but she has since turned it into a garden. She has several fruit trees, garden beds with greens, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cabbage, and other produce, and an herb spiral built from old bricks and other found materials. Her space is well maintained, but does not at all replicate the manicured natures often found in city parks and residential front yards. The aesthetic of her garden, together with the improvements upon the land (a hoop-house sheathed in heavy plastic, a pergola built from tree limbs, an adobe mud and straw shed, and a large compost heap) represents a hybrid approach to agrarianism. Louise includes modern improvements to extend the growing season, principles of permaculture that integrate agro-ecological methods to capture and reuse as much energy and resources as possible, ancestral knowledge, and the knowledge of other groups that have contributed to her farm.

Louise, Dawn, Lou, and others like them persist in their attempts to remake the world around them in spite of (or perhaps because of) the continued neoliberalization of the city, and the material effects this has had on their lives. The story of Dawn and Lou's community garden – the loss of their land and their struggle to be heard by the City demonstrates a key problematic behind claims being made on and to the city from marginalized spaces. Much like any radically democratic ideal, there is no promise that power relations will be restructured in favor of more equitable relations, or that such claims will be heard (Purcell 2002). In other words, urban agriculture and alternative food production do not necessarily equate to new conceptions or configurations of nature or space in cities. Amina, who knows Dawn and Lou from meetings of community gardeners commented:

> It was so heartbreaking. Their garden was so nice. And I'm saying, they did all the classes and the composting and market gardening.… But the councilperson went along with [the complaints], instead of going over there. I mean, I know people vote and stuff. But they were not doing anything wrong. And their space was nice. I could see if they had a bunch of garbage and trash, but it wasn't like that. It was just so defeating. So I'm looking at, if they could do that to them, they could do that to any of us. The councilman, he's the person, the go-to guy. And that's unfortunate.

The neighbor whose complaints resulted in the loss of their land in effect was asserting the dominant view of "the urban," in effect denying "the possibility of a [more] complex negotiation between the city and its inhabitants" (Zeiderman 2006:211). Dawn and Lou did not lose their land because of pending development or the future potential for such; however, their story represents the priorities of the City Council, and demonstrates how little political protection there is for alternative land use practices.

After losing access to their land, Dawn and Lou focused their efforts on microgreens, a specialty crop that can fetch upwards of $30 per pound in certain markets. The sister and brother began producing these greens inside their family house, so that they could gain access to

a lucrative niche market, while also supplying community members (and their family) with nutrient-dense food. As they continue to grow their business, they hope to earn enough money to lease or buy land in another part of the city, and install another community garden.

In a broader sense, alternative land use practices do not automatically subvert the inequalities embedded within capitalist spaces of production and consumption (McClintock 2014; Saed 2012). Not all food-based activism will successfully challenge the dominant structures of capitalist space and food systems (McClintock 2014). Had the above community garden been recognized by more powerful people as a site of food production, a source of sustenance for the neighborhood, a space where children came to learn, play, and be free, perhaps it would not have been so easily removed from the city's urban foodscape.

Furthermore, there are tensions inherent to any counter-hegemonic socio-ecological struggle, evident in the multiple overlapping and often-contradictory meanings, functions, and rationalities in the production of space (Loftus 2009; McClintock 2014). Even the most radical alternatives to the conventional food system can simultaneously reproduce elements of the old system (Galt et al. 2014; McClintock 2014). In other words, urban food provisioning in response to the global restructuring of capital or the withdrawal of social supports and state services can both validate the neoliberalization of space while laying the groundwork for a different configuration of capital, social relations, the labor force, and relations of production.

It can seem like some parts of the alternative food movement have been co-opted (Eizenberg 2012). Politicians, city governments, and wealthier residents have begun to integrate urban food production into a larger understanding of land use and an urban spatial imaginary, albeit in very different ways (as discussed in chapter 3). The benefits of such production systems highlighted by these actors are varied – and contested – but mostly revolve around the potential for positive

health and economic outcomes, as well as access to specialty foods for the more affluent (Bellows et al. 2003; Guthman 2008; Nugent 2000). Many cities, including Cleveland, have changed zoning laws and instituted programs to encourage and help residents to produce food in the city. Extension education, through land grant universities, similarly offer trainings and programs to that end. When urban agriculture is implemented as a subsidy for low wages or a rationale for the inequitable distribution of food within cities, it implicitly enables the neoliberal capitalist state (Saed 2012) as it is integrated into the capitalist logic of efficiency, productivity, and replicability that also reifies the commodification and fetishization of vacant land. In particular, this model of urban food production helps to (re)produce cities as sites of capital accumulation and growth (Béal 2014; Brenner and Theodore 2002). The cooptation of urban agriculture as a productivist and commodified practice, or as a "tool for financial gains under the guise of an environmental agenda" (Eizenberg 2012:767) competes with indigenous or traditional modes of food production and alternative knowledge systems.

Notwithstanding, in advanced capitalist economies, where some fraction of the population contends with low wages or un(der)employment but a high cost of living, spaces of non-hierarchical difference are part of a politics of possibility and geography of survival for these marginalized and disenfranchised groups (Alkon and Mares 2012; Galt et al. 2014; Mitchell and Heynen 2013; Young 1990). The production of nature for accumulation under a capitalist model subsumes nature under its logic (Smith 2007, [1984]2008); however, the politics of possibility created through a framework embracing the city as a use value or as untamed second nature integrates agricultural practices and socio-environmental metabolisms as a part of an integrated urban socio-ecological whole (Saed 2012).

III. SOUTHERN AGRARIAN HERITAGE

In Glenville, which neighbors Hough to the northeast, Amina is an urban gardener with roots in Arkansas, where her grandfather grew up. Amina and her neighbors "all grew up with a garden" (personal communication 2016). This practice took hold in response to both a lack of accessible food options and to the "down south, up south" ties that emerged from the migration of thousands of people from southern spaces to Cleveland (Adero 1992; Wilkerson 2016). Seeing, understanding, and experiencing the spatially uneven and racially determined character of development in the city – especially the geographies of food access – has informed the work of many black urban growers: to call upon knowledge and histories of urban food production. Amina recalls a connection to southern agricultural practices throughout her entire life:

> We all grew up – with my mom canning and all that kind of stuff, so it's not foreign, it's just to be reintroduced back into the family. I know how to do all of that, I learned it by helping my mom. And then when we would go to Arkansas, we had to help. So yeah. It's just there, but when you live in the city, when things change, you get that convenience, and you forget. And that's what – I forgot.

The idea of memory – both remembering and forgetting – is a powerful motivator for many black growers in Cleveland. Sofie draws a connection between the oppression and other negative experiences many growers faced in southern states, and the land they used to work and steward.

> You have a generation of farmers in the south that lost their land. You know about that black farmers thing. So, when their descendants moved to the north, their memory is about detachment from the land. So, you have a people who have been detached from the land. Have you read [Isabel Wilkerson's] *The Warmth of Other Suns*?

Kim, who is the director of an environmental nonprofit, evokes the idea of collective memory or consciousness that is somehow embedded in the genetics of those whose ancestors farmed.

> I think we carry genes and we carry memory. I believe in that. And then you just have a naturalness sometimes. I might not ever be a green thumb. My great-grandmother could green-thumb all day. And I remember that. I think we have some memory of that.… Somebody did say, "We just have to remember where we came from." This is just going back and remembering or relearning something that we already know.

This aligns with Gramsci's contention that people are a "précis of all the past" (1971/2014:353), the amalgamation of different and varied histories of social relations and knowledge systems. The viability of an urban food system depends upon the urban socio-ecological context, which includes the knowledge of how to grow food within the community as well as sufficient arable land for food production (Barthel and Colding 2013). During the summer of 2016, Louise and I spent two days "putting up" the harvest from her one-and-a-half-acre urban garden. We harvested tomatoes, peppers, collards, garlic, and cabbage, and then collected about thirty large mason jars and two stock pots in which to process the jars. During these two days in Louise's kitchen, she told countless stories about canning food with her aunts, cousins, grandma, and mother in Mississippi during her youth. After her family left Vicksburg for the north, eventually settling in Cleveland, Louise frequently travelled "back home" to the family house for the summers, to participate in harvesting and preserving food. The practice of putting up the harvest is not only about ensuring that families have a reserve of food over the winter, but also about building relationships, sharing stories, and spending time together. Louise told me that "it takes many hands" to do this work. That is, working the land, growing food, harvesting and preparing food, and feeding your community is not the work of an individual, or even of several individuals, but rather it is the work of an entire community together. Louise – who is now in her eighties – did not remember the exact recipes or processes of canning, and relied upon my (very basic) knowledge of food preservation. However, like Amina, for whom knowledge about food production is being "reintroduced back into the family," Louise's embedded memories connect her to her southern history and ancestry, and inform how she enacts the black agrarian imaginary.

In a discussion of an unfolding "wave of urban restructuring," urban theorists Brenner and Schmid (2015:151-2) observe that geographical binaries (urban/rural, North/South, etc.) are no longer appropriate or useful descriptors of spatial unevenness, as "divergent conditions of

wealth and poverty, growth and decline, inclusion and exclusion, centrality and marginality" exist simultaneously at all spatial scales. Following this logic, which calls for a "new epistemology of the urban," Brenner and Schmid argue that patterns and processes of urbanization "are bringing forth diverse socio-economic conditions, territorial formations, and socio-metabolic transformations across the planet" (2015:152). In that vein, the production of space, as enacted by black urban growers in Cleveland, draws upon a nonbinary epistemology of mutually constituting urban and rural ideals, influenced by northern (industrial or postindustrial) conceptions of what constitutes a modern lifestyle, as well as "blues" and surrealist epistemologies, as described in Chapter 1 (Woods 1998/2017).

For black growers in Cleveland,maintaining connections to this agrarian past is in part achieved by "ha[ving] a garden at home," but also relies upon ancestral ties and sharing collective memories. Patrice describes her piece of this collective history:

> My grandmother is from Fairfield, Alabama. She claimed Cleveland, because she was actually here longer than she was there. She moved up here when she was 19 years old. They had a garden [in Alabama]. I don't know what all they grew in their garden, but my great-grandmother's house is – the family house, it's a house on the corner, actually right around the corner from Miles College, a historically black college. It sits right there as you go up the hill, and right now it's a big ol' pecan tree in the backyard. And my great aunt's house next door, but they had that built. But as my grandmother grew up, that was all their land, it wasn't a house next door, it was just land. So, they had their garden, they had chickens, and I mean, even now they still have fig trees. I think they have a plum tree back there, and then they have the pecan tree. When my grandmother had gardens [in Cleveland] when I was little, I would always run home from school so I could help in the garden.
>
> I would say that my desire to really start to grow and nurture things, have a garden and all that, sparked and reunited in me when my grandmother passed away in 2011. The first thing that I did when she passed away, February 2011, that upcoming summer, I initially planted flowers, a rose bush, black-eyed Susans – that was her favorite flower – so I went that route. And it just… for me, just doing that, I said, "Well, this is something I really, really enjoy doing." It helped me keep my mind on my grandmother, but also it was a way of me paying homage to her, without being heavy in my grief. It was a way to work through that.

> So, then the following year, I said, "Well, I'm going to expand this thing. I'm going to try to grow some tomatoes!" My grandmother loved tomatoes. I'm going to try to grow some tomatoes, some bell peppers, so I… bought some transplants. I tried doing that, like I said, out of pots, and I was pretty successful. During that time is when my son was already involved [in an agricultural program at his school]. So I said, "let me start going to the meetings, I can learn some new things."

Patrice's ancestral history comprises a small part of a collective agrarian identity that is not a singular linear history, but rather extends across the black diaspora and across generations, within an individual's family, as well as in the families of black subjects around the globe.

The Rural in the Urban

Urban agrarian imaginaries have long been enacted to repurpose urban land for subsistence and market-based food production. While this agrarian imaginary differs between and across classes, genders, racial groups, political sectors, or other socio-spatial divisions, it has permeated on many levels, enabling and legitimizing different urban practices and engagements in the eyes of growers (Mayes 2014). Almost 30,000 parcels of vacant land in Cleveland lends a rural feel to spaces across the city; in some neighborhoods, entire blocks are left fallow, while in other areas, vacant parcels are interspersed with houses and other structures, forming constellations of green space within this once densely populated industrial city. Vacant and abandoned "untamed" landscapes that do not at all resemble common-sense imaginaries of the traditional American city are commonplace in Cleveland, as they are in other Rust Belt cities such as Buffalo and Detroit. While the vacant land alone does not equate to an urban agrarian imaginary, it does represent a potential to produce different spaces (and spaces of difference) across the city. The particular historical geography of Cleveland also draws significantly on black political groups and figures, including many of the Black Power groups mentioned in Chapter 2. This growing agrarian consciousness is deeply influential in the production of social, ecological, and cultural urban landscapes.

The collective memory embedded within the black agrarian imaginary represents the translocation of a different urban vision. With the relocation of southern black rural populations into the city, rural histories and less tame aesthetics were brought into urban spaces. Louise, was twelve when she moved with her family to Cleveland from Mississippi, recounted her impressions of the produced nature they found when they arrived in Cleveland. She and her parents "didn't see the same kind of gardens they had in Mississippi – everything was manicured." Many families, including hers, lived in dense urban areas with little or no space for food production. Because her family lived in an apartment complex without access to their own land when they first arrived, Louise did not start growing her own food in Cleveland until later in life, but neighbors and community members innovated, turning backyards, tree lawns,[50] or front porches into gardens. She told me, "if you go and look in the backyards of many of the houses that are still standing, even if they are vacant and abandoned, you will see the fruit orchards that people planted decades ago." These relics of urban natures from her parents' generation remain in the collective consciousness of people like Louise and Dawn. Fruit trees and other edible landscapes were functional as well as aesthetic – representing efforts to remake new adopted spaces to more closely resemble those left behind.

As in other cities where the demographic character has been shaped by the Great Migration or other patterns of domestic or international migration, the agrarianism across the food movement in Cleveland is rooted in a historical past steeped in agriculture and land stewardship. Scott (1977) excludes plantation laborers (bonded labor), migrant laborers, and day laborers from this definition for their explicit alienation from the processes of production, but black southerners who sharecropped or tenant farmed by and large fit his definition of a peasant class. For

[50] A tree lawn is the strip between the sidewalk and the street. It is owned by the City, but residents are responsible for its care as well as that of the sidewalk (including mowing and snow removal).

instance, Gladys, who I quote frequently, refers to black growers in Cleveland intermittently as either indigenous farmers or peasant farmers. In the literature, Clyde Woods calls for a "revis[ion of] labor history so that enslaved African Americans assume their rightful place as one of the world's first working classes" (1996/2017:7), expanding peasant classes to include the social relations produced under the capitalist organization of a plantation regime. Woods likens the knowledge system created out of slavery and its aftermath, the "blues epistemology", to "other working class and peasant knowledge systems" (32).

The socio-cultural and spatial movement of the migration brought together specific knowledge systems about how people relate to and in nature, about food production and cultures, as well as the desire for more just economic systems and equitable living conditions (Zeiderman 2006) in response to the persistent white supremacist plantation economies that many were fleeing (Wilkerson 2010; Woods 1998/2017). The legacy of predominantly black southern knowledge about nature has not always been visible in northern cities, indeed often it is repressed or rejected. Moreover, it is essential to not romanticize the agricultural histories of slaves and their descendants, who fought constantly for the right to food, including the right to grow their own food, despite being a central part of the American agricultural system. As Somers (2008:4) points out, the rights and privileges of many have been subsidized by and subsisted on the construction of "people considered neither fully human nor even partial rights-bearers," while the "stateless Others" – racialized and marginalized groups within the United States – have had to continually fight for suvival and full recognition as rights-bearing citizens within American society. Indeed, these two struggles have often gone hand in hand.

Precisely because of histories of slavery and sharecropping, as well as the desire to leave behind the traumatic histories of black ancestors, many black Americans reject participation in agricultural activity. For those who do work the soil, the heritage of being bonded to the land

makes the struggle for self-determination all the more important. Many black growers reclaim the traumatic history of slavery and sharecropping by staking claims on their right to produce expansive more-than-urban natures: to change the city and, in so doing, remake their own lives, both present and future. Amani, who works with a youth gardening programs and also kept a garden to teach her children when they were young, highlights the contradictions in these two perspectives in a conversation with Kim, the director of an environmental non-profit:

> Amani: I was remembering that I have two aunts. And their jobs, they worked for affluent families in Shaker and Pepper Pike, and she would get off the bus in Shaker and my mother would meet her at the Shaker Rapid [Metro] but she would walk in the woods and stuff and pick herbs and stuff like that. And I remember her sister saying, "Why she doin' that crazy stuff, it's a grocery store. People don't do that anymore!" You know and she always believed in picking them, she would make medicine, she would use some of them, I remember goin' to her house, she would have them dried out to use in the food. There's so much that she had that our family saw as, "Leave that alone, this is the city!"
>
> Kim: Yeah, that's all slave work, like people say, "Don't touch that!"
>
> Amani: So, you forced yourself to lose it. So, when I first became an adult and I had children and was into being a midwife and all that. I was trying to pull up some of that stuff, like, "I remember her doin', what was she doing?" [Kim: Where did she get that?] "What was that flower she was tryin' to show me?" To where you saw it as, it's so different. To where you don't want to… it's kinda like, some of us, we were around it and we were like, "We don't want to think like that. We don't wanna be a part of that."

One way of thinking depicts self-provisioning in food (kitchen gardens, community gardening, urban agriculture, or gathering wild plants) as backwards and unappealing, something that does not belong in the city (Zeiderman 2006), and that is also eternally attached to an oppressive history of slavery. By contrast, the grocery store represents a status symbol signifying distance from an agrarian past. As Amani describes, however, these representations are simplified and incomplete. Many growers do think historically, but they are reframing and reclaiming those histories to create something new and different.

During a meeting of the Black Food Justice Collaborative, Gladys commented:

> A lot of stuff has to be placed in a historical context. Many of the reasons we are at the position we're at is from being shut out of certain markets. Redlining, and all these other things that have happened in our communities: lack of access to loans, when other peasant farmers – like Martin Luther King says – were getting access to loans, black farmers wasn't getting that.

Studies in Chicago and Philadelphia show that either a significant proportion or a majority of practitioners in urban agriculture from the 1970s to the 1990s migrated to the city during the second wave of the Great Migration (Taylor and Lovell 2015; Vitiello and Nairn 2009), supporting the hypothesis that an urban agrarian consciousness has been strengthened by these migration patterns. My interviews indicate that the older "first generation" of migrants tended to hold onto an agrarian past, bringing that knowledge and vision with them into the city, whereas their children (and later migrants to Cleveland) were more likely to reject agrarian practices. One research participant described these tendencies as "a kind of generational divide where it was seen as something backwards, didn't appeal to people" but that "this generation – the third generation – is trying to get back into it." She continued, "I didn't learn how to garden. I didn't want to learn how to garden. But now that knowledge gap (between generations) has to be closed" (personal communication 2016).

Cities are often understood to have a particular essence that influences and shapes the lives of those who inhabit it, while urban residents are expected to have or adopt a certain set of resources to cope with life in that city (Zeiderman 2006). This one-way interpretation of the relationship between urban and rural knowledge systems ignores the embodied and located knowledge of the millions of black Americans (Collins 2000) whose lives and experiences were imbued with a production of nature that not only opposed the hegemonic dominance of a white supremacist and productivist system, but was rooted in a historically intimate relationship to the land. The black epistemic frames – ways of knowing and producing nature – that I outline in this and previous chapters are in many ways rooted in their historical and geographical struggle for justice. Black migrants who planted gardens in cities often faced discrimination, but used

this and other "southern" socio-cultural and ecological practices as a way to withstand the "discriminatory nature of the established [community]" (Zeiderman 2006:220), as well as to demonstrate the agrarian ideal behind their wants and needs within urban space. The knowledge and history of the Great Migration, in one way or another, is implanted in urban soils across the country, and embodied in agrarian imaginaries – both latent and explicit – within American cities.

Socio-ecological concerns for control over urban metabolisms (Heynen et al. 2006; Shillington 2013) at the bodily scale *and* the community or city scale have influenced this black agrarian imaginary and the associated drive to produce space differently (Zeiderman 2006). A scalar understanding of social and spatial justice struggles more broadly demonstrates that an embodied vision for healthier environments is grounded in larger ambitions for the production of more just urban natures at multiple scales (Pulido 2000; Taylor 1997). For instance, Don farms in a pocket of Cleveland tucked in between three different highways. He owns the land he grows on, and runs several educational programs with mostly black youth at his farm. His vision for urban nature represents both the contested nature of knowledge production, and an alternative vision for the production of nature. Don describes the interventions of the Ohio State University Extension services as a particular kind of knowledge that is "aimed at perfection, rather than at the imagination or the arts, where, even if it might not look perfect to someone else… these are projects in some stage of imagination or completion." He explained:

> Someone else might not be able to see your vision, but you have it all figured out in your mind, and are arriving there at your own pace. The weeds are probably there for a reason. It might not look perfectly manicured and tame, the way OSU Extension would want it to, but they are there for a reason. If you can imagine it, then that is your success and that's what you are manifesting.

Political ecologies within and across urban and rural areas offer different and sometimes unconventional understandings of the production of (urban) natures and alternative urban food

spaces (McClintock 2014; Robbins 2011). In addition to recognizing different knowledge systems as well as anti-essentialist visions of nature (Escobar 1999), this framework reconceptualizes the interdependence of or even mutual constitution of urban and rural areas (Brenner and Schmid 2015; Zeiderman 2006). According to this perspective, one that is reflected the black agrarian imaginary, socio-natural or socio-ecological processes occur across socially or politically constructed boundaries, and are not delimited by markers of urban or rural space. Embedded within the practices of black urban growers that draw upon a southern agrarian heritage is a tacit critique of and dismantling of the category of the urban. The rural agrarian heritage of relatives and ancestors coalesces with growers' lived experience in Cleveland – a much denser urban area, offering the potential for a critical examination of both urban processes, as well as common-sense ideas about what does and does not belong in urban spaces.

IV. CONCLUSION: PRODUCING BLACK SPACE DIFFERENTLY

A focus on food systems points to many of the ways in which racial and spatial underprivilege coalesce to produce urban inequities that impact poor communities of color more intensely than many other groups (Billings and Cabbil 2012; Heynen et al. 2006). Within neighborhoods of color in Cleveland that are more vulnerable to food insecurity (Alkon and Agyemon 2011; Allen 2008; Billings and Cabbil 2012), the enactment of alternative food futures must also embrace the right to difference – including alternative epistemological framings that inform the production of space. The black agrarian imaginary undergirds the work of black subjects in marginalized and interstitial spaces who produce urban natures as a totality, the differentiated unity of humans and nonhuman nature, or nature as (wo)man's inorganic body (Marx

1844/1993).[51] The production of ontologically unified urban-rural spaces aligns with the epistemic framing of many indigenous groups, including black growers, who often identify as indigenous people.

Vacant lots – urban fields – are regularly left fallow for years after a structure has been abandoned or demolished (McClintock 2010, 2014), contributing to a distinct rurality within Cleveland's urban space. However, urban land is often more intensely impacted by heavy metal contamination, lasting residue from decades of industrial production, and lead from car emissions, which creates unique challenges in reusing the land for agriculture (Elliott and Frickel 2013). Sofie articulates the necessity to adapt southern agrarian practices to the urban context, including the innovations for working in contaminated soil. "We had to use raised beds because the soil was contaminated, of course, but yeah. Getting those greens, and cooking… it's easy!" (personal communication 2016).

Notwithstanding, in Rust Belt cities across the northeastern and midwestern United States, local governments have dedicated resources to repurposing vacant land and to managing other impacts of a shrinking urban population.[52] Projects that indicate a rethinking of urban space – what it could or should look like – include initiatives like ReImagining Cleveland, whose success was hindered by the epistemic rift between residents and the City, whose metrics for

[51] Marx refers here to the work that nonhuman nature does as a totality, or part of a dialectic with humans. In concrete terms, the work of humans to grow food is incomplete without the hoe, the shovel, and the water. These are understood as (wo)man's inorganic body.

[52] In Pittsburgh, the Department of City Planning has included a project for "reimagining" vacant lots in the city's first ever comprehensive plan, and is trying to make it easier for residents to use vacant lots (www.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/vltk). The commercialization of vacant lots in Detroit has received much more attention because of the sheer amount of vacant land available (more than 6,500 acres) and large-scale acquisitions that could concentrate land ownership for capitalist accumulation. Notwithstanding, one analysis estimates that about 75% of the vegetables and up to 50% of the fruit needed to feed the population of Detroit could be grown on the vacant land in the city (www.fairfoodnetwork.org). The city of Buffalo has an Urban Homestead program, which helps residents acquire vacant side lots to be repurposed (www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/RealEstate/UrbanHomesteadProgram).

success were unclear to residents, but which were focused on increasing property and land value.

Epistemologies of value, development, and economy are all at play in municipal and state government initiatives to reuse land or reimagine urban space. Vacant land reuse programs are not without contradictions, and rarely represent an unadulterated vision of the city as *l'œuvre*, valued "for and through its use" (Passidomo 2014:395). As detailed in Chapter 3, urban side-lot land acquisition and other models of vacant land reuse is often only possible if there are no prospects for redevelopment by a business, real estate firm, or through other capitalist means. The ReImagining Cleveland program evolved into one where grant money is no longer allocated to residents, but rather filtered through a small group of CDCs, whose land-use practices tend to align more closely with a state/capitalist valuation of land and vision for urban development. Rather than *l'œuvre*, the "city as commodity" is one of many "dehumanizing effect(s) of capital;" the commodification of space, or the creation of homogenous space as exchange value, necessarily divorces humans from nonhuman nature and the mutual constitution of that "differentiated unity" (Lefebvre 1996, 2009; Marx 1844/1993; Passidomo 2014:395). Depeasantization and land loss in rural areas is mirrored by land insecurity through rental economies and lack of land tenure as well as the capitalist domination over the production of nature in urban spaces. Capitalist economic development is still prioritized by governing bodies, and resources – especially land – are limited to those with the means to acquire it.

Alternative visions for urban space including the black agrarian imaginary thus persist in the face of dominant market ideologies and increasingly austere urban governance structures. Black urban growers produce spaces marginal to the capitalist project, and yet simultaneously represent a counter-hegemony with the power to shift prevailing notions around what constitutes urban space or processes of urbanization. The persistence of peasant ideologies in

the face of deepening capitalist relations *in urban space* is notable, and perhaps results in part from the continued racial projects and displacement that have impacted black communities. In other words, the urban metabolisms instantiated through food provisioning over time are a direct result of modern capitalist relations: a countermovement to the increasingly neoliberal, individualist, and austerity-oriented economic structures of our times.

CHAPTER 6: POLITICAL ECOLOGIES OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

> Exodus provided black people with a language to critique America's racist state and build a new nation, for its central theme wasn't simply escape but a new beginning.
>
> Exodus represented dreams of black self-determination, of being on our own, under our own rules and beliefs, developing our own cultures, without interference.
> Robin D.G. Kelley 2002:17

I. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters present several components of an agrarian counter-hegemony among black urban growers in Cleveland. This counter-hegemony is organized around the epistemic tensions presented in the preceding chapters regarding value and the related tension around development, both of which are primarily concerned with land and space. A third tension around economies or entrepreneurialism expands upon the first two, exploring the market engagements and aspirations of growers. Epistemological difference informs the urban vision(s) of black urban growers, and how they strive to enact those visions. Epistemologies of value, development, and entrepreneurialism are all informed by and in turn help to inform the black agrarian imaginary as it manifests in Cleveland. No matter how incomplete or disparate they may be at times, these counter-hegemonic endeavors form touchstones of a political ecology of food sovereignty in Cleveland with resonance in communities of growers across the world.

Food sovereignty is an intentionally anti-globalist and anti-capitalist agrarian movement largely comprised of peasant farmers in rural spaces. The food sovereignty movement works to "protect local farming [and also] revitalize(e) democratic, cultural, and ecological processes at the subnational level" (McMichael 2012:208). Ideals of self-determination and self-sufficiency are embedded into the food-based praxis of peasants fighting for food sovereignty, while the movement simultaneously presents a strong critique of deepening neoliberalism as it impacts

the global food system (Alkon and Mares 2012; Bartos 2016; Holt-Giménez 2010; McMichael 2014). Embedded within food sovereignty is a demand for choice and freedom around food, diversity of thought or worldview, as well as the right to difference. Political ecologies of food sovereignty seek to collapse divisions between humans and their environment as a differentiated but unified nature, part of a strategy for universal liberation around food and its production. In other words, "[B]iodiversity is not only flora, fauna, earth, water and ecosystems; it is also cultures, systems of production, human and economic relations, forms of government; in essence, it is freedom" (Via Campesina 2000).

Proponents of food sovereignty support access to land as commons and other related land reforms (Tornaghi 2014; Trauger 2014), such as more broad-based community control over land; they support cultural diversity and the right to safeguard indigenous and traditional knowledge among peasant producers; food sovereignty supports the right of peasants to engage economically according to their own needs and desires, while also supporting agro-ecological methods of production. International peasant resistances exist in parallel to each other, and "weave together solidarity between peasant communities around the world" (Via Campesina 2000). Many black growers in Cleveland have adopted an international agrarian perspective. Regardless of direct ties, farmers and gardeners situate themselves in relation to black and brown growers in other parts of the world, drawing strength from the collective struggle across geographies.

In 2007 in the Malian village of Nyéléni, the World Forum for Food Sovereignty took place. As a meeting place for international peasant groups, including La Via Campesina, its purpose was to "reaffirm the right to food sovereignty and to clarify its economic, social, ecological and political implications" (nyeleni.org). The Nyéléni Declaration, written at this forum of over 600 delegates, detailed a comprehensive definition of food sovereignty, as follows:

> Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal – fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social and economic classes and generations.

This declaration resonates strongly with the alternative epistemologies that comprise the black agrarian imaginary. However, because the movement for food sovereignty has not taken hold in Cleveland as such, I do not use the language of food sovereignty to theorize growers' participation in urban spaces, or the ways in which their rights claims enact urban transformation. Rather, in describing the political ecologies of food sovereignty, I situate the materiality of the black agrarian imaginary in a larger world historical context of a peasant struggle for rights and self-determination.

Food Sovereignty of Urban Production

As a conceptual frame or analytic food sovereignty has traction as an anti-capitalist peasant movement with a strong critique of the corporate food regime and the deepening neoliberalism of everyday life (Alkon and Mares 2012; McMichael 2009). While the particular language of food sovereignty is not the terminology of choice for the majority of growers I have worked with and interviewed, the language of food sovereignty has been deployed by groups of black growers in the US such as the National Black Food and Justice Alliance (NBFJA). The NBFJA embed the struggle for black sovereignty within their understanding of the food justice

movement, with a specific focus on racial justice in the food system. A group based in Oakland, California called Movement Generation: Justice and Ecology Project, works towards "the liberation and restoration of land, labor, and culture" (Movement Generation). Their Black Land & Liberation Initiative was an 18-month project that trained black leaders on strategies of land reform, space appropriation, and contestation against the "violent enclosure of land, labor, culture, power, wealth, and spirit" (Movement Generation). These two US-based groups reflect a dominant struggle for racial, economic, and food justice while also deploying the language and philosophies of food sovereignty.

Conceptually, food sovereignty synthesizes many of the agrarian ideologies espoused by Cleveland's urban gardeners and farmers, including food and land justice, restorative agriculture, regenerative agriculture, and sustainable agriculture. Concepts of choice, agency, power, and ownership are all central to how black urban growers in Cleveland understand the agricultural practices they engage in. Food sovereignty, however, is not a singular model that can be imposed upon a community, region, or nation. Rather it emerges from particular time- and place-specific contexts in a way that reflects communities according to their needs.

This concluding chapter is an exploration of the black agrarian imaginary as it contributes to political ecologies of food sovereignty, or contributes to elements of a black food sovereignty in Cleveland. Black growers' struggles to access land, to political participation, and to rights to and in the city, demonstrate an "immanent critique" of their socio-natural reality, grounded in a vision for a different reality (cf. Gramsci 1971/2014). Alex Loftus contends that "build(ing) a new reality emerges from this critique of the present: the conditions of possibility for revolutionary change are continually sown within the everyday" (2009:328).

Through appropriation and the everyday production of space, marginalized groups make claims on the kind of city space they want to live in – and therefore the kind of urban citizens they want to be (cf. Brøgger 2014). These claims to the right to the city extend to governance institutions, and the kind of state that would support an urban politics of socially just and radically democratic practices. The enactment of philosophies and movements such as the right to the city or food sovereignty is contingent; that is, it has the potential to mean as many different things as the places and spaces in which it is pursued (Purcell 2002). Continual processes of "becoming urban" – across natures and space – and inherent unevenness in these processes, means that urban actors "engage in producing urban spaces in different ways" (Brøgger 2014:97). The immanence of the struggle for food sovereignty constructs the present moment both as an embodiment of the historical-geographical dialectic, but also as a mirror to the future (cf. Gramsci 1971/2014; Loftus 2012). This understanding of food sovereignty reflects much of the philosophical and epistemological frame of the black agrarian imaginary, especially the attention to alternative imagined futures.

It is the emancipatory potential of movements such as food sovereignty or the right to the city that, through an everyday politics of space production aimed at substantive and socio-spatial change, is most relevant to asserting an alternative way of being in the city. Black urban growers in Cleveland often situate themselves within an international context, drawing connections between their own agrarian pursuits, and those of black farmers and gardeners in Jamaica, Ghana, Israel, and elsewhere in the black diaspora. This diasporic mentality also manifests in a philosophical lens connecting growers spiritually to the land, to growing, to the food they produce and the communities where they work. Kima, the urban mushroom farmer, characterized the path she followed to become a mushroom farmer as "a spiritual quest." Similarly, Keymah from Rid-All explains the spiritual aspect of the farm in terms of a connection or closeness to nature.

> Everybody brings their energy, and it's really the thing about being close to nature. When you are close to nature, there's automatically a spiritual connection that exists. It's about how you, as an individual, or as a group, want to express that. And it's (sic) no text book for it, no manual for it, you can't buy it off the shelf. It's not packaged or bagged, it's just so organic, it flows out of what's into you, you put it in the soil and the soil gives it back to you, so it's more like an exchange than it is something that you can replicate place to place. So we believe in diversity in lead[ership] – everybody has their own expression – and this just happens to be ours.

Keymah emphasizes the black leadership at the farm as central to the "energy they bring," echoing the sentiments of many other growers for whom a specifically black epistemology resonates.

II. POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF BLACK FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Complicated Relationships to Food and Land

Black relationships to "the foods that sustained their communities" during slavery, Jim Crow, and decades of socio-spatial oppression are complicated and often contested (Edge 2017:71). Histories of oppression across the food system, especially including institutionalized discrimination around land and food production, are an important part of the collective memory of black urban growers, and inform much of the relationship of black subjects to food and its production and consumption. Perceptions and interpretations of soul food represent an interesting analytic for how black subjects from various socioeconomic and geographical backgrounds relate to food culture. Byron Hurt, the writer and director of the 2013 documentary "Soul Food Junkies", introduces his father – and his relationship to food – in the beginning of the film:

> My pops loved to eat and he loved eating soul food – barbequed ribs, grits and eggs, collard greens, ham hocks, cornbread, mac and cheese, black-eyed peas, sweet potato pies. You name it, he loved it. My mother, Francis Hurt, married my pops at 17 and cooked most of his meals. Like most boys, I wanted to be just like my pops. At the dinner table, I ate whatever he ate. So, I would stack up my plate with the grits and the eggs and the salt pork, and we would slice up our pork in nice little pieces and mix the grits and the eggs together and put all the pork that we had cut up on top of the grits and the eggs, and then put it on top of our toast. That was a typical Sunday breakfast. Breakfast on Sunday

> morning was when my pops and I really connected because we were sharing food with each other and establishing a family tradition.

The importance of family tradition is hard to argue with, but the particular foods that were on the table have been the subject of both praise and derision (from black and white sources alike) for several years. Hip-hop duo dead prez (comprised of Khnum Muata Ibomu, who uses the stage name stic.man and Mutulu Olugbala, or M-1) write and produce rap music with a focus on social justice, drawing upon both Marxist and Pan-Africanist ideologies. Their 2000 track, "Be Healthy," from the album, "Let's Get Free," paints a different picture of what soul food could or should be:

> I don't eat no meat, no dairy, no sweets
> only ripe vegetables, fresh fruit and whole wheat
> I'm from the old school, my household smell like soul food, bro
> curried falafel, barbecued tofu
> no fish though, no candy bars, no cigarettes
> only ganja and fresh-squeezed juice from oranges
> […]
> Lentil soup is mental fruit
> and ginger root is good for the yout'
> Fresh veg-e-table with the mayatl stew
> sweet yam fries with the green callaloo
> careful how you season and prepare your foods
> cause you don't want to lose vitamins and miner-ules
> and that's the jewel
> life brings life, it's valuable, so I eat what comes
> from the ground, it's natural

These lyrics depict soul food not only as plant based and vegan (curried falafel, barbecued tofu, lentil soup, no meat) but as expanding beyond the black American diaspora. Callaloo, made of amaranth leaves, is a traditional Jamaican dish that is also found in the diet of many Congolese people in Central Africa (called lenga-lenga). In this context, it represents a pan-diasporic, or Pan-Africanist interpretation of soul food. The "complicated relationship" to soul food is in part about staking a claim on and protecting the legacy of black practices, and partly about protecting that legacy by reclaiming practices in a new way (Edge 2017). Byron Hurt and his father defined soul food in a more traditional way (i.e. collards with ham hocks, cornbread, salt pork, and grits), whereas for dead prez, soul food is plant-based and relies upon international

influences from across the diaspora. The act of reclaiming does not exist without contradiction or contestation.

Eldridge Cleaver, in his book, *Soul on Ice*, criticized those (black bourgeois subjects) who would try to reclaim soul food as a part of their own foodways when soul food has only recently attained a degree of mainstream cultural caché. "Take chitterlings," he writes. "The ghetto blacks eat them from necessity while the black bourgeoisie has turned it into a mocking slogan. Eating chitterlings is like going slumming to them. Now that they have the price of a steak, here they come prattling about Soul Food. The people in the ghetto want steaks. […] I wish I had the power to see to it that the bourgeoisie really *did* have to make it on Soul Food" (1968/1991:49). Cleaver's perspective is nuanced. In effect, he is saying that those with means to not eat soul food, do so only because of the novelty, but would likely not want to eat those foods every day. In other words, they have the choice. However, for those who were forced into relying upon the inexpensive fatty cuts of meat and crops such as corn and rice for the majority of their calories, soul food was a resilience- and subsistence-based necessity. Throughout the last several generations, poor blacks have taken different measures, including kitchen gardens, to nourish themselves in the context of little available food, and often a lack of access to what is considered healthy food. They cooked from and ate what was available and what would provide the most calories for sustenance. In these contexts, there has been little choice available.

Fannie Lou Hamer in 1960s and 70s Mississippi and growers in Cleveland today share a vision of reclaiming the land as a way to change the socio-spatial experiences of residents. Embedding choice within produced space creates a degree of sovereignty over space, food, body, mind, and spirit for residents who have often been constrained by the structural limitations of their surroundings. Because "black matters are spatial matters" (McKittrick 2006:xiv), the reclamation of land and self-provisioning of food are spatial practices meant to reclaim and

redefine black geographies. Self-provisioning in food is not sought out as an exploitative or extractive labor practice, but as a rearticulated and reimagined agrarian practice within the black community. Though the direct appropriation of space, the Black Land Liberation Initiative laid claim to "40 Acres [in] 40 cities" over the course of a day, as a way to highlight the linkages between land reform and racial justice. For this group, land is a key resource, and a means to a liberated future. It represents opportunity, the ability to choose (what you grow or build, how you live), empowerment, and self-determination. Choices around food in particular – where it comes from, how it is produced and consumed, as well as whether it is grown in your back yard or in a farm somewhere across the globe – have become "a means to construct black identity and express black mores" (Edge 2017:70).

"Soul Food Saturdays" is an example of a monthly event at Rid-All that reflects a growing trend of vegan soul food in Cleveland. Residents learn about black culinary traditions that, while they retain historically and culturally important black customs, feature a diversity of more "healthful" ingredients (healthful, in this instance, is interpreted as meatless, with lots of vegetables and whole grains). The trend of adapting soul food to appeal to current discourses of what constitutes healthy eating (cf. Guthman 2008) represents the meeting point of black entrepreneurialism and many of the ideologies embedded in an everyday environmentalism, or the "remaking of the world" undertaken by black growers. Huey Newton, one of the cofounders of the Black Panther Party, wrote that "within [b]lack capitalism [are] the seeds of its own negation and the negation of all capitalism, we recognize that the small [b]lack capitalist in our communities has the potential to contribute to the building of the machine which will serve the true interests of the people and end all exploitation" (2002:230). "Small black capitalism," or black entrepreneurialism is a means to both serve the black community, and, ultimately, to alter the structure of economic relations altogether.

Soul food originated as a culinary survival mechanism during times of slavery: a way to prepare food with inexpensive ingredients, which were usually high in fat and salt to add flavor. However, soul food – criticized for being unhealthy – can also be celebrated as an important historical tool for the survival of black people in this country. Sharlene, who runs one of the largest historical settlement houses in Cleveland, described soul food as an inextricable part of black culture. Louise defines soul food not by the ingredients or methods of cooking them, but rather as "food that feeds the soul." Angela, whose entrepreneurial focus is on music production, views food as an element of black culture that is also connected to other aspects of black culture:

> Arts, food, culture – they just go together. There is no disconnect. It's a feeling, a vibe, a whole experience. Different cultural experiences – including black culture – have their own food…that people grow up with, that is just always around. Soul food, southern cooking, soul music, etc. Food is sustenance, and the soul is starved without it.

Vegan soul food businesses within Cleveland's black community celebrate this tradition. However, they also modify it to the demands of a present-day context informed by both media pressure to eat and look a certain way, and by physicians, including black physicians (Edge 2017), who assert a linkage between a diet high in fat and illnesses such as heart disease or high blood pressure. These conditions disproportionately impact the black community. Cleaver's intervention makes a clear class distinction between the practices and culture of "ghetto blacks" and the "black bourgeoisie." This understanding of separate race-class structures as they influence cultural practices and belonging is mirrored in often-articulated delineations between urban and rural practices, which are also associated with perceived differences in ways of living and being in the world.

The black agrarian imaginary's southern heritage erodes at those delineations, effectively collapsing the urban-rural binary. Informed by an agrarian vision, black urban growers "use a rural, agrarian past to shape their own identity and to create both the imagined as well as the

real landscapes of their neighborhoods" (Zeiderman 2006:211). As I have demonstrated, this agrarian vision is not without contestation. Zeiderman (2006) in a brief history of (mostly European) cities as formed by the long-term and widespread migration of rural people into urban agglomerations, describes how rural sensibilities were (and are) often rejected within urban landscapes. Black sociologist W.E.B. DuBois wrote about southern blacks as "devoid of cultural resources that enabled them to cope with life in the city" (Trotter 1995:440), reflecting a narrative about rural migrants as somehow backwards or unmodern.

This perspective is not one held by the "black bourgeoisie" or white urban residents alone, as many of the descendants of slaves, sharecroppers, or southern farmers who came to live in the city also scorned agrarian practices as unnecessary or backwards. This helps to illustrate the anti-essentialism of black epistemologies: there is no singular or right way to be black in the city. Whereas the right to difference and the right to the city indicate a movement towards *autogestion* or the withering away of the state (cf. Gramsci 1971/2014; Lefebvre 1996, 2009), agricultural production is not the only pathway to black liberation or radical democracy. Urban agriculture, which is often celebrated as a way to reclaim agrarian histories (including in this dissertation), is also an incredibly laborious method of food provisioning. It is a heavy workload for individuals with other responsibilities including work, school, and family. Individuals who might be responsible for reproductive care, or the care of elder family members, for example, might not have time to also nurture the land and self-provision in food.

At "Soul Food Saturdays" gatherings, participants recount black histories and geographies as a celebration of black knowledge about health and wellness instead of focusing on health disparities or less healthy food choices; this is a powerful form of claiming both the right to difference and of producing black spaces differently. One of the people Byron Hurt interviewed in his documentary draws the connection:

> African Americans have [always] been green. We've been eating close to the land. We've been thinking about ways that we could be eco-sustainable. We just didn't call it that. It was just the way that people had to live out of necessity. If anything, we need to be talking to the elders – the aunties and the grandmothers and the great-grandmothers – and finding out, what were they doing? How were they practicing sustainability with very few resources and a lot of people?

Black subjects in Cleveland have echoed this sentiment about the work that they and their ancestors have been involved in for generations. Gladys commented that she has "led a sustainable life, and a green life" for her entire life. As a way of explaining where that knowledge and practices came from, she said, "My parents came from different parts of the South, and they brought agricultural knowledge with them to the city, and like others in the city, we had a plot of land that had some food on it." Don, who has been farming since the early 90s on a plot of land he owns, also made connections between indigenous knowledge and sustainability practices. He observed that there is a wealth of knowledge to share and "get out there"; he recognizes that the kind of "master's degree, white people knowledge – rationalized, logical knowledge – is not the way the I want to teach this" (personal communication 2015). Sustainability is a key part of the knowledge system he is referring to. "It's not just food and agriculture, but it's math or business, people skills, social skills, as well as (how to) grow your own food and be sustainable." The math, business, and other skills are a part of that sustainability in that it helps to create a community of expertise. The impulse to teach and to share this knowledge with younger generations of black youth is key to the development and persistence of the black agrarian imaginary.

Black growers do not always deploy the more conventional terminology or language to describe the knowledge and practices they embrace. For example, rather than calling what they do "sustainable" agriculture, the farmers at Rid-All refer to their practices as regenerative. Mark White, the Farm Operations Manager, explains that the agricultural philosophy of the farm is not rooted in sustainability, because current farming practices don't merit sustaining.

> This is a little bit different. Regenerative, vs. just sustainable, it's a little different. Our belief is that most of American topsoil, well, all of American topsoil is destroyed. So we don't want to just sustain that, we want to regenerate that, right? A lot of pollution, a lot of farming practices are wrong. We don't want to sustain that either, we want to change that, regenerate, start over and bring it back to life.

The ways that Mark describe the practices at Rid-All represents a rejection of hegemonic conventional agricultural practices, which are intimately linked to dominant capitalist market structures. The founders of Rid-All use the concept of regeneration in an expansive way. The regenerative agriculture practiced at Rid All is directed not only at top soil regeneration, or ecologically beneficial farming practices, but at the surrounding community and neighborhoods. The farmers at Rid All are regenerating black histories, black geographies of agriculture, and black economies. The vision for regeneration grows from the past, the "sites of memory (with) symbolic and political significance" collectively selected and held by black growers (O'Meally and Fabre 1994:7).

They also draw upon an imagined future where black growers and black communities can be free of exploitative and oppressive black (agricultural) histories. As one black grower explained, "with anything, you hold on to the good and throw away the bad. So the exercise, working the land, you do it for yourself." Kim talks about the bigger picture, and how the work on the land builds a bridge to the future:

> …the seed is so powerful, it can sustain life. The way I explain to the kids, everything is building to something else… This farm was just plopped down here, this was a dumping ground, and one phone call created the next one and the next one. So it's like, how does this activity move you to another level. (I want the kids to) see the bigger picture. I'm really trying to connect dots for people, for them to see how this activity is leading to this greater piece of it all. Don't just focus on this one thing, this one planting, it's really about all this other stuff. You can't get to that unless you're willing to start here.

Emerging from international peasant spaces, food sovereignty offers a conceptual framework for the work of black urban growers. Catarina Passicomo assesses both food sovereignty and the right to the city movements as a way to "(re)conside(r) food as a *lens* through which structural

inequalities may be more fully appraised" (2014:386). The epistemic tensions expressed through the black agrarian imaginary resonate with the objectives of food sovereignty, especially the ways in which growers prioritize the wellbeing of the black community in the work that they do. Together with Lefebvre's right to the city, food sovereignty articulates a vision for possibility beyond the actually-existing city: "where citizens fight the alienation of space through the reappropriation of processes of space production" (Tornaghi 2017:786).

The Struggle for Sovereignty and Rights

The definition of food sovereignty from the Nyéléni Declaration outlines many of the important values of black growers in Cleveland, including healthy food that is specific to black culture and defined by and for the black community, the primacy of social relations and community needs ahead of markets, intergenerational engagement and particular attention to youth, the idea of "just incomes," or the ability to earn a livelihood from agricultural endeavors, and attention to social justice and freedom from oppression. The praxis of food sovereignty is contingent; that is to say, it has the potential to mean as many different things as the places and spaces in which it is pursued (Agarwal 2014; Alkon and Mares 2012; Purcell 2002). Notwithstanding, it is the emancipatory potential that, through a politics of space production aimed at substantive socio-spatial change, aligns with the black agrarian imaginary.

Political ecologies of food, race, and of space encourage an explicit recognition and naming of politics, power, and privileged systems of knowledge as they relate to ecological processes. Expanding upon that, political ecologies of black food sovereignty foreground the particular histories of race and racialization that are deeply embedded in capitalism, and the associated spatial forms.

Through the production of specifically black spaces and claims to the right to the city, black growers in Cleveland enact their agrarian imaginary, constituted through difference and by alternative epistemologies. Through the lens of these alternative epistemologies, endeavors in urban agriculture represent the future of the black community: liberated black spaces, and a radically democratic state that supports a politics of socially just and democratic practices. Taking over empty lots; planting gardens in public spaces; using residential lawns in unconventional and provocative ways; engaging in animal husbandry in urban spaces; becoming environmental stewards of urban forests; participating in and occupying green spaces within the city; demanding access to green infrastructure and for the installation of a more robust food and agricultural infrastructure within the city; all of these evoke the right to the city, and represents a demand for food sovereignty. These are examples of how a food-based and ecological appropriation of space can represent claims for a broader set of rights of urban residents.

The claims made by black growers through the production of space have echoes across the United States, and throughout US history, as well as among peasant and indigenous groups across the world. Among the historical influences on black growers in Cleveland are figures such as George Washington Carver, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, and black nationalist groups such as the Black Panther Party or the Nation of Islam. Fannie Lou Hamer, a former sharecropper in the Mississippi Delta, established the cooperatively owned Freedom Farm to support the food-based and economic needs of poor southern families through the lens of sovereignty. Like peasants struggling for food sovereignty, she articulated her work as a part of the larger fight for the full citizenship for black Americans (cf. Somers 2006). In other words, food is a means to other rights (cf. Shue 1996). According to Hamer, food is what "allows the sick ones a chance of healing, the silent ones a chance to speak, the unlearned ones a chance to learn, and the dying ones a chance to live" (quoted in Edge 2017:58). Quentin X, a member of

the Nation of Islam, quoted Elijah Muhammad when he said, "We need to get our mouths out of their kitchen," meaning that black people need to stop relying on white people, institutions, and organizations Self-determination is central to both the black agrarian imaginary and to peasant movements for food sovereignty across the world. To emphasize his point, Quentin, who farms a quarter-acre plot of land in Kinsman, insisted that you cannot depend on the state to put good food into a community. "The state has resources. And we could use more of these resources. We would love to see the state share or give away more of these resources, but the community needs to build themselves up" (personal communication 2016). Quentin is not the only grower I interviewed who shared this sentiment. AJ, quoted in chapter 4, spoke similarly about the desire for state resources (especially investment), but also the need for community infrastructure and skills to manage them. Espousing a vision similar to the international movement for food sovereignty, Quentin would like to "get money out of the hands of corporations and back into the community" (personal communication 2016). Not unlike many other black growers I interviewed, Quentin and AJ share a vision for economic self-determination that is rooted in alternative economies, including cooperative enterprise and community supported agriculture.

I have shown that black urban growers demonstrate a tacit critique of, and dismantling of the category of the urban through the production of space the draws upon a southern, mostly rural, heritage. The claims to urban space for unconventional purposes – bee hives, fish aquaponics, microgreens production, herb spirals – establishes non-binary nature and spaces within the city. The epistemic frame and worldview of black growers in Cleveland collapses geographic distance through the instantiation of "down-south" histories and memories (cf. O'Meally and Fabre 1994) in spaces typically thought of as northern. The idea of "up-south" geographies indicates that spatial distance can be bridged through epistemological connections. Indeed, the connections felt by black growers in Cleveland to black and brown farmer and gardeners across the globe inform the materiality of their work as well as its spiritual underpinnings.

Through the practices mentioned above, black food sovereignty is also an expression of survival mechanisms in the city, the instantiation of the black southern agrarian heritage, discussed in chapter 4. Keymah, from Rid-All, is the son of southern black growers who instilled in him a love for plants and gardening, explained that "Most people coming [up] from the south gardened. This is part of a survival, part of the culture. You know, you didn't go to the grocery store for every little thing." While urban food provisioning is sometimes interpreted as not appropriate for urban spaces, as something best left behind in the past (or in the south), the sense of power that results from self-provisioning is crucial to healing the trauma of oppressive agricultural practices.

Across the United States members of the National Black Food and Justice Alliance (NBFJA) articulate black food sovereignty as a key element of black survival in the US. Black food sovereignty figures centrally in the mission of the organization: "We focus our work on black food sovereignty, self-determining black economies, and land. We approach food sovereignty, land and self-determining food economies through the lens of healing, organizing and resistance against anti-Blackness" (blackfoodjustice.org). The NBFJA defines black food sovereignty as "both the right and ability to have community control of our food system including means of production and distribution" with an associated "shift (in) the paradigm from a rights-based framework to one of governance and control" (NBFJA 2017). The economic emphasis is on black ownership of enterprises "including but not limited to cooperatives and shared economies" with a focus on land ownership and ecological stewardship (Ibid.) As I elaborate in the previous chapters, among black subjects that I interviewed and worked with, the desire establish outside-of-capitalist systems and structures is strong, if varied.

The ideals of sovereignty, as described by the NBFJA underscore not only the importance of "organizing for black food and land", but highlight many of the themes that have emerged amongst black growers in Cleveland. Sustainability, international (diasporic) food systems and "land rights work" are part of the vision of the NBFJA, as are concepts of self-determination through healing and political organizing. The right to the city, with the ultimate associated goal of *autogestion*, is embodied by the efforts of growers to produce a self-determined urban food system explicitly for the black community.

Both the Rid-All Green Partnership Farm and the Black Food Justice Collaborative (BFJC) in Cleveland are NBFJA member organizations. Malia, an organizer with the NBFJA, worked closely with the BFJC during several of their meetings, helping them to formulate and refine their vision for black food justice in Cleveland. The BFJC describes themselves as an "intergenerational network of Cleveland residents engaged in growing food, educating their community on sustainable living and healthy eating, and working to steward vacant and abandoned land in Cleveland." Their mission is to "build an intergenerational, grassroots organizing collective that cultivates future leaders, supports life sustaining activities through education, job creation, arts, culture, and innovation, focused on impacted communities." In their vision statement, the group articulates a desire to "take back their community" that rejects the idea of "outsiders" coming in to implement solutions to community problems. Aligning with the philosophies of food sovereignty, they emphasize the need for "community-based solutions in food and farming as well as…culture to reinvigorate the community" (personal communication 2016).

The BFJC uses the language of food justice, with an emphasis on collaborative and cooperative agrarian structures; the language of food sovereignty introduced to them through the NBFJA, with a stronger critique of capitalism and white supremacist structures, resonates strongly with

members. From the beginning, the BFJC did not shy away from strong language, or pointed critiques of the hegemonic order of things. In a 2015 meeting, Don labeled the condition of black Americans a genocide:

> Look at the people walking up and down the street and in the hospitals, and tell me this isn't an attack on our people? A systematic attack that doesn't exist in the white community. This has been an attack by the government on the African American community, and we must take steps to deconstruct something that the government is constructing.

Another member commented that hospitals, in particular, have "morphed into a capitalist system of profit making," rather than places of healing, with fresh air and sunlight. She continued to criticize Ohio State University Cooperative Extension services as a historically white institution that was complicit in neighborhood redlining. These critiques of racial capitalism, the racial state, and racist educational institutions indicates a desire to create cohesion within and between black groups across the US and to deconstruct and break apart the white supremacist structures, including "the economic chain to feed the banks" (personal communication 2016).

Black food sovereignty represents a broad-based critique of systems and structures that do not serve, or have directly harmed the black community. It makes a claim to self-determination within the black community, supported by a movement for self-determination within communities across the globe. Self-determination, under the philosophy of food sovereignty, is the right of all people "to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems" (Via Campesina 2009).

The Black Urban Peasantry

Black subjects have experienced widespread land loss and expropriation from the land, including displacement from southern agricultural spaces and internal displacement within

industrial and postindustrial cities. In part because of how black urban growers understand themselves and their work, and partly because of their socio-spatial and political economic positioning in relation to the land and the governing apparatus, the black agrarian imaginary can be understood as the instantiation of a peasant logic in urban space (Quintano, Borquez, and Aviles 1998). Building upon Barrington Moore, James Scott argues that the peasant class is not only found in rural spaces, but that the peasantry includes smallholding sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and other growers "who have some degree of control over the production process" (Scott 1977:267). Moore also suggests that, while it is impossible to comprehensively define the peasantry, "A previous history of subordination to a landed upper class recognized and enforced in the laws…sharp cultural distinctions, and a considerable degree of *de facto* possession of the land, constitute the main distinguishing features of peasantry" (1966:111).

It is not only the heritage of sharecropping that remains in the forefront of the collective memory of black growers in Cleveland that lends an element of peasant class consciousness to the endeavors of black growers. The everyday experiences of growers contribute to this peasant consciousness: as they try to access land, markets, and other resources; as they work to establish themselves on the land and to provision themselves and their communities in food; and as they seek out political support for these endeavors. Barrington Moore writes of the nineteenth century peasantry in England that their country was ruled by a "committee of landlords" (Moore 1966:19); the privatization of and enclosures of thousands upon thousands of parcels of land in Cleveland that otherwise might be available for public use also lends a degree of peasant class consciousness to the initiatives of black growers in the city.

Political philosopher Karl Kautsky, whose 1899 book *On the Agrarian Question*, remains one of the most important texts on the agrarian and peasant questions,[53] suggested that the political influence of the rural peasantry was the most significant, "precisely at a moment when its weight in the economy was waning" (Watts 1996:231). Throughout most of the long history of slavery and sharecropping, black growers had incredible political importance, but not power. After decades of economic and political oppression during the post-bellum period (including expropriation from the land, disenfranchisement, and white terrorism), black farmers have increased slightly in both number and the amount of land they farm or control since the early 2000s (Penniman 2016). because they do not produce or sell in high quantities, black growers have limited economic power in urban areas. However, the political power that black growers have held at certain times in history, such as during the Civil Rights Movement and the era of Black Power, motivates the socio-spatial and political aspirations of growers today.

Growers who seek out access to resources and try to establish themselves as self-determined exist within the larger world-historical context of a corporate food regime (McMichael 2009) and continued neoliberalization of space that discourages self-provisioning in food through the constant cycle of crisis of capital and subsequent resolution of and deepening of capitalist relations (Harvey 1978, 1985). The concept of food sovereignty helps to situate their struggle in Cleveland within a broader international struggle, lending political significance to the activities of Cleveland's black growers. Simultaneously, the ways in which black growers across the US have contributed to the food sovereignty conversation brings important questions about racial

[53]Jason Moore writes of agrarian questions, rather than the agrarian question (Moore 2008), highlighting the importance of recognizing the mutual constitution of questions of agriculture and capital at multiple scales. He also evokes the importance of considering the uneven nature of scalar relationships between agriculture and capital, observing, "the latest effort to remake agriculture in the image of capital […] has entered a phase of rapidly declining returns for capital as a whole" (Moore 2008:np). Declining returns on capital, however, are not reflected in the price of food; rather, profits and accumulation are concentrated at the top of the corporate pyramid. On the contrary, food prices (in 2008) were at their highest real level since the mid 1800s, contributing to widespread hunger, food insecurity, and poverty amongst vulnerable populations world-wide.

justice, urban space, and the legacies of slavery (vis-à-vis reparations and land reform) to the fore in a global arena. The multiscalar locations of struggle for food sovereignty, from the international to the hyperlocal align with the internationalism inherent to the black agrarian imaginary, and the perceived connections between black growers across the world, "beyond our physical presence around each other" (personal communication 2016). Keymah from the Rid-All Farm, explained:

> …because that's the energy that goes forth that pushes back against…commercial agriculture [and] deforestation, all of these individual efforts. They combine somewhere in the space beyond me... We create a greater shield around the planet. … That's the real way around the world. All of these small little energies. There's a term called "universal consciousness" that if enough people think the same way at the same time we can create a shift in the universe. … Whether we never meet John Doe that has a farm down the street, our work still meets somewhere, because there's a common energy there that exists that makes a difference in the universe.

Keymah recognizes that there are common threads within the struggle for self-determination among black and brown growers. The combination of intensified globalization of food systems, economic restructuring (including neoliberalization and austerity urbanism), and the increasing penetration of capital into the recesses of markets has made the establishment of self-determining communities much more difficult. In urban areas where access to land is sparse, the pressure to develop is intense, and the penetration of global capital is near-complete, this is particularly salient.

As with Kautsky's agrarian question, these urban conditions stem from outside the agricultural and food sectors, but have very real implications for how people provision themselves: with decreased access to markets within pockets of the urban environment, communities with deep roots in agrarian cultures are calling upon that knowledge in order to produce more resilient, sovereign spaces within the urban core. Gladys said once that if she "could create an oasis like that garden [where we just were], I could create a safer community that wouldn't even need the police." This particular way of articulating community self-determination arises frequently as a

vision of resistance – rooted in the production of food and the production of space – against patterns of oppressive and racialized governance.

The death of Tamir Rice, and other related incidences of violence and trauma in the black community influence growers' desire to reject both the surveillance and disciplining of their communities, and to reclaim and (re)produce space after their own vision. Like the Black Panther Party, black growers envision communities that can take care of, defend, and support themselves. Self-determination does not mean a withdrawal from the broader society, but the assertion of their worth in the face of generations of oppression and neglect. Growers explain that urban agriculture and community-based food provisioning will improve the health of community members, provide youth opportunities other than gang violence (that spreads fear within the black community), and create beautiful and welcoming spaces that do not elicit the disciplining gaze of the racial state.

III. CONCLUSION: RECLAIMING THE POWER OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

As a consumer base, the power of black communities has been manipulated by the corporate food system to push high calorie, high sodium food within impoverished neighborhoods of color especially through the disproportionate prevalence of fast food and corner stores, and through (emergency) commodity food programs (Billings & Cabbil 2012; Holt-Giménez and Wang 2012; Guthman & DuPuis 2006; Kwate 2008; Larson et al. 2009; McMichael 2009). Black and brown neighborhoods are served by an excessively high number of liquor and convenience stores, while also experiencing a dearth of full-service grocery stores (McClintock 2011: 89; Eisenhauer 2001; Lane et al. 2008; Massey & Denton 1993). As a consequence, people of color are disproportionately harmed by the dominant food system along the entire supply chain from production to consumption, and simultaneously silenced regarding transformation of this system. Within the Rust Belt, this racialized effect has the largest impact

on the black community. Neoliberal governance structures that emphasize a self-regulating market economy do nothing to correct for the uneven and inequitable commercial development, and in fact perpetuate the deepening of racialized space through uneven investment and development schemes, motivated by the perceived necessity for a specific kind – and specific geographies – of capitalist growth in cities (Wilson 2007).

Neoliberal individualism and the tenets of personal responsibility only further the disempowerment of communities struggling to achieve self-determination. Conversely, social inclusion and cohesion is integral to the collective actions that produce spaces and a politics of difference (cf. Young 1990). The right to difference emerges as a radical alternative to capitalocentric relations, especially for the "internally displaced" whose communities have been fractured and marginalized by those relations, to remake the city – and their own lives – as use-value relations (Harvey 2003; Kipfer 2002; Somers 2008).

Through everyday practices, residents inhabit, occupy, and claim marginalized, interstitial, and often neglected, or abandoned spaces within the city (Galt, Gray, and Hurley 2014; Hilbrandt 2017; Passidomo 2014; Thompson 2015) to recreate black space as well as themselves (Harvey 2008). It is through these processes – at times legible, at times not – that the black agrarian imaginary takes on its concrete form.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: THE STRUGGLE OVER GEOGRAPHY

The Opportunity Corridor, a development project briefly discussed in Chapter 2, presents a clear picture of the struggle over geography as it manifests across urban space. An important impact of the Opportunity Corridor and other development projects on residents' capacity to obtain land for food production is found in the "Sustainable Development Pattern Map" drawn by the City Planning Commission. The Opportunity Corridor is central to the Development Pattern Map, whose prioritized areas include a wide radius alongside the Opportunity Corridor including much of Kinsman and the Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone. In urban areas, land investments are often framed as development initiatives (as opposed to the more common use of the phrase "land grabs" in rural areas) (Noorloos, Klaufus and Steel 2019). Despite the lack of development planned for much of the land within Kinsman – and outside of the direct footprint of the Opportunity Corridor – parcels remain within the footprint of prioritized development. While this approach to urban development is designed to achieve important financial and spatial goals of the City to increase tax revenue, improve urban density, and attract investment into the city, 'prioritized development areas' that do not coincide with actual areas of investment or current development remain neglected by the city and inaccessible to farmers and gardeners. The coincidence of the footprint of the development priority areas with the Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone perfectly highlights the contradictions within the dominant urban planning paradigm: alternative land use and urban agriculture are valued by city officials, but only insofar as they don't currently – or potentially in the future – overlap with areas of possible real estate development.

CDCs and city planners have made efforts to engage directly with residents on development projects and with neighborhood plans: to ask questions about the kind of business and job creation they would like to see, and to create stipulations and community guidelines for the

ways in which development and change impacts neighborhoods. The epistemic divide in land management and valuation remains: the paradigm of "highest and best use" has not been seriously unsettled in any way, and resident engagement in these processes has not led to any substantial changes in plans for development. Kinsman, for example, has some of the highest concentrations of vacant land in the city of Cleveland, and strategic land assembly remains central to development practices within this area. A CDC employee reasoned that "this neighborhood, this particular part of the Opportunity Corridor *does* have a lot of vacant land. Just blocks and blocks and blocks where there's one house, two houses, so I feel like it's the least disruptive because this neighborhood has already been decimated for all sorts of other reasons" (Personal Interview 2017).

APPENDIX B: THE HOUGH RIOTS OF 1966 AND THE GLENVILLE SHOOTOUT AND RIOTS OF 1968

Hough

There are many versions to the story of the Hough riots. Here I recount the most well-known version. There was a white-owned café on East 79th Street and Hough Avenue, known for racially discriminatory service policies. Throughout the mid-1960s, workers there refused service to black residents, including, in 1966, a black man who had asked for water. In one version of the story, the owner placed a sign on the door that read, "No water for n------", aggravating an already inflamed situation (Stradling and Stradling 2015). On July 18, 1966, violence broke out, leading to several days of arson, firebombing, looting, and other violence in the Hough neighborhood, ultimately resulting in the death of four black Americans, several dozen injuries, and almost 300 arrests. The riots and looting lasted for six days, despite the deployment of the National Guard to the Hough neighborhood.

In the aftermath of the violence, there was much speculation about the influence of Black Nationalist groups or communists, including the communist Jomo Freedom Kenyatta House, in encouraging the unrest. However, a more structural explanation is found in a letter written to then-mayor Ralph S. Locher by a Cleveland group working to prevent juvenile delinquency. Members of Community Action for Youth wrote about the dilapidation in the neighborhood, high levels of unemployment, and the inability of impoverished residents to lead "decent dignified" lives (Stradling and Stradling 2015). Indeed, although it had only 7.3% of the city's population at that time, Hough was home to 19% of welfare recipients, and struggled with disproportionately high unemployment rates. Hough had transitioned from a racially integrated neighborhood to one that was 90% black by the mid-1960s. It held a considerable amount of wealth in real estate, although properties were declining in value and absentee landlords were allowing rental homes to fall into disrepair.

Despite the efforts of the all-black Hough Area Development Corporation (HADC), Hough declined considerably in both housing (in part due to arson, see Kerr 2012) and population in the years following the riots. The HADC was formed in 1967 to rehabilitate and reinvest in the neighborhood, while also monitoring urban renewal and anti-poverty projects in black neighborhoods (Williams 2015); however, the next several decades saw steady declines in both investment and population, and the HADC was only able to remain in operation until 1984.

Glenville

Fred "Ahmed" Evans, who had migrated to Cleveland from South Carolina in the early 1930s, and served in the U.S. army during World War II, became aware of and involved with the black nationalist movement against racialized violence in the aftermath of the brutalization and lynching of a black man in Louisiana in 1959. He opened the African Cultural Shop in Glenville, where he displayed an Afro-centric flag representing Garveyism and the Universal

Negro Improvement Association. He became the leader of the Republic of New Libya around 1966, and began to draw attention from the local police department for his "publicly expressed belief in armed revolution" (Moore 2003; Williams 2015:174). This followed the example of many other radical groups including the Revolutionary Action Movement and the Black Panther Party. Evans' belief that self-defense and the militarization of black radical groups was, in a sense, a demand for the rights to "inhabit, appropriate(e), and participat(e)" in urban spaces within Glenville (Vasudevan 2017). Together with the Revolutionary Action Movement, Afro Set, and the Federation of Black Nationalists, the Black Nationalist work of the Republic of New Libya represented a political and spatial threat to city officials, including then-mayor Carl B. Stokes, the first black mayor of Cleveland.

Authorities were tipped off to reported plans of an assault on the police using an alleged stockpile of weapons, while Evans also suspected an assault or ambush by the police. On July 23, 1968, reacting to the presence of police cars outside of his apartment, the situation spiraled into a lethal shootout. Three members of New Libya and three Cleveland police officers were killed. After the incident, violence in Glenville erupted as a demonstration of protest against the assault on black political organizing. Police officers enforced curfews and regulated the flow of people and cars through the neighborhood. Several reports of police abuse, including sexual assault against black women, beatings of black men, and of police firing their guns in public spaces emerged, increasing the resolve of rioters to reclaim this space for the black community. The response of the state – to aggressively control or takeover the neighborhood – essentially forced the mostly black community to retreat to their homes, to avoid venturing into neighborhood spaces, or to obey strict spatial restrictions on their movements outside of enclosed, private spaces. In the end, several dozen businesses were destroyed, with more than $2.5 million in damage accrued across the neighborhood.

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