Marginalized Food Growers in a Changing Environment: Tracing Collective Survival Strategies

by

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DEDICATION

To all the Ypsilantians—past, present, and future—who have fought for collective liberation on this land.

To Sammy and Gordon who left us too soon.

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iv

of the other beloved kids in my life: Sofia, Vayda, Rehan, Jonah, Zubin, Nola, Milo, Elijah, Heath, and Blaine) will do better than we have, but I'm also sick of adults putting that on you. Your photo is below a James Baldwin quote "Nothing can be changed until it is faced," and this dissertation is one attempt to start facing the many things we need to change in this world.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX

ABSTRACT

Within the United States, many marginalized communities have long-standing food growing traditions, which is relevant to responding to the growing climate crisis that imperils global food security and disproportionately impacts marginalized communities. In this community-engaged qualitative dissertation, I broadly ask, what can we learn from marginalized agrarian traditions that might be useful to those marginalized communities in collectively surviving global environmental change? To answer that question, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with marginalized food growers in the de-industrial city of Ypsilanti, Michigan. Using a historically and theoretically informed approach to thematic analysis, I identified five overarching themes regarding how marginalized people view growing food. These are: (a) growing food as building resilience; (b) growing food as promoting health and healing; (c) growing food as deepening connections; (d) growing food as difficult because of land injustice; and (e) gentrification as a destructive force in movement towards resilience, healing, connection, and justice. Growing food within marginalized communities is not only of material help in collectively surviving climate change, but also is vital to cultural revitalization that ties people to the ways that their ancestors survived similarly epochal changes. General implications of this study include advancing collective survival strategies, refining environmental subjectivities, and drawing critical attention to climate refuge cities. Sociological implications include the importance of taking culture, including oral culture, and history, including

the history of colonization and enslavement in the US, seriously in understanding not just the past and present, but also the future. Theoretical implications include how everyday people are theorists and political actors in their food growing practices and how elite environmental subjectivities can serve as a barrier to building resilience in marginalized communities. Policy implications include the overlap between housing justice and climate resilience, the need for proactive planning in areas that are expected to serve as climate refuge, and the need for reparations and rematriation of land. Finally, social work practice implications include the need to center environmental, climate, and land justice in social work education; the need to adopt anti-colonial and advance anti-racist standards in practice and education; and the need for recognition and accountability for the harms committed by institutions that social workers are a part of, including universities.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Given the global environmental changes and crises currently gripping the world—mass extinction, sea level rise, loss of biodiversity—geologists have proclaimed that we have left the Holocene and entered the Anthropocene, or "age of man," so named because humans have altered the planet such that we are the defining element of this epoch. However, Moore (2016) takes issue with this classification, as it treats humanity as one undifferentiated mass, equally responsible for the earth's destruction. Rather, he argues that some humans, for most of modernity if not now, were not considered fully human, and, thus, were considered a part of nature, free to have their bodies and their labor exploited as a natural resource under capitalism. Consequently, he argues that a more apt name for our era is the Capitalocene, framing the global elites' actions in pursuit of capital accumulation, or capitalist processes, as the source of environmental destruction.

While Moore's (2016) reframe is consequential in terms of assigning responsibility, it is also consequential in terms of conceptualizing responses to our predicament. Moore (2016) argues that the dominant response coming from scholars who embrace the Anthropocene framing is to recognize that "we are all in this together." They often use the metaphor of the earth as a spaceship that we are all on, and whose life support systems need to be maintained. However, if we accept that the interrelated processes of capitalism, colonialism, and enslavement caused our predicament, as Moore (2016) argues we should, he suggests that the extreme exploitation, expropriation, and domination along the global color line that enables accumulation by global elites necessitates that we

1

recognize that the vessel we are on is actually a slave ship. In recognizing that, he argues that we can learn from the recurring revolts of the enslaved to envision what we must do to achieve not only a livable future on this planet, but also a just one.

I am interested in what strategies marginalized communities, the vast majority of the population globally, can use to ensure their collective survival in the Capitalocene. Some futurists argue that we are living in "post-normal times" that are governed by the three "Cs," chaos, complexity, and contradictions, an in-between stage, where the assumptions of the past no longer hold but we do not yet know what the new order is (Ramos, 2022). As we navigate our way through this uncertain stage, Ramos (2022) argues the adoption of an "epic times" framework helps us to understand who we need to be and what we need to do at this time in the world, which necessitates "temporal conscientization," understanding the past that led us to where we are and imagining new possibilities for the future. Doing so creates meaning, which is essential to surviving and living our best lives in the circumstances that we find ourselves in (Frankl, 1946/2006). So while, it is important to acknowledge that the future will likely be vastly different than both the present and the past, enduring cultural traditions, and especially agricultural traditions, the basis of our sustenance, have potential to help communities in navigating these epic times. If we accept that the more apt metaphor of the Earth as it stands is the slave ship rather than the space ship, it makes sense to focus not just on slave revolts as Moore does (2016), but also on the cultural and agricultural traditions that enabled the collective survival of African American communities since slavery. Thus, in this dissertation, I broadly ask, what can we learn from marginalized agrarian traditions that might be useful to those marginalized communities in collectively surviving global environmental change? To answer that question, I use qualitative methods to examine the growing traditions of marginalized communities in the de-industrial city of Ypsilanti, Michigan.

This dissertation project is part of work on a "resilience from below" (Vrasti & Michelsen, 2017) framework that I developed with my colleagues, Mary Kate Dennis and Amy Krings, collective survival strategies (CSS), as well as my experiences and observations in Ypsilanti, commonly referred to as Ypsi. CSS are fundamentally about how communities protect and care for each other, and have five key attributes. They are: "(1) communal and cooperative, not individualistic; (2) rooted in place and existing cultural traditions; (3) focus on basic survival needs—food, water, shelter, protection, culture; (4) self-organized and autonomous—not reliant upon outside actors; and (5) address both quotidian and spectacular disasters—making everyday life better and reducing vulnerability to larger crises" (Bell, et al., 2019, p. 287). Part of our motivation for developing this framework was to take history, power, and culture seriously in a way that the field of resilience has not always done. However, as North Americans, we recognized that to take history, power, and culture seriously we needed to embrace anti-colonialism. Work on anti-colonialism in social work has been led by Michael Hart in Canada. Hart describes anti-colonialism as a social, cultural, and political position rooted in the collective and common consciousness that colonialism was imposed and dominating, as well as the resistance to settler colonialism (2009). Anti-colonialism is an analogue to anti-racism in that it can, and should, be practiced by everyone, including settlers on Indigenous lands (Carlson-Manathara & Rowe, 2021). This research project imperfectly embraces anti-colonialism.

In Ypsilanti specifically, concerns about Black and working class futurities in the city have increased. Whyte and others (2018) define futurity as "the idea that members of a society ought to be able to experience that their own efforts and contributions to their society play a part in making it so that a vibrant future is possible for the coming generations" (p. 163) Conversations about Black and working class futurities in Ypsilanti have mostly arisen in the face of increasing gentrification, which threatens to displace all working class residents, but has been particularly pronounced in the

city's historically Black Southside (Citizen Committee on Housing Affordability and Accessibility, 2020). This has prompted campaigns to "Defend Affordable Ypsi" and "Keep Ypsi Black" and activists in Ypsilanti have had major wins: against an encroaching development on Water Street and in passing a Community Benefits Ordinance—only the second one in the country, with Detroit being the first (Kelly, 2018).

However, some area residents are concerned that gentrification pressures will only increase as the climate changes because Michigan is, relatively, a natural climate refuge (Beth Gibbons, personal communication; Desiraé Simmons, personal communication). In a 2017 issue of *Popular Science* magazine, an article on "Where to Live in America, 2100 A.D." goes through all of the dangers facing the continental United States and ends with the conclusion that Michigan will be the safest place to live at the end of the 21st century, urging their readers to "go nail a quality spot while the pickings are still slightly more plentiful" (Hess, 2016). Already there are reports of wealthy people buying up land for second homes in places that are expected to fare slightly better in a changing climate (Krueger, 2018), and farmland is increasingly being being bought up by billionaire and foreign investors, as well as by retirement plans including TIAA-CREF (Galloway, 2021; Newkirk, 2019). The fact that the failed development on Water Street was luxury international student housing and funded by Chinese investors who would receive an EB-5 visa for a minimum $500,000 investment only fueled fears that Ypsilanti may suddenly become a destination city not just for those priced out of Ann Arbor, but also for global capital more broadly (Kuang & Mori, 2017; Scott, 2017; Scott, 2018).

Ypsilanti has a robust community of environmentally-minded folks who are concerned about futurity more generally. When I first moved to Ypsilanti in 2013, I was growing increasingly concerned about climate change and wanting to get involved locally, so I went to a meeting of people working to transition Ypsilanti away from fossil fuels. Of the 35 people at that meeting, I

read 34 of them as white and none as Black. At one point, participants made it clear that they were building a tight-knit alternative system to survive impending collapse, and that this system was to benefit the members of the group, who were people that they "could trust." I left that meeting thinking that if the almost entirely white group—in a city that is a third people of color and 28% Black—really believed what they were saying about imminent collapse, their proposed solution amounted to genocide. There seemed to be no room in their minds for a Black futurity in Ypsilanti given the depth of environmental crises. While the people at this meeting embraced the principles of permaculture and had much in common with "homesteaders," who usually believe in social justice and a common good without reflecting on their race, class, and settler positionalities (Ford, 2021), their solution to the deep problems we face had much in common with "prepperism" in that they focused on preparing a select group of people to survive an impending collapse, which is often a form of social abandonment (Katz-Rosene & Swarc, 2022), as was the case here.

What all of these threats have in common are that they involve dispossession and cultural imperialism—dominant whites erasing African diaspora, Indigenous, and other people of color culture and replacing it with their own. While dispossession and cultural imperialism are long threads through history that I will explore more shortly, African Americans have a particularly rich and long-standing history of building self-reliant communities with deep agricultural practices. Nonetheless, the literature on climate adaptation has not been in conversation with the literature on Black agrarian traditions. Uniting these two literatures is one of the potential scholarly contributions of my study, and will hopefully have practical benefits for marginalized communities in Ypsilanti, as well as in other places.

Ypsilanti is an ideal site for this study. As Small (2009) and Weiss (1994) both note, often the best cases are not the most representative, which will never be statistically representative, but rather relatively rare cases that can help us to better understand social processes. Ypsilanti fits this bill on

multiple counts that are relevant to my study. First, Ypsilanti, and Michigan more broadly, represent a natural climate refuge, relatively. The effects of climate change in Ypsilanti clearly illustrate the decidedly social mechanisms that can endanger vulnerable communities. Second, Ypsilanti has a long history of resistance to oppression and injustice, particularly within its Black community, which was founded by people escaping slavery along the Underground Railroad. Third, there was massive migration of both Black and white people seeking work in Ypsilanti's factories in the first half of the 20th century, and those workers brought their agrarian traditions with them, so multiple marginalized agrarian traditions persist in Ypsilanti to this day. Finally, while gentrification is very much happening in Ypsilanti, it is relatively early in the gentrification process, which presents both an opportunity to learn from long-time residents who have not yet been displaced and an opportunity to learn how residents work to counter its progression.

To explore if and how marginalized agrarian traditions can help ensure collective survival in a changing climate, I partnered with a number of individuals and organizations involved in growing food, countering gentrification, or uncovering the untold histories of the city. Using archival materials and secondary sources available from local public libraries, I grounded myself in the history of Ypsilanti with a particular focus on Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) and working-class communities. Right as I finished pilot interviews with community leaders, affordable housing stakeholders, and BIPOC and working class food growers, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Michigan. The pandemic severely limited the scope and character of my fieldwork, due to institutional, personal, and community limitations. In the new landscape, I prioritized interviewing BIPOC and working class food growers within a geographically bounded area, and ultimately conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 20 of them. I used theory-informed thematic analysis to identify five primary themes on the impacts of growing food for participants as well as the challenges that land injustice and gentrification present for them.

Food security and food sovereignty in a changing climate

A central concern in adapting the human population for a changed climate and making our food system more just and sustainable is how to re-localize our food system and shift more people from the roles of pure consumers to also being producers (Lyson, 2004; Princen, 2010; Shiva, 2007; Toth et al, 2016). While changing the food system to meet the demands of a changed climate may feel daunting, by looking at the past, we see that in the lifetimes of some people who are still alive today, just such a system did exist, where many people kept at the very least a kitchen garden and often some small livestock as well (Maurer, 2017; White, 2017a). This is particularly true in marginalized communities who are already the most food insecure and are the most vulnerable to a changing climate. In this project, I interviewed marginalized food growers to see if and how producing their own food has helped make their communities more resilient to changing conditions.

Despite their rich agricultural history, BIPOC communities are disproportionately likely to live under food apartheid[1], where access to fresh food is insufficient in both quality and quantity to meet residents' needs (Brones, 2018). While there is an abundance of scholarship on food insecurity and efforts to build urban agriculture in distressed communities, little attention is paid to how agricultural practices in these communities declined to begin with (Maurer, 2017; White, 2017a). Understanding that decline and documenting the agricultural knowledge and practices that persist is valuable in and of itself, but its value becomes even more apparent when we consider the likelihood that many more people would benefit from growing at least some food themselves in a changing climate.

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[1] I follow Karen Washington's lead in using the term "food apartheid" rather than "food desert" because a desert is a natural phenomena and lack of access to food is human-caused. As Washington also argues, food apartheid helps us to get at the root causes of the issues (Brones, 2018).

However, land is a necessary prerequisite for growing food, and is the center of the nexus between people, the environment, and food. Focusing on growing food necessitates conversations about who has land, how did they get it, and who has lost land. In asking these questions, historical developments make clear that land justice is a key part of this story and will become only more important moving into a future defined by rapid environmental change. As Malcolm X stated, "Revolution is based on land. Land is the basis of all independence. Land is the basis of freedom, justice, and equality" (Penniman, 2018, p. 1). Land justice is a key part of broader social and racial justice. As the food sovereignty movement lays bare, there can be no justice without protecting common people's rights to the land and correcting historical wrongs (Walsh-Dilley, et al., 2016).

Food sovereignty, a term that emerged from the international peasant movement, La Via Campesina, against unbridled global capitalism and land grabs in the 1990s (La Via Campesina, 2021), is a "right to have rights over food" (Patel, 2009, p. 663). Food sovereignty is, by definition, an expansive concept because it is particular to whatever the struggle for rights over food looks like within a particular community; nonetheless, a focus on small-scale food producers, including peasants and Indigenous peoples, as well as consumers, land justice, and planetary well-being are all core components of food sovereignty (Patel, 2009). In Latin America, food sovereignty includes directly challenging neoliberal modernization policies through using ecological farming methods to increase local self-reliance (Altieri & Toledo, 2011). For Indigenous people in North America, where hunger has been and continues to be used as a weapon of colonization, Indigenous food sovereignty involves reclaiming and healing Indigenous food systems (Robin et al., 2020). In Detroit, Malik Yakini, former Black Panther and Founder of Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN) roots his work in "African Diasporic history, struggles against slavery, and efforts to recover African indigenous knowledges to create decolonial Afrocentric alternatives by connecting people to land via healthy, ecological community labor" (Figueroa-Helland et al., 2018, p. 194). I

focus on Black agrarianism within much of this research project because that is largely what the right to have rights over food looks like in Ypsilanti. Food sovereignty is the broader movement within which this research takes place and aims to contribute to.

Social work in the climate crisis

Social work in the United States is increasingly catching up to the rest of the world in recognizing the risks associated with global environmental change, by including the mandate to "create social responses to a changing environment" as one of the twelve Grand Challenges for the profession (Kemp & Palinkas, 2015) and adopting environmental justice as a core competency for social work education in 2015 (Council on Social Work Education, 2015). Global environmental change affects marginalized communities first and worst, and social workers have an ethical mandate to serve poor, and otherwise marginalized, communities (NASW, 2017). Further, as the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports have made clear, we are entering a phase in which civilization itself is at risk due to ecological breakdown if transformative action is not achieved in the next 10 years, and the risks touch nearly every social institution and policy domain (Guterres, 2020; IPCC, 2022). Thus, in addition to the ethical commitment of effectively serving marginalized communities, every domain of social work will feel the impacts of global environmental change, including its impacts on every social determinant of health. Futures-focused social workers are already thinking about the kinds of new social work jobs that could emerge due to climate change, such as "heat advocate and coordinator," "eco-grief and anxiety specialist," and "climate refugee resettlement counselor" (Nissen, n.d). However, Kenkel (2020) argues that social workers, and particularly social work educators, have a moral duty to be realistic about what natural scientists are telling us about the scale of ecological collapse and the extent to which that will translate into varying levels of social collapse. In not taking the future scenario of collapse seriously, Kenkel sees a moral risk of social work being redeployed into ever more punitive management

systems over the poor and displaced as resource bases shrink. Rather than continuing to work within systems that blame and try to fix individuals, Kenkel (2020) argues that we need to be "refocusing on assisting communities to develop compassionate and workable responses to coming troubles" (p. 247). This project is one such attempt at examining one particular community's response to "the coming troubles."

Overview

In the following chapters, I will answer the question of how marginalized agrarian practices may help marginalized communities to collectively survive climate change by: setting the broad historical and macro-sociological context in which this study takes place, as well as the more specific history of and conditions in Ypsilanti; detailing the qualitative, community-engaged methods that I used; sharing my findings; and discussing the implications of this research. In Chapter 2, I start by taking a macro-sociological look at what I term as the disconnect from land and land-based subsistence practices in modernity by examining the interrelationships between English enclosures, the rise of capitalism, trans-Atlantic slavery, and settler colonialism in North America. I then examine contributions from key sociological figures in making sense of the interrelationships between these processes and the environment—starting with Polanyi's contributions on the subsumption of the social in the market economy and the fictitious commodification of land and labor; second, discussing Marx's contributions on primitive accumulation and the metabolic rift; third, looking at how Du Bois established the relationship between slavery, capitalism, and imperialism; and ending with Robinson's conception of racialized capitalism and Black resistance. I then examine a specific form of Black resistance, Black agrarianism, and begin to trace its formation from slavery to current forms of urban agriculture. I discuss the massive land dispossession of African American farmers that began in the first half of the 20th century, before moving on to current movements to reclaim Black agrarian traditions. To understand the relevance of Black

agrarian traditions as a potential collective survival strategy in a changing climate, I look at how climate change is likely to exacerbate food insecurity, as well as the potential that small-scale growing practices have in building resilience to food insecurity under climate change.

In Chapter 3, I zoom in to my specific case site and research design. I begin by exploring some of the ways that Ypsilanti is an apt case site in understanding the processes surrounding Black agrarianism and global environmental change. I then give a more general description of the case site, including relevant Ypsilanti history, before moving into my methodology. In completing this research, I am cognizant of being a white person doing this work in predominantly BIPOC communities and give some consideration to how my social locations and standpoint impacted my ability to do this work effectively. I then discuss the methodological considerations guiding the design of this project and the specific qualitative methods that I used.

In Chapter 4, I discuss my findings, focusing on five broad themes that I identified after using theory-informed inductive thematic coding to analyze the data from the 20 BIPOC and working class food growers who I interviewed. I found that for marginalized people, growing food helped them to build resilience and self-reliance, promoted health and healing, and deepened connections, but was also difficult because of land injustice. Further, I found that gentrification was a threat to the self-reliance, resilience, health, healing, and connections that marginalized people are building through growing food.

In Chapter 5, I discuss how my findings answer my research question, including how growing food on a small scale directly makes marginalized people more resilient to climate change, as well as broader implications from the research. I detail three theoretical implications: how everyday people are theorists and political actors in their food growing practices, how collective survival strategies showed up in action, and how white-dominated environmental messaging can serve as a barrier to building resilience in marginalized communities. I then share three policy

implications: the overlap between housing justice and climate resilience, the need for proactive planning in areas that are expected to serve as climate refuge, and the need for reparations and rematriation of land. Finally, I include three social work practice implications: the need to center environmental, climate, and land justice in social work education, the need to adopt anti-colonial and advance anti-racist standards in practice and education, and the need for recognition and accountability for the harms committed by institutions that social workers are a part of, including universities. I close the chapter with the limitations of this study, areas for future research, and reflection on where we should go as a field from here.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this dissertation, I examine how marginalized community members perceive their access to land and food growing experiences in the small, deindustrialized city of Ypsilanti, Michigan, with a particular focus on African American food growers. However, to really understand how race and class are entangled with agrarian practices in Ypsilanti, we have to examine a much deeper history. As bell hooks (2014) reminds us in thinking about the deeper history of Black people specifically in the US, "Living in modern society, without a sense of history, it has been easy for folks to forget that Black people were first and foremost a people of the land, farmers" (p. 136). hooks (2014) links many of the adverse conditions that African Americans currently face living in a racist society to their forced disconnect from the land, first through their violent kidnapping and enslavement, and later through exploitation, dispossession, and forced migration.

Examining disconnection from the land and land-based subsistence practices is vital to understanding the ecological crisis, as well. Disconnecting people from their homelands and making it impossible for people to live off the land is a key origin of the ecological crisis, precisely because it shifts people's allegiances from the earth as the source of all life to industrial society as the system that feeds, houses, and clothes people and their children (Waziyatawin, 2012). Even if people recognize that industrial society is, of course, fueled by inputs from the earth that are being jeopardized, if they have no skills and practices of providing for their own subsistence outside of industrial society, they will fight to uphold the industrial system that they know and rely on

13

(Waziyatawin, 2012). Further, with land comes the power to provide for oneself and the freedom that entails (Penniman, 2018; Samudzi & Anderson, 2018).

However, disconnection from land and land-based subsistence practice is not a natural development of human progress. Rather, it comes from the dispossession of specific groups of humans that have taken place at different points in time, but particularly in modernity. Prior to modernity, all but the elites made their living from the land (Polanyi, 1944/2001; Scott, 2017). I will broadly trace a series of events that started with the enclosure movement in England to gain a better understanding of how people in the US today are so disconnected from the land and land-based subsistence practices. While this is, no doubt, a simplified telling of history, in doing so, I hope to show how the racialized distribution of land in the US is a culmination of the interlocking processes of enclosures, colonization, slavery, and capitalism.

Historical Processes that Lead to Present Crisis

We cannot understand our present state of vast inequality and ecological crises without understanding these historical processes. As Moore (2015) argues, it was specifically capitalist interests that have so thoroughly endangered the Earth. Moore further argues that we cannot understand capitalism's impact on the earth without simultaneously looking at slavery's role in building a capitalist economy. But to understand these developments, I must start much further back, to the origins of capitalism, the English enclosures. In looking at this deeper history, we see what was lost under capitalism: how industry replaced land as the basis of the social system. Further, white settlers implanted this new social system upon North America, making it the historical basis for the US.

The English Enclosure Movement. The English enclosure movement began in earnest in the 16th century when King Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries and all of their lands and redistributed that land to the gentry, who then began removing peasants from the land (Linebaugh,

2008; Marx, 1867/1978). Thereby, the gentry took away people's means of subsistence, causing a massive social dislocation that ended in abject poverty and starvation for many (Linebaugh, 2008; Polanyi, 1944/2001). Enclosures continued across England until the middle class began to protest the lack of recreational land in the 19th century (Fairle, 2009).

The peasantry, or households who lived on and made their living off common land, were the backbone of the pre-capitalist order. They practiced self-sufficient householding, what Aristotle distinguished as "producing to use" rather than "producing to gain" (Polanyi, 1944/2001, p. 56). In Marx's (1867/1978) language, the peasantry were concerned solely with use values. While Scott (1978) famously described peasants as being like people standing up to their noses in water, such that the slightest wave will drown them, English peasants prior to enclosures lived within a moral economy that offered them both customary rights and social insurance (Fairle, 2009; Linebaugh, 2008; Thompson, 1993). As Linebaugh (2008) delineates, the communal rights of the peasants were enshrined in no less than the Magna Carta itself. Peasants had the right to meet their subsistence needs on common farmland, in the forests, and by the sea. Thompson (1975) explains that "[A forester's] livelihood depended upon the survival of pre-capitalist use-rights over the land, and upon some form of social organization … by which conflicting claims to use-rights over the same land and timber could be reconciled" (p. 240). The destruction of these customary rights through enclosures, and the draconian Black Act of 1723 (Thompson, 1975), represented a sea change from everything the peasants had known to come before in human history and unleashed untold human misery with much of the population literally starving (Polanyi, 1944/2001; Thompson, 1993). For the peasants who survived the initial enclosures, later 18th and 19th century enclosures—billed as necessary reforms for improving the productivity of the land—often dispossessed their descendants. As Fairle (2009) states, "However necessary this process might or might not have been for the improvement of the agricultural economy, it was downright theft. Millions of people had customary

and legal access to lands and the basis of an independent livelihood was snatched away from them" (n.p.).

The Role of Enclosure on Colonization and Enslavement in North America. Further, the destruction of the English peasantry was a direct precursor and enabler of English colonization of Africa and the Americas. The widespread misery caused by the dispossession of peasants and small landholders made military service enticing, and the riches gained from the spoils of war allowed the English to build a formidable standing military that was used both in wars within Europe and to colonize Africa and North America (Horne, 2018). As one historian remarked, "the English succeeded as colonizers largely because their society was less successful at keeping people content at home" (in Horne, 2018, p. 12). In addition to enclosures playing a part in the acquisition of colonies through military force, they also played a part in expanding the colonizing project in North America to include settlers. Enclosures are part of what pushed poor, landless English people to settle along the frontier of the "new world," creating buffer zones to protect the elites from Native American retribution (Fairle, 2009; Horne, 2018; Robinson, 1983/2000). With the impossibility of having even a small allotment in England, people who refused the "satanic mill" of the Industrial Revolution (Polanyi, 1944/2001) sought opportunities by settling in the North American colonies, and, in doing so, fueled the violent colonization of Indigenous peoples (Fairle, 2009). Further, the English government incentivized these settlers in order to expand their wealth coming from the "new world" (Horne, 2018). So, many of the same people who were violently dispossessed in their own lands took part in the violent dispossession and subjugation of others halfway across the world. In doing so, the surviving Indigenous peoples also found that, despite the language of treaties, they faced and continue to face violent punishment when using the land in traditional ways to meet their subsistence needs (Hunter, 2022; Treuer, 2019).

The colonization of Africa and the mass kidnapping and enslavement of generations of young, healthy, and skilled peoples primarily from West Africa are another key part of this story. Many of the dispossessed English went, willingly or unwillingly, to the American colonies as indentured servants and helped to build an economy reliant on unpaid labor (Horne, 2018). This was concurrent with the enslavement of both the Indigenous people of North America and Africa (Mays, 2021), and African and Europeans servants lived and worked together in the early colonies (Horne, 2018; Kendi, 2016). At the time, slavery was a temporary status and neither Christians nor those with a free father could be enslaved (Kendi, 2016). However, as the demand for agricultural labor grew with the plantations, the English colonies developed new laws that ran directly counter to English common law, allowing the enslavement of Christians and the rule that children earned their enslaved status from their mothers. This simultaneously equated enslaved people with beasts of burden and promoted sexual violence towards enslaved women. (Kendi, 2016). As white indentured servants and enslaved Africans still had much in common, additional laws were made in the 1660s to break any cross-racial solidarity, including severe punishments for white women in relationships with non-white men and white servants who ran away in the accompaniment of Blacks (Kendi, 2016). Subsequently, a distinction began to form between European indentured servants who were eventually freed, and Africans who were enslaved for life (Horne, 2018; Kendi, 2016).

Although racialism was a European hallmark, seen clearly in the treatment of the Irish by the English (Robinson, 1983/2000), and racist ideas have been around even longer (Kendi, 2016), "whiteness" as a concept appears for the first time in the colonies (Horne, 2018; powell & Watt, 2009). After Bacon's Rebellion of 1676 in particular, colonial elites saw the danger of solidarity amongst subjugated Europeans and Africans (powell & Watt, 2009; Robinson, 1983/2000), despite the fact that the participants in Bacon's Rebellion may have had ambiguous motivations (Mays, 2021). To mitigate this danger, colonial elites offered privileges not based on enslavement status or

property ownership, but rather on heritage, and the category of whiteness appears for the first time (powell & Watt, 2009). In embracing skin color-based privileges, European-Americans of all class statuses began to identify their interests as lying with the elites, creating a white solidarity (Robinson, 1983/2000), and the main contours of the racialized system that we know today was born.

Settler colonialism in the US is the other pillar of the racialized system in the US today. Settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism in that the colonizers never leave, rather they remake the place in their own image. The logic of settler colonialism is not solely about extracting riches from a place. Rather, the logic of settler colonialism is the logic of elimination and domination: destroy to replace (Waziyatawin, 2012; Whyte et al., 2018; Wolfe, 2006). Settlers seek to destroy the native population, native culture, native ecologies, and native sovereignty in order to replace them with their own population, culture, ecologies, and institutions (Waziyatawin, 2012; Whyte et al., 2018; Wolfe, 2006). Settler colonialism is not an event that happened in the past, rather it is the structure of settler colonial societies (Wolfe, 2006). Further, the destruction is not figurative. Rather, European settlers in North America unleashed a literal apocalypse on the Indigenous population (Whyte, 2016; Whyte, 2017) including a population decline of up to ninety percent from first contact to the nineteenth century (Horne, 2018). Up to five million Indigenous people were enslaved during that same time period, in addition to the "nearly 13 million Africans [who] were brutally snatched from their homelands, enslaved, and forced to toil for the greater good of European and Euro-American powers" from the 16th through the 19th centuries (Horne, 2018, p. 7). The logic of racial descent that developed in the United States illuminates the logic of settler colonialism and how racism was constructed in the United States. As Wolfe (2006) documents:

> In the wake of slavery, this taxonomy became fully racialized in the 'one-drop rule,' whereby any amount of African ancestry, no matter how remote, and regardless of phenotypical appearance, makes a person Black. For Indians, in stark contrast, non-Indian ancestry

compromised their indigeneity, producing 'half-breeds,' a regime that persists in the form of blood quantum regulations. As opposed to enslaved people, whose reproduction augmented their owners' wealth, Indigenous people obstructed settlers' access to land, so their increase was counterproductive. In this way, the restrictive racial classification of Indians straightforwardly furthered the logic of elimination. Thus we cannot simply say that settler colonialism or genocide have been targeted at particular races, since a race cannot be taken as given. It is made in the targeting. Black people were racialized as slaves; slavery constituted their Blackness. Correspondingly, Indigenous North Americans were not killed, driven away, romanticized, assimilated, fenced in, bred White, and otherwise eliminated as the original owners of the land but as Indians. (p. 387-388)

As Wolfe (2006) explains, understanding the present conditions of different "races" in the United States can only come through understanding how those "races" were made in the United States. And, we can only understand that by examining settler colonialism and slavery.

The racialization of both Native Americans and Africans was predicated upon seeing them as people without a history and without a culture. For Native Americans, Alfred (2009) argues this process began with the doctrine of terra nullius, or "empty lands" asserting that North America was not populated by humans before the arrival of Christian Europeans and rationalizing the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands. For Africans and African Americans, the complete denial of any cultural traditions or history rationalized their treatment as beasts of burden in the colonies. Robinson (1983/2000) shares the following quote from a prestigious literary magazine in 1856 to illustrate this point:

The most minute and the most careful researchers have, as yet, failed to discover a history or any knowledge of ancient times among the negro races. They have invented no writing; not even the rude picture-writing of the lowest tribes. They have no gods and no heroes; no epic

poem and no legend, not even simple traditions. There never existed among them an organized government; there never ruled a hierarchy or an established church. Might alone is right. They have never known the arts; they are ignorant even of agriculture. The cities of Africa are vast accumulations of huts and hovels; clay walls or thorny hedges surround them and pools of blood and rows of skulls adorn their best houses. The few evidences of splendour or civilization are all borrowed from Europe; where there is religion or creed, it is that of the foreigners; all knowledge, all custom, all progress has come to them from abroad. The negro has no history – he makes no history. (p. 98)

We can clearly see how the refusal to see the rich history and culture of Africans and Native Americans facilitated both dispossession and cultural imperialism.

Thus, understanding African American experiences of disconnection from land and land-based subsistence practices necessarily brings us back to slavery. As Sharpe (2016) argues, the current state of disproportionate Black suffering in the US can only be understood as the afterlife of slavery. Horne (2018) makes a similar argument that the "underdevelopment" of Africa is a direct result of the mass kidnapping of young, able, and skilled people from its Western shores that happened for generations. Further, in charting a course for a global historical sociology, Magubane (2016) challenges the American exceptionalism that insists that American racialization is unique in that it is not tied to colonialism. As we can see, rather than the US being founded as an anti-colonial state through its emancipation from Great Britain, US history is founded on colonialism: the experience of a stolen people on a stolen land (Magubane, 2016).

The Impact of Enclosures, Colonization, and Slavery on the Rise of Capitalism and Destruction of Environment

Understanding how not only enclosures, but also colonization and slavery, are fundamental to the rise of capitalism and consequent environmental destruction, necessitates engagement with diverse thinkers. In my attempt to do so, I focus on the work of the founders of economic sociology, Polanyi's concepts of economic subsumption and the fictitious commodification of land and labor and Marx's concepts of primitive accumulation and the metabolic rift. I then challenge their accounts by engaging with the founder of the sociology of race, Du Bois, who established how capitalism was racialized from the start and the terrible impacts that had on diverse peoples, as well as Cedric Robinson, who built on Du Bois's and Marx's accounts to develop the concept of racial capitalism.

Polanyi's rise of the market economy and fictitious commodities. I start with Polanyi (1944/2001), as his streamlined account of the rise of the market economy, and the corresponding subordination of the social to the economic, in *The Great Transformation*, yields rich material from which to understand not just the current state of capitalist hegemony, but also key origins of the ecological crisis: the commodification of land and labor. Polanyi (1944/2001) shows how destruction of the commons through enclosure led to the development of the market economy, which he defines as "an economic system controlled, regulated, and directed by market prices" (p. 71), and how this development was a rupture from how economies had functioned up until that point throughout the world. The current economy is unique in being controlled by markets; this had previously never existed. Polanyi argues that pre-industrial humans structured economic exchange as subordinate to their social relations. There is no motive to try to make a profit in an economic system that is a function of social organization. Put simply, the economic system was run on social, not economic motives: "Man's economy, as a rule, is submerged in his social relationships" (p. 48). The reason for this is simple: survival is a collective activity. The behavioral principles of reciprocity,

21

redistribution, and householding assured order in production and distribution within groups. Individual gain was not the motive for any of these behavioral principles.

Polanyi (1944/2001) shows that the rise of the market economy and self-regulating markets was not natural or inevitable. It was not natural inclinations, but rather the necessity of long distance trade with people outside of social relationships that led to exploitative behavior. Early towns and settlements resisted all attempts to insert competition into local and long-distance markets, as they understood "That competition must ultimately lead to monopoly [which] was feared...as it often concerned the necessaries of life and thus easily waxed into a peril to the community" (p. 69). The self-sufficing household, particularly among the peasant class, had been the backbone of the economy, but this was challenged as the market economy arose during the Industrial Revolution.

Polanyi (1944/2001) argues that the social conditions during the Industrial Revolution were "a veritable abyss of human degradation" (p. 41) because they caused profound social dislocation. People dispossessed from 18th and 19th century enclosures—justified as necessary to improve the land—provided the workforce to power the Industrial Revolution (Fairle, 2009; Polanyi, 1944/2001). However, the market economy was also established to allow the Industrial Revolution to truly take off (Polanyi, 1944/2001). A market economy is a self-regulating system of markets that, once established, must not be interfered with.

Under a market economy, labor and land became mere objects of commerce with devastating effects on both the humans who supplied the labor and the natural world. For the first time, they were subsumed by market logic and subordinated to the economy. Polanyi (1944/2001, pp. 76-77) predicted that such a vast transformation would have a devastating impact on both people and the environment:

> To allow the market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of human beings and their
> natural environment indeed, even of the amount and use of purchasing power, would result

in the demolition of society. For the alleged commodity "labor power" cannot be shoved about, used indiscriminately, or even left unused, without affecting also the human individual who happens to be the bearer of this peculiar commodity. In disposing of a man's labor power the system would, incidentally, dispose of the physical, psychological, and moral entity "man" attached to that tag. Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the dislocation through vice, perversion, crime, and starvation. Nature would be reduced to its elements, neighborhoods and landscapes defiled, rivers polluted, military safety jeopardized, the power to produce food and raw materials destroyed…Undoubtedly, labor, land, and money markets are essential to a market economy. But no society could stand the effects of such a system of crude fictions even for the shortest stretch of time unless its human and natural substance as well as its business organization was protected against the ravages of this satanic mill.

As Polanyi (1944/2001) predicted this transformation has not only represented a severe dislocation for the people whose entire way of existing in the world was upended and whose lives became mere commodities, but it also was disastrous to the natural world and put us on the path towards ecological destruction.

Nonetheless, Polanyi (1944/2001) also asserts that in response to a major social dislocation, there is a double movement wherein the protests of the common people being dislocated can result in a slowing of change and relief from the state. Although the people seldom "win" their demands, Polanyi (1944/2001) shows how even palliative efforts by the state to protect the people and slow the rate of change makes a massive difference in their lives. The enclosures of the 16th century are a prime example. Destruction of the commons, on which peasants engaged in land-based subsistence practices, through enclosures disrupted the fabric of society, decimating poor, rural communities. Eventually, the crown defended them in this "revolution of the rich against the poor" (p. 37)

because of the massive depopulations, rebellions, and transfer of power to wealthy lords, nobles, and merchants that ensued. Further, destruction of the commons resulted in "the first great proletarian revolt of modern history; the Peasants' Revolt of Germany in 1526 [to demand] the restoration of customary forest rights" (Linebaugh, 2008, p. 55). While the resistance that peasants mounted against enclosures is most often read as futile historically, their resistance effectively slowed down the rate of change, which is important. Polanyi (1944/2001) argues that the rate of change determines the welfare of the poor as it structures their ability to adjust to broad social change and find new ways to achieve sustenance [see also Rob Nixon's work on environmental injustice, *Slow Violence* (2011) and E.P. Thompson's work on food riots (1993)].

Although Polanyi's (1944/2001) analysis of the destructiveness of the market economy is ultimately used to explain the rise of fascism in Europe, he does not meaningfully engage the role race, gender, and colonialism have in building the market economy (Klein, 2017). While Polanyi ties the rise of the market economy to enclosures and industrialization, the connection that these practices had to colonialism and the slave trade is not examined.

Marx's primitive accumulation and metabolic drift. Marx (1867/1978) ties the foundation of what he calls the "capitalist mode of production" (p. 434) to the expropriation of English peasants through enclosures, as well as to the primitive accumulation of capital through colonialism and the Atlantic slave trade. Marx (1867/1978) writes that "in fact, the veiled slavery of the wage workers in Europe needed, for its pedestal, slavery pure and simple in the new world" (p. 435). As Polanyi (1944/2001) does as well, Marx (1867/1978) argues that the expulsion of peasants from their lands and the privatization of the commons provided the commodified labor needed to fuel the Industrial Revolution. However, Marx (1867/1978) goes further than Polanyi in asserting that the foundation of capital also needed to fuel the Industrial Revolution came from the additional expropriation of land, resources, and people through colonialism and the slave trade. Marx

(1867/1978) further details the violence necessary to enact such a vast transformation of society, both in the "expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence" (p. 437) and in the "discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the...turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of Blackskins signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production" (p. 435).

In addition to the expropriation of land, an analogue to Polanyi's fictitious commodification, Marx and Engels (1978) presage capitalism's role in ecological destruction, writing in 1848 of an ongoing vast transformation that:

> The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour? (p. 477)

This vast, societal transformation, also known as progress, facilitated rapid urbanization. While Marx and Engels (1848/1978) saw clear benefits from urbanization, notably rescuing people "from the idiocy of rural life" (p. 477), they also identify how the bourgeoisie subjects rural communities to the rule of urban ones, tying it to the rule of the colonized by colonizers. Thus, Marx and Engels (1848/1978) develop an analysis of the systems of domination under capitalism, with hints of the inclusion of nature in that domination.

Marx also provides insight into capitalism's inevitable impact on the environment, presciently describing how industrialization and urbanization under capitalism created a "metabolic

rift," wherein nutrients were taken from the rural areas in the form of food to be consumed in the urban ones and create the problem of human waste (Foster & Clark, 2016). This is in contrast to the previous, closed loop cycle in which nutrients are returned to more or less the same land they come from through human and animal excretions, which are then used as fertilizer for future crops. "Metabolic rift" is essential to understanding political ecology in the context of capitalism. With urbanization and the beginning applications of industry to agriculture, Marx (1867/1978) foresaw a new crisis for agriculture. Agriculture as practiced by peasants and yeoman functioned as a closed loop, but all of this changed when they were forced off the land. Thus, extractive economies were created, not just for luxuries, but also for basic necessities, degrading the earth's regenerative capacities and making agriculture increasingly fragile.

Du Bois' analysis of racialized capitalism and cross-racial possibility. In his work on *Black Reconstruction in America*, Du Bois (1935) not only showed the importance of Black agency in bringing down slavery and establishing essential social welfare institutions in the South after the Civil War, but he also shows how the era represented an opportunity for transformation from a slavery-based plantation economy to a worker-based democracy. In so doing, Du Bois (1935) lifted the veil on how capitalism was racialized from the start, linking Mississippi with both Manhattan and Manchester, for it was only through enslaved labor that such a massive cotton-based industrial economy could be built.

This work is significant for many reasons. Du Bois upended the dominant, racist narrative on *Reconstruction* that freed Blacks sowed chaos after the Civil War, which justified repressive white economic and political control in the South, showing instead how it was the achievements of Black communities in gaining land, economic prosperity, and political power that whites found so threatening. Du Bois introduced a method of "history from below" that used the voices of the oppressed to understand historical events, which profoundly reshaped the field (Morris, 2015). Du

Bois used primary sources and statistics to an extent that was uncommon at the time and presaged modern sociology as a social science (Morris, 2015).

However, for our purposes, the most important aspect of Du Bois's (1935) work on *Reconstruction* is that it firmly establishes how capitalism was racialized from the beginning and how subjecting capitalism to a historical materialist analysis must involve continually examining how that racialization shifts with changing conditions, but never goes away. As Du Bois (1935) himself puts it:

> Black labor became the foundation stone not only of the Southern social structure, but of Northern manufacture and commerce, of the English factory system, of European commerce of buying and selling on a world-wide scale; new cities were built on the results of Black labor, and a new labor problem, involving all White labor, arose both in Europe and America. (p. 5)

As Du Bois (1903/1961) relays, the problems of labor only intensified after slavery was abolished and manifested as the "Negro Problem," which he famously analyzed in *The Souls of Black Folks*. Unfortunately, rather than embracing a worker-based democracy that would benefit both working class whites and Blacks who had freed themselves from slavery, whites, again, aligned their interests with the ruling class and embraced capitalist exploitation when it could benefit them, either materially or psychologically (Du Bois, 1920/1995). Southern white unity, which took the form of white elites setting the political and economic agenda and working class whites enforcing it through violent militias, resulted in the disenfranchisement and dispossession of Blacks who were seen as a "problem" once their labor and reproduction could not be harnessed for free (Du Bois, 1903/1961).

This backlash not only caused the re-creation of slavery-like conditions for free Black people, such as convict leasing, in the South, but Du Bois (1935) shows how they also led to increased imperialism abroad and worsened conditions for working class whites as well:

The abolition of American slavery started the transportation of capital from white to black

countries where slavery prevailed . . . and precipitated the modern economic degradation of

the white farmer, while it put into the hands of the owners of the machine such a monopoly

of raw material that their dominion of White labor was more and more complete. (in

Johnson, 2018, n.p.)

Hence, by subjecting the capitalist economy to a racial analysis as well as a class-based one, Du Bois

opened up a new frontier for understanding the economy as a product of global, racialized processes

and understanding how those processes differently shape groups of people: Black and white,

metropole and colony, North and South. For the scholars who would come after him, this analysis

laid a critical foundation for understanding the interconnection of capitalism and white supremacy.

Further, Du Bois clarifies the origins of later farm crises and climate imperialism.

Robinson's racial capitalism and radical Black resistance. In Cedric Robinson's

(1983/2000) groundbreaking work on *Black Marxism*, he challenges Marxist notions of capitalism

and revolutionary movements as Eurocentric. He does so by, first, showing how capitalism was not

a negation of feudalism that produced a universal European proletariat. Rather, capitalism was a

product of the historical conditions in which it developed, which necessarily means that capitalism

was racialized from the beginning and was a product of imperialism, colonialism, and slavery. In

explaining this, Robinson (1983/2000) coined the term "racial capitalism" to refer to how capitalism

was always, already racialized (p. 2). He shows how Europe was already an intensely racialized

society prior to the advent of capitalism, primarily by looking at the colonization of Ireland and the

treatment of the Irish by the English working class, complicating the narratives of Marx and Engels,

as well as European historians from below, such as E.P. Thompson.

Building off Du Bois' work, Robinson (1983/2000) additionally shows that the "primitive"

accumulation of capital was not a phase that has now ended, rather accumulation of the capital that

is constantly needed in a growth-based economy comes from expropriation within the existing social structures. This invariably means that Black people, Indigenous people, people of color (BIPOC), and others in the Global South are disproportionately the victims of such expropriation. Fraser and Jaeggi (2018) describe the resulting bifurcation of white workers who are exploited but still retain rights to citizenship and BIPOC workers who are expropriated and retain no individual or collective rights. Their lands may be stolen and their bodies violated in service of ongoing capital accumulation, but they have little legal recourse to challenge their dispossession.

However, Robinson (1983/2000) also charts the long tradition of radical Black resistance that has existed throughout capitalism's phases, challenging Western Marxist assumptions that European workers have a monopoly on radical resistance. He challenges Marx's inability to see enslaved Africans as people who brought with them essential culture, including resistance to oppression. In the next section, I will delve more deeply into how this resistance has manifested in regards to food-growing practices particularly amongst African Americans in the face of near constant expropriation.

Black Agrarianism and Land Dispossession

Robinson (1983/2000) challenges mainstream Marxism as dominated by white Americans and Europeans for ignoring the long traditions of resistance that come from the African diaspora. I now turn to one domain in which these traditions of resistance show up: Black agrarianism. The broader white supremacist social, political, and economic context in the US continually challenges the practice of rich agricultural traditions by African Americans, which can be seen most dramatically in the massive decline of Black-owned farm land in the US—from 16 million acres at its height in 1910 to 3.2 million acres in 2007 (Tyler & Moore, 2013). I will examine some of the factors that led to this massive land dispossession. Access to land and the ability to grow food is likely to

become even more important moving into the future, as global environmental change will likely cause widespread food insecurity, already a pressing problem in many marginalized communities.

Black Agrarianism. The United States has long espoused an agrarian ideal of a society led by farmers and landowners who had a clear stake in its advancement (King et al., 2018; Smith, 2004). However, in the classic Jeffersonian articulations of agrarianism, BIPOC people were intended to provide the labor that powered agrarian ideals, but were never intended to benefit from that labor (King et al., 2018; Smith, 2004). In contemporary democratic agrarian writings, BIPOC people are largely ignored or dismissed (Berry, 2009; King et al., 2018; Lyson, 2004). In this context, Black agrarianism emerged as a way to continue African diasporic traditions (Bandele & Myers, 2016), resist white domination and economic coercion (Gordon Nembhard, 2014; White, 2017a), and build resilience within Black communities to whatever may come (Gordon Nembhard, 2014; White, 2017a).

Fiskio, Shammin, and Scott (2016) define Black agrarianism, a basis for Black environmental thought (Smith, 2004), as including:

> the agricultural, botanical, and culinary knowledge and practices brought to the United States by enslaved Africans, the knowledge produced and skills created by enslaved Africans and African Americans in the US and throughout the Atlantic world, and the knowledge and practices formed by African Americans since emancipation into the present. (p. 19)

Black agrarianism shares many aspects with broader democratic agrarianism, particularly in exalting the land as the basis for "economic independence, political freedom, and cultural ties" (King et al., 2018, p. 680). However, for Black agrarians, this vision of emancipation through the land is explicitly racialized. Black agrarianism is directly derived from the "collective historical experience of oppression and White supremacy" (King et al., 2018, p. 680). In its early appearances during Reconstruction, Black agrarianism was explicitly political and communal in its orientation, as a way

to protect Black communities from surrounding white hostility and violence (Reid, 2012). Beyond protection, the self-reliance of Black farming communities allowed them a degree of autonomy that enabled community organizing and development (Gordon Nembhard, 2014; Roll, 2012; White, 2017a).

However, it is important to recognize that although Black agrarianism developed in part as a reaction to the racist conditions in the US, it is also drawing upon enduring African cultural traditions (Bandele & Myers, 2016; Hinson, 2018). Most enslaved Africans came from agriculture-based societies (Hinson, 2018), considering themselves to be "people of the soil" (Hinson & Robinson, 2008), and many West Africans were specifically targeted for enslavement because of their vast agricultural knowledge and skill sets (Bandele & Myers, 2016). Further, maintaining African agricultural traditions has been an essential site of resistance to colonialism from the beginning. For example, enslaved African women secretly braided okra and rice seeds into their hair to bring vital pieces of their culture with them through the Middle Passage (Bandele & Myers, 2016).

As discussed previously, enslaved African labor enabled the formation of a capitalist economy, but Africans also built many of the landscapes in the US and indelibly shaped its food ways (Bandele & Myers, 2016). Recognizing the impact that African Americans have had on the development of the US and the continuation of African diasporic traditions is vital. As Malik Yakini, executive director of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN), argues:

> 'Building a Racially Just Food Movement' requires 'academic research…that lifts up the history of Black food ways…One of the ways that oppressive systems continue to maintain the dominant narrative is by disconnecting us from our historical memory…A food movement that fairly represents African Americans and other People of Color must honor and lift up our stories, cultural perspectives and lessons learned.' (Fiskio, et al., 2016, p. 21)

Culture is a strength upon which many communities have built their ability to survive and thrive despite oppressive conditions, which explains why cultural imperialism—convincing the colonized that their culture is inferior and that they must adopt the superior culture of their colonizers—is such a potent tool amongst oppressors (Said, 2012). As Nobel Peace Prize winner, Wangari Maathai, stated when discussing the violence of colonialism (Dater & Merton, 2008):

> Culture is coded wisdom. Wisdom that has been accumulated for thousands of years and generations…. All people have their own culture. But when you remove that culture from them, then you kill them in a way. You kill them. You kill a very large part of them.

Given the horrific nature of Africans' arrival and early years in the US, the fact that enslaved Africans brought their cultural traditions with them through the Middle Passage despite intentional attempts by enslavers to sever cultural ties, including by keeping them linguistically isolated, is all the more remarkable. Further, many Africans maintained cultural traditions and knowledge, much of which was encoded in agricultural practices, throughout their enslavement and emancipation, passing them along to their African American descendants (Bandele & Myers, 2016).

It should come as no surprise then that farming was an essential enabler of Black advancement both pre- and post-Emancipation. Before the Civil War, free Black agricultural communities existed, and many thrived, throughout the old Northwest—Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio (Cox, 2018). After Emancipation, Black-owned farms grew exponentially, gaining interest and encouragement by Black thought leaders accordingly. Du Bois is known primarily as an urban sociologist; however, Du Bois saw the question of land ownership and the relationship of African Americans to the soil as of the greatest sociological interest (Jakubek & Wood, 2018, p. 24). He saw power in how a group of people went from being literally regarded as the property of land owners to owning land themselves as quickly as the Freemen did during Reconstruction and up to the beginning of the twentieth century (Du Bois, 1935; Jakubek & Wood,

2018). Du Bois saw particular power in debunking racist theories of social stratification by providing empirical evidence of the achievements of rural African Americans despite the enormous hurdles that they faced at the time (Du Bois, 1935; Jakubek & Wood, 2018; Morris, 2015). In the process, he developed many of the methods and foci of rural sociology decades before the field's credited white founders (Jakubek & Wood, 2018), part of a recurring denial of Du Bois' contributions in mainstream sociology (Morris, 2015).

Despite Du Bois' focus on Black landowning and farming as essential to Black empowerment, the liberatory aspects of agriculture for African Americans have been overshadowed by the long history of subjugation tied to agriculture for African Americans (Bandele & Myers, 2016; White, 2017a). However, newer research is complicating this history. During the Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the 20th century, Black farmers played a key role in enabling movement participation within African American communities (Grant et al., 2012; White, 2011b, 2017a, 2018). Building off lessons learned during the push for voting rights for African Americans in the Jim Crow South, Fannie Lou Hamer developed a massive farming collective as a refuge for movement participants in Mississippi in 1970 (White, 2017a). When white landowners and business owners threatened to literally starve Black people who stepped out of line, the Freedom Farmers Cooperative ensured that movement participants neither starved, nor went homeless. Hamer famously declared that as long as she had a pig and a garden, she could be beaten but would not starve (White, 2017a). In rural Mississippi, the deadliest place to be a movement activist (Payne, 1995), the Freedom Farmers Cooperative was a Black-led project that not only protected movement participants, but also offered a model for Black self-reliance despite their extremely racist surroundings (White, 2017a). Agricultural cooperatives were a driving force in African American survival since Emancipation and particularly in providing for the foot soldiers of the Civil Rights

movement (Gordon Nembhard, 2014). Understanding the revolutionary history of Black farming raises questions about how Black farmers today fit into resistance movements.

Black Land Dispossession. Unfortunately, Black agrarians today face increasing challenges to their practice due to the massive amount of land that they have lost in the past century. At the peak in 1920, there were 925,710 Black farm operators, whereas in 2007 there were only 30,599 (Tyler & Moore, 2013). While farming as an occupation declined substantially during this time, the loss of Black farm operators was at a far greater proportion, 96.6%, compared to whites at 61.5% (Tyler & Moore, 2013). The loss of Black-owned farmland was even more dramatic. At the peak in 1910, Black farmers owned 16 million acres of farmland but owned only 3.2 million in 2007 (Tyler & Moore, 2013). This represents an 80% loss, whereas white-owned land increased by 3.8% during the same time period (Tyler & Moore, 2013). This land loss is, in part, tied to macro social and economic changes that Du Bois (1935) presciently identified in real time: mechanization, urbanization, and consolidation. However, given the racially disparate rates at which land loss occurred, these larger trends cannot completely explain the level of dispossession that Black farmers faced.

Rather, there is well-documented evidence of violent racism and ongoing discriminatory practices and policies at the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) (Daniel, 2013; Grim, 2012; Hinson, 2018; Hinson & Robinson, 2008; King et al., 2018; Tyler et al., 2014; Tyler & Moore, 2013). In the earliest days of free Black agricultural settlements, whites who were upset at the success of their supposedly inferior Black neighbors were prone to violently driving them off the land (Cox, 2018). Further, even getting land to begin with was an enormous task from Emancipation onwards, as in many parts of the South, there were federations of white landowners who refused to sell to Black farmers or would only sell the most marginal land in small tracts (Hinson, 2018; King et al., 2018). Sympathetic white landowners who tried to sell to Black farmers faced violent backlash from

other area whites, often causing them to rescind agreements (Hinson, 2018). Hinson (2018) notes the racialized economic incentives at play, "As a general rule, White landowners wanted to prevent landless Blacks from gaining title to their own land in order to coerce the latter to work as tenant farmers for Whites" (p. 909). Despite all of these barriers, by 1910, African Americans had acquired an enormous amount of land, 16 million acres (Tyler & Moore, 2013).

However, holding on to this land was another matter, as the systematic institutionalized racism of the USDA and other key power players erected enormous barriers for Black farmers. As Daniel (2013) meticulously documents, unabashed racism at the highest levels of the USDA enabled and condoned discriminatory policies and practices that caused hundreds of thousands of Black farmers to lose their land in the twentieth century. One of the most prominent means of this dispossession was in loaning practices. Due to the high cost of inputs, the slim profit margins, and the seasonal nature of agriculture, most farmers are reliant upon loans from the USDA to keep their businesses afloat. However, USDA officials had numerous tactics for ensuring that this capital did not reach Black farmers: they conveniently lost loan applications, modified the loan applications to be for ineligible or unnecessary expenses, delayed payment of loans such that farmers missed the seasonal window for buying seeds and other inputs, or flat out denied applications on racial grounds (Daniel, 2013; Hinson & Robinson, 2008). To make matters worse, there was local control over much agricultural decision-making, meaning that racist whites who had a vested interest in tracts of land owned by Black farmers were deciding loan eligibility (Daniel, 2013). After denying Black applications at critical junctures and forcing land into foreclosure, those same white farmers who sat on the local councils that made the decision would then buy the foreclosed land (Daniel, 2013).

Partly in reaction to racist USDA practices, Black-led cooperatives and mutual aid societies were created to meet farmers' needs and simultaneously protect and develop rural Black communities (Gordon Nembhard, 2014). For many Black farmers, the USDA was the "lender of

last resort" (King et al., 2018, p. 687). In 1999, a class action lawsuit against the USDA, Pigford v. Glickman, resulted in the largest civil rights settlement in US history (Cohen & Horton, 2012; Daniel, 2013; Hinson, 2018; King et al., 2018; Reid, 2012). Nonetheless, for many Black farmers who had endured decades of discrimination and already lost their land, the damage was done, and the Pigford settlement was debatable in its usefulness (Hinson & Robinson, 2008).

Movement to Reclaim Black Land and Liberatory Farming Practices. Food justice and food sovereignty are intersecting movements that overlap with Black Agrarianism. Many of the efforts within these movements that focus specifically on African American communities are focusing on reclaiming land for Black growers and reclaiming specifically African diaspora growing practices. Leah Penniman's Soul Fire Farm in New York State is a prominent example. With the publication of *Farming while Black*, a "practical guide to liberation on the land," Penniman (2018) offers hard-won expertise on how aspiring Black farmers can build freedom-focused agricultural initiatives. In each chapter, Penniman (2018) includes relevant practices from African, African diaspora, and specifically African American communities to "uplift" the wisdom and culture of these communities. These practices run a gamut from "Indigenous soil testing in Africa" (p. 90) to the "Black Panther Party Oakland Community School" (p. 255). Further, Soul Fire Farm created a Google map to facilitate "Reparations for Black-Indigenous Farmers" to squarely center the stolen land and stolen labor on which the current food system is built (Willoughby, 2018).

Increasingly, land is recognized as a key axis for achieving food justice, as the executive director of the Land Loss Prevention Project, Savi Horne states, "never forgets…Food justice requires land justice" (in White, 2017b, n.p.). By its very nature, growing food requires land to grow it on. For a people who have struggled to acquire and to hold onto land for so long, who, for the founders of this country, were always intended to labor on the land but never intended to own it, secure access to land is vitally important.

This is also where some of the tensions with the broader environmental movement come in. Mainstream environmentalisms regard land as something to be protected, as "pristine wilderness" (Smith, 2004), which also contributes to Indigenous erasure (Ford & Norgaard, 2020). Black agrarianism also regards land as something to be protected, but not as wilderness, rather as a site of productive, self-reliant, autonomous, and collective labor (Smith, 2004). These two visions compete. For example, freed Black people bought farmland in 40 acre parcels as part of the "freedpeople territory authorized by General Sherman's Field Order 15" on the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina, making them historically and culturally very important (Bandele & Myers, 2016). One former plantation, now known as "Harris Neck" became entirely legally owned by the descendants of formerly enslaved Africans, but during World War II:

> These families were uprooted from their land when the federal government used eminent domain to seize the Harris Neck land for construction of a federal airstrip. Seventy-five families were displaced from over 2,600 acres of land. Later, the land was given to the Department of Interior who converted it to a National Wildlife Refuge. Residents have been waging an ongoing battle to regain their land since. (Bandele & Myers, 2016, p. 4)

Whereas mainstream environmentalism regards this area as in need of protection and safekeeping from humans, the Black farmers whose land this was "have an uninterrupted cord of environmental and land-based knowledge guiding them in their land stewardship practices" (p. 4). In the Black agrarian tradition, agriculture both protects land and nourishes people.

On the other hand, African American-led food justice movements do not limit their activities to rural settings. Rather, the rise of urban agriculture in African American neighborhoods has been well-documented (Fiskio et al., 2016; Paynter, 2017; Quizar, 2018; White, 2011a). In studying urban agriculture in Cleveland, Fiskio and colleagues (2016) document how African Americans who moved north during the Great Migration brought essential food growing practices

with them and developed an urban Black agrarianism. One of the most important values within urban Black agrarianism is hospitality, which growers articulated as "the need for creative support in the context of a hostile environment" (p. 25). In this way, they were using agriculture to care for each other in a structurally racist environment and to build resilience while resisting white supremacy.

In describing Black-led agriculture work in Detroit, Quizar (2018) makes a related argument, that "growers often characterize farming, accessing food, and having control over one's own food supply as issues of survival—of day-to-day livelihood and also more broadly of Black and poor people's survival" (p. 82). For some Black Detroiters, growing food is important because it entails reclaiming agricultural labor from its association with enslavement and exploitation as a site to build self-reliance and self-determination (Quizar, 2018; White, 2011a, 2017a). The farmers at D-Town farms, many of whom are women, explicitly identify growing food as an act of resistance (White, 2011a, 2011b). Black food growers also use growing practices to reduce their reliance on precarious paid labor and to prevent health problems caused by lack of access to fresh, healthy food: two key dangers of everyday life for many low-income, Black Detroiters (Quizar, 2018; White, 2011a).

The need for reclaiming in urban agriculture happens in part because of the traditions that got lost along the way. Xavier Brown, a master composter and garden leader in Washington D.C., espouses a practice that he calls "Afro-ecology" as a way to heal the disconnect that many urban African Americans experience after associating agriculture solely with land-based trauma (in Paynter, 2017). Another D.C. garden leader argues that while gardens and chickens used to populate the front yards of many Black neighborhoods, those traditions were broken when home gardens were destroyed in the uprising after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. (Paynter, 2017). It was at this point that he believes the connection to the land and commitment to self-reliance were broken in some Black neighborhoods. Brown argues that "Afro-ecology is reorientation of our connection

to the land, an organizing principle, and the way we express our culture while we grow food and grow healthy people" and a way to feed Black liberation (Paynter, 2017, n.p.).

Nonetheless, urban farmers and gardeners experience similar pressures on their land as rural growers do, especially from developers (Fiskio, et al., 2016). "Green gentrification"—wherein an intended environmental justice win in developing green space in a disinvested community attracts new residents and displaces the original population—is increasingly recognized as a danger in BIPOC and working class communities (Krings & Kopic, 2020; Wolch et al., 2014). A key question for community members, then, is how to reclaim their own sacred land-based practices without losing the literal land (Fiskio, et al., 2016).

Gentrification as a continuation of land dispossession and cultural imperialism

The logic of gentrification follows a process, not dissimilar to settler colonialism, according to Quizar (2019). First, intentional public and private disinvestment in Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and/or working class communities occurs, including reductions in essential public services. This often coincides with urban renewal or revitalization projects which are often supposedly for the good of the existing community, but BIPOC and working class communities bear the brunt of disruption and displacement from the associated changes, such as highway projects (Fullilove, 2005; Moskowitz, 2018). Then, when the market value of properties within those communities is low enough, they are bought at a profit, encouraging middle and upper class white people to settle within those neighborhoods, both in the interest of making a good investment and in doing a social good to save those communities from themselves (Quizar, 2019). However, to claim that these new people settling in previously BIPOC neighborhoods is the new colonialism ignores that all gentrification in the US happens on Indigenous land that was stolen through genocide (Quizar, 2019). As Wolfe famously stated, settler colonial "invasion is a structure, not an

39

event" (2006, p. 388). Thus, gentrification is happening within the structure of settler colonialism, and there is no new colonialism because the old colonialism is ongoing.

The logics of settler colonialism are very much at play in the process of gentrification. First, while private property is thought to be a natural phenomenon in much of the US as a "major organizing principle of capitalism" (Ford & Norgaard, 2020, p. 57), thinking so obfuscates how private property rights were established through the genocide and dispossession of Indigenous peoples and turning Black people into objects through enslavement, using their labor to build white settler society in the US (Safransky, 2017). Further, while there was an attempt to eliminate Indigenous peoples, in part through "blood quantum" heritability, to delegitimize their claims to their lands, growing the population of enslaved African labor increased their enslavers' wealth, leading to the "one drop" rule (Wolfe, 2006). Nonetheless, Quizar (2019) argues that as Black people in the US are increasingly being coded as non-workers rather than unskilled workers, due to changing capitalist needs and a globalized labor market, white settler society increasingly finds value not in the labor of Black people, but rather in the land that Black communities occupy, most visible in Detroit. In this way, Quizar (2019) sees Black communities as increasingly being treated more like Native communities in their place in settler colonial logic, as well as a shift in the rhetoric of Black-coded spaces as being abandoned and unproductive, and in need of saving by white-coded settlers, who now often take the form of "urban homesteaders" who are attracted to the city by the abundance of land and low cost of living. Further, food justice organizations, intentionally or unintentionally, often encourage gentrification by developing a green aesthetic in cities that is compelling to both developers and upper-class whites (Alkon & Cadji, 2020).

All of this intersects with and complicates Black agrarian traditions and Black land dispossession. Black agrarianism approaches farming from an explicitly liberatory framework (King et al, 2018), often using farming as a means by which to gain power and achieve justice (Safransky,

2017). By using food growing as a way to achieve some form of economic independence (Gordon Nembhard, 2014; White, 2011a, 2011b, 2017a, 2018), Black urban farmers also challenge capitalist relations by focusing on the use value of land, rather than the exchange value (Safransky, 2017). As the exchange value of land in post-industrial cities such as Detroit increases, it will become increasingly difficult for long-time, and particularly Black, residents to hold onto land which they value for its use, either in providing housing, growing food, or both. This could have serious impacts on how marginalized communities in gentrifying contexts will be able to adapt to a changing climate. Growing food has long been a strategy that people have used to survive times of crisis and hardship, but growing food is predicated on having land to grow on. I now turn to the importance of growing food to building climate resilience.

Food Security in a Changing Climate

One of the most pressing issues that humanity faces under global environmental change is growing food insecurity (Connors et al., 2015; Lal, 2013; Shiva, 2007; USDA, 2015). Globally, food security is "when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], 2006, p. 1). Worsening food insecurity is expected for a number of reasons related directly to climate change: drought, premature freezes and thaws, loss of topsoil, desertification, crop loss due to extreme weather events, global warming shifting local climates, changes in precipitation cycles, and crops losing nutritional value (Lal, 2013; Shiva, 2007; USDA, 2015). However, there are also a number of social, political, and economic reasons to expect increased food insecurity in the future, including: disruptions to global supply chains that industrial food system is reliant upon, closing of borders and increased political conflict as people flee areas worst impacted, destabilization of seed stocks from genetic engineering,

shortage of chemical inputs, intensifying inequitable distribution, loss of farmland, dispossession of small farmers and farmers of color, and the transition away from fossil fuels (Lal, 2013; Shiva, 2007; USDA, 2015).

Of particular concern is how the industrial food system that represents the vast majority of calories consumed in the US is heavily dependent on fossil fuels for its functioning (Kaiser & Kelly, 2013; Polack et al., 2008; Shiva, 2007). While not necessarily getting more scarce, the usability of fossil fuels is likely to decrease significantly in the near future because the amount of energy they produce will near the amount of energy needed to extract them (Polack et al., 2008; Shiva, 2007). Already the net energy within industrial agriculture is negative (Shiva, 2007). This means that how we currently grow food is not likely to be able to continue into the future, which makes industrially grown food increasingly insecure.

This fundamental flaw of the industrial food system is in addition to its fragility (Kaiser & Kelly, 2013). Disruptions such as those experienced since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic will become the norm in a climate governed by extremes and can have enormous consequences in food production, distribution, and storage (Aday & Aday, 2020; Bell, 2021; Connors et al., 2015; Shiva, 2007; USDA, 2015). Further, contributing to the fragility of the industrial food system is the assault on diversification in all of its forms, which greatly reduces its resilience. Resilience, as it emerged from complex systems theory (Chandler, 2014; Vrasti & Michelsen, 2017), refers to "the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks" (Walker et al., 2004 in Peeters, 2012, p. 16). One of the most important factors in the resilience of any given system is the diversity within it, such that if one part fails, the whole system does not go with it. In the context of agriculture, we can easily see how this has played out historically. For example, the Great Famine in Ireland was largely caused by tenant farmers relying on one or two varieties of potato for the

majority of their diet, and when blight was brought to the island from North America, it wiped out the whole crop, killing about one million people and forcing millions to migrate (Mokyr, 2019). While humans historically have eaten thousands of different vegetable crops, the majority of food worldwide now relies on just a few staples: corn, soy, and rapeseed (Shiva, 2007). This makes us incredibly vulnerable to crop failures. Further, the rise of agribusiness practices, including patenting seeds and genetic engineering, endangers farmers' ability to save seeds and adapt varieties to their climate (Shiva, 2007). Seed security, which comes from them being treated as a commons, is increasingly important in a changing climate (Shiva, 2007). Looking forward, growing food becomes all the more important because global environmental changes are likely to dramatically worsen food insecurity.

Growing importance of urban and peri-urban agriculture for climate resilience

While agribusinesses are constantly concentrating power and resources into fewer and fewer hands, in the process killing vital sources of diversity (Lyson, 2004; Shiva, 2007), small-scale farmers and gardeners tend to plant polycultures of different crops rather than monocultures, making them more resilient to weather disturbances, pests, and disease (Shiva, 2007). There is increasing research establishing how having networks of small-scale food growers can act as a buffer against food insecurity in a changing climate (Barthel & Isendahl, 2013; Kortwright & Wakefield, 2011; Newell et al., 2022; Panagopoulos, et al., 2018; Partalidou & Anthopolou, 2016; Shiva, 2007; Taylor & Lovell, 2012; Toth, et al., 2016). Further, when people share their agricultural knowledge, cultural practices, and the food itself, all of those resources are distributed within a community rather than being hoarded by a few. All of these characteristics make a localized food system more likely to withstand multiple shocks without collapsing, thus building resilience. In times of crisis and societal transitions, people who grow food have fared better than their peers, to a degree (Buchmann, 2009; Kortwright

& Wakefield, 2011; Lyson, 2004). However, greater impacts can be felt when networks of dispersed food growers exist (Buchmann, 2009; Lyson, 2004; Newell et al., 2022; Toth et al., 2016).

Agriculture in urban and peri-urban areas—which are a combination of urban and rural in land use and socio-economic activities—is increasingly recognized as vital to food security and climate resilience globally (Connors et al., 2015; FAO, 2010; Gulyas & Edmondson, 2021). International bodies, researchers, and practitioners have studied the impact of urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) for food security and climate resilience in the Global South (Connors et al., 2015; Gulyas & Edmondson, 2021). However, there is an increasing recognition that a similar effort needs to be made in the Global North, particularly in terms of marginalized communities within the Global North (Gulyas & Edmondson, 2021). UPA has the potential to help soften the impacts of shocks to the food system, whether those are caused directly by climate change, or by a global pandemic, a war, or some other systemic shock (Connors et al., 2015). This potential is particularly important for marginalized communities. As we have seen throughout history, the importance of slowing down the rate of change and softening the blows of systemic shocks is vital to the collective survival and well-being of marginalized communities (Polanyi, 1944/2001; Thompson, 1993; Nixon, 2011). UPA most directly supports climate resilience through times of change by providing people with a most basic survival need, food (Connors et al., 2015; Newell et al., 2022). However, UPA has additional potential for climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation.

Mitigation and adaptation are both essential parts of climate resilience. In urban areas, climate resilience refers to "a city's ability to respond to, resist and recover from changing climate conditions" (Connors et al., 2015, p. 424). Comparatively, mitigation is focused on slowing down the rate of climate change and, thus, reducing its damaging effects (Denton et al., 2014). Mitigation includes strategies such as reducing the extraction and consumption of fossil fuels and retrofitting buildings to be more energy efficient. Adaptation, on the other hand, is about preparing populations

to live with the effects of climate change (Denton et al., 2014). Adaptation strategies include planning the sites of new housing developments based on expected sea level rise and changing building codes so that structures can withstand more extreme weather events. In some instances, mitigation and adaptation may go hand in hand to build climate resilience, such as when older buildings are retrofitted to increase their energy-efficiency, use of renewable energy, and ability to withstand extreme weather events. However, in other instances, mitigation and adaptation are competing goals (Denton et al., 2014). For example, as the world warms, increased use of air conditioning is essential to maintaining a healthy and safe indoor environment in hot climates, but that increased use will contribute to potent greenhouse gas emissions and exacerbate climate change. So while access to air conditioning is a climate adaptation strategy, it will actually impede climate mitigation goals. In contrast, reducing the energy availability to rapidly developing countries would mitigate climate change, but would decrease those countries' ability to adapt to a changing climate (Denton et al., 2014). Climate resilience is achieved through both mitigation and adaptation measures, and particularly when these strategies are used synergistically.

UPA's promise as a climate resilience strategy comes in large part from its use of both mitigation and adaptation strategies. UPA can mitigate climate change by reducing the use of fossil fuels in the production and distribution of food (Connors et al., 2015; Gulyas & Edmondson, 2021). Food growers in urban and peri-urban areas are also likely to compost, which reduces the waste going to landfills thus producing methane, a potent greenhouse gas (Connors et al., 2015). UPA can also encourage more green space in city and suburban landscapes, which can help sequester carbon dioxide—having a mitigating effect—as well as reduce flooding and cool the area, combatting the urban heat island effect, which helps with climate adaptation (Connors et al., 2015; Newell et al., 2022). UPA can also help communities to adapt to climate change by diversifying and enhancing the local food supply (Connors et al., 2015; Gulyas & Edmondson, 2021; Newell et al., 2022). Food

growers are also likely to recycle water through the use of water catchment or gray water systems, which reduces water use, insulates growers from the impacts of drought, and can help prevent localized flooding, all adaptation strategies (Connors et al., 2015). UPA can also provide additional income and social capital to growers, increasing their adaptive capacity (Connors et al., 2015; Gulyas & Edmondson, 2021). Nonetheless, in order for these mitigation and adaptation strategies to take root in building climate resilience, growers need access to sufficient land that is safe to grow on, as well as clean water and safe nutrients (Connors et al., 2015). While access to clean water and safe nutrients have primarily been studied in the Global South where sanitation systems are not always as developed, brownfields and compromised municipal water systems make these considerations relevant to post-industrial areas in the Global North as well (Newell et al., 2022). In summary, the need for small-scale urban and peri-urban food growers is why understanding how communities have historically used food growing practices and continue to today is vital in planning responses to global environmental changes.

      Resilience from below and collective survival strategies. Despite the importance of building resilience, the concept itself and how that concept has been used is controversial amongst social scientists for its lack of attention to history, culture and agency (Boonstra, 2016; Fabinyi et al., 2014; Ingalls & Stedman, 2016), as well as the way that it has been used to shift the blame and responsibility onto individuals for the ravages of neoliberal capitalism (Tierney, 2015). However, marginalized communities themselves have developed a "resilience from below" that is tied to other liberatory frameworks such as food sovereignty (Vrasti & Michelsen, 2017). The resilience from below framework also ties to racial ecologies, which is the acknowledgement that BIPOC communities have always been and will always be the leaders of work to achieve a socially just sustainability (Nishime & Hester Williams, 2018). Building off these frameworks, I worked with colleagues to develop a new "resilience from below" framework, collective survival strategies (Bell et

al., 2019). Collective survival strategies are the ways that marginalized communities have long protected and cared for each other. They are: 1) communal and cooperative, not individualistic; 2) rooted in place and existing cultural traditions; 3) focused on basic survival needs, such as food, water, shelter, and protection; 4) self-organized and autonomous, not imposed or led by outside actors; and 5) address both everyday and more spectacular disasters (Bell et al., 2019). Growing food has long been a collective survival strategy used by BIPOC communities to survive the vagaries of racial capitalism (Bell et al., 2019; Gordon Nembhard, 2014; White, 2018), but in this project I ask whether growing food may also be a collective survival strategy in building climate resilience amongst marginalized communities?

Within the last few years, concern has arisen amongst social scientists about the depoliticizing potential of a shift in focus from averting collapse to surviving it (Ford, 2021; Katz-Rosene, & Swarc, 2022). Katz-Rosene and Swarc (2022) name this shift "eco-survivalism" and divide it into three distinct categories: elite, retrenchment, and communitarian. Elite eco-survivalism has come into public consciousness through the revelation that tech billionaires in Silicon Valley were buying building bunkers in New Zealand to ride out climate collapse, or even proletarian revolt (Katz-Rosene, & Swarc, 2022). Retrenchment eco-survivalism, however, is the movement of mostly white and middle class people in the US who identify as "preppers," focusing their energy on preparing to not only survive but "thrive" in a climate-induced collapse scenario (Katz-Rosene, & Swarc, 2022). Finally, Jem Bendell's work on "Deep Adaptation," which Bendell argues is not about giving up on broad social change but about opening up to a wider agenda in helping communities spiritually and materially adapt to climate catastrophe, is most illustrative of communitarian eco-survivalism (Katz-Rosene, & Swarc, 2022). While communitarian eco-survivalism shares an underpinning in the inevitability of climate collapse with the other varieties, it is different in that it is not individualistic, but rather focused on how communities can proactively plan for what is coming

and, in some instances, already here. Katz-Rosene and Swarc (2022) argue that although communitarian eco-survivalism, in focusing on community-level or societal resilience is not nearly as problematic as elite and retrenchment eco-survivalism, it still is dangerous for the ways that it could contribute to environmental defeatism and anti-civilizationism.

Ford and Norgaard (2020) make a similar argument when comparing the environmental subjectivities of urban white homesteaders and members of the Karuk tribe in the US Pacific Northwest. By environmental subjectivities, they mean how knowledge about and engagement around climate change is filtered through intersectional social locations, culture, and embodied experience. Ford and Norgaard (2020) find that people's relationships to capitalism and colonialism, the main drivers of climate change, impact how they engage with the issues. For white homesteaders, they seek to withdraw from unsustainable systems by adopting self-sufficient practices that they associate with early Europeans settlers. In doing so, they rarely challenge capitalism and embrace the ongoing settler colonial project in the US. This is in contrast to the Karuk tribe members who, unlike the white homesteaders, see the climate crisis not as something new, but rather as a continuation of apocalyptic conditions they have faced since settlers arrived, and their engagement around climate change involves both protecting their land and relatives, as well as advancing Indigenous sovereignty (Ford & Norgaard, 2020).

Ford and Norgaard (2020) are critical of the ways that the white homesteaders pull from individualistic cultural legacies and are, thus, disengaged from broader climate justice struggles, but they are also critical of the ways that so much scholarship on climate change knowledge and behavior is reflective of elite environmental subjectivities. They further call for additional research to understand the climate responses of people who do not fit Audre Lorde's "mythical norm." In this study, I do just that by looking at how marginalized food growers relate to climate change. Understanding the similarities and differences in the environmental subjectivities of Black, white

working class, and people of color food growers who share commonalities with the homesteaders Ford and Norgaard (2020) studied and yet are drawing from oppressed cultural legacies has the potential to extend and complicate their work on environmental subjectivities.

Chapter 3: Case Site & Methods

To answer the question of how growing food may be used as a collective survival strategy for marginalized communities in a changing climate, I interviewed Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and/or working class food growers in the small de-industrial city of Ypsilanti, Michigan. In this chapter, I discuss why Ypsilanti is a good case site for answering the overarching research question, give background information and an abbreviated history of Ypsilanti, and detail the qualitative methods that I used to collect and analyze data.

Case Site: Ypsilanti, Michigan

Ypsilanti is a particularly apt site for examining how marginalized communities can build resilience to climate change for four primary reasons. First, science reporters have recently touted Michigan as a relative climate refuge (Hess, 2016), making it a "rare case" (Small, 2009; Weiss, 1994). Second, Ypsilanti has a rich history of resistance to oppressive forces, particularly within Black communities (Marshall, 1993; Siegfried, n.d, 2021a.). Third, as I will detail below, the history of Ypsilanti as a destination for rural people seeking industrial jobs after World War II means that there are multiple marginalized agrarian traditions represented within the city. Finally, Ypsilanti is in the earlier stages of gentrification (Moskowitz, 2017), which makes the processes of neighborhood change both more visible and more stoppable.

Climate refuge. While climate justice advocates have rightly focused on the people most directly vulnerable to harm in places where climate change presents an immediate existential crisis (United Nations, 2019), this research project focuses on communities who are not as directly vulnerable geographically, but rather by living in a place that is perceived as a relative climate refuge, their vulnerability in the future will likely increase. Emerging research on climate destination cities directly names Ann Arbor as a destination city, but also recognizes that Ann Arbor has little interest or appetite in developing affordable housing for working class and poor people already living and working in the city, which does not bode well for a large influx of people who may need to seek refuge (Marandi & Main, 2021). Facilitating socially just climate migration needs to be proactively planned, but a part of the justice issues involved in climate migration is what happens to the marginalized people who are already living in these places of relative climate refuge and are already being pushed out by the forces of racial capitalism? And how does continuing land dispossession impact their ability to build resilience to climate change, particularly when growing food is one of the most accessible and culturally relevant ways that marginalized communities build resilience more generally (Quizar, 2018; White, 2018)?

This case study diverges from the main thrust of research on climate vulnerability in that rather than focusing on a group of people who are particularly vulnerable to the direct effects of climate change, such as sea level rise or increased hurricanes, I am focusing on a community that, relatively speaking, is sheltered from the worst direct impacts of climate change. Although nowhere is safe from climate change, Michigan faces relatively low risks of natural disaster (Great Lakes Integrated Sciences and Assessments [GLISA], 2019). Crop yields are actually increasing in Michigan due to the expansion of frost free days and increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere although this benefit is not expected to last once other effects of climate change worsen, such as flooding, droughts, and pests (GLISA, 2019; Newell et al., 2022). Further, as two peninsulas surrounded by

the Great Lakes, there is an abundance of fresh water, in fact, one fifth of the world's fresh water (GLISA, 2019). Nonetheless, the effect of global environmental changes on the Great Lakes is unknown (GLISA, 2019), and the water crises in Flint and Detroit clearly show that proximity to essential natural resources does not equate access to them (Krings et al., 2019).

Correspondingly, BIPOC and working class communities in Michigan can expect to face disparately negative consequences from climate change, but not just from sources that are current targets of climate resilience and adaptation planning, such as flooding. Communities in Michigan are less likely than majority Black communities on the East Coast to be pushed from their homes as those homes become unlivable (Paolisso et al., 2012). Rather, if climate change continues unabated, I argue that further gentrification and land dispossession will be much larger dangers for BIPOC and working class communities in Michigan, as people with greater resources and power seek a safe haven from the ravages of climate change.

Further, as environmental changes disrupt the globalized industrial food system (Kaiser, 2011; Kaiser & Kelly, 2013; Shiva, 2007), having a means by which to produce one's own food and meet one's own subsistence needs will become more important. BIPOC and working class people, and particularly African Americans, have long used agriculture as a way to collectively survive oppressive conditions (White, 2018), but agriculture is reliant upon access to land. If access to land becomes even more difficult for BIPOC and working class communities in Michigan, it will become even harder to use this historical means of collective survival, growing food.

BIPOC Resistance in Ypsilanti. As I detail in the following history, Ypsilanti has a long tradition of resistance to oppressive forces, starting with the resistance that Potawotami, and other Anishinaabe, and Wyandot people mounted to the colonization of their lands. Black communities, in particular, have a long tradition of resistance and affecting social change in Ypsilanti, from the earliest Black residents who freed themselves from enslavement and helped others to do the same to

the Black union leaders who not only changed the political direction of Ypsilanti but the country as a whole. While I will not go into detail here as I include this history below, it is important to note that this tradition continues with the many young activists and long-time residents who are leading the charge to keep Ypsilanti affordable and racially and economically diverse by building community self-determination, in the face of gentrification.

Marginalized Agrarian Traditions in Ypsilanti. African Americans in general have a long history of using agriculture as a way to resist racist coercion, exploitation, and domination. In Ypsilanti, agricultural practices were essential in enabling African Americans to escape slavery and obtain freedom in the northern United States, including in Ypsilanti (Marshall, 1993; Siegfried, n.d.). Once in Ypsilanti, African Americans worked predominantly as farm hands, but also created community owned and run gardens and orchards, and had thriving gardens and livestock in their own back and front yards (Bien, 2010; Marshall, 1993; Maurer, 2017; Siegfried, n.d.).

In the Great Migration, countless African Americans left the South between 1915 and 1970 in search of better opportunities in the industrializing North and to escape racist terrorism (Wilkerson, 2010). As Premail Freeman (2018) recounts in an archived interview, his family was a part of this migration when they left Mississippi for Ypsilanti in 1952:

> I remember the incident when we had to leave Mississippi. A guy came. I guess the person that owned the property came to talk to my mother about some chickens or something. And … I don't know what happened that day. But I know she went for no stuff cause she had a gun by the door. And about a week or two later-- or to me it seemed like a week or two. But we was on our way out of there, heading to Michigan.

Freeman's parents were the last of their family to move North and the family that they joined in Michigan continued their rural Southern traditions, such as annual autumn hog killing wherein everyone took home some meat for the winter. Despite seeking industrial jobs, many migrants, such

as the Freemans, continued rural ways of life in their new surroundings by continuing to grow food

and keep livestock in the Northern cities and towns that they came to call home (Fiskio, et al., 2016;

Maurer, 2017). In many places, Black migrants continued to face extreme segregation in what

housing and public services were made available to them, so growing food was often a survival

strategy, as well as a continuation of a way of life. However, after World War Two (WWII), these

practices began to shift with growing food no longer being the norm, but rather the exception.

This is true for most communities, regardless of race, because of the ascent of industrial

agriculture as a continuation of the use of chemicals and equipment developed in the war (Johnstone

& McLeish, 2022) and the ascent of the modern supermarket. In Ypsilanti, the first supermarket to

open was in 1942, as a direct response to the difficulties of shopping at multiple stores when men

were at war, women were working full-time, and rationing reduced delivery options (Bien, 2010).

For working class Black and white families though, this transition took longer as women had often

worked before the war (Siegfried, 2021b) and growing food and having food preparation side

businesses were still common after the war. Dyann Logwood (2021) relayed how before farmers'

markets became trendy, Black farmers would drive through her neighborhood selling produce out of

their car trunks or truck beds. In the tight-knit Black community that she grew up in during the

1970s and 1980s, people were always sharing food from their gardens. Logwood's mother was one

of a group of "Cake Ladies," who had side businesses of making elaborate cakes for neighborhood

kids' birthdays. When her father, who worked at the Ford plant and was a Pentecostal preacher,

moved the family to a rural part of Ypsilanti Township to chase the American dream of owning

more land, Logwood's family experienced overt racism from the white farming community that

surrounded them (2021). This is despite evidence of Black farmers in the area since the postal

service first started delivering mail to the area in the early 1900s (Bien, 2010). White industrial

workers also brought agricultural traditions with them from Appalachia and other more rural areas,

and keeping both a large garden and some small livestock was common in white working class communities in Ypsilanti (Bien, 2010; Maurer, 2017).

While there was a decline of robust agricultural systems after WWII within the city, recently there has been a resurgence of public attention to urban agriculture led by Black residents of Ypsilanti. This attention is important, as the focus on urban agriculture in Ypsilanti has long almost exclusively included white-led initiatives (Maurer, 2017). However, it may also be obfuscating the enduring home and side lot gardening traditions of African American residents (Taylor & Lovell, 2012). I learned of this tradition in Ypsilanti through meeting long-time African American residents while participating in a white-led cooperative orchard in the predominantly Black South Side of the city. In this study, I will include more widely known urban agriculture initiatives as well as many of the more "private" home and side lot gardeners. This is essential to understanding how Black Ypsilantians think about and have used growing practices, including how home gardeners may differ in important ways from more public gardeners.

A Gentrifying Ypsilanti. As alluded to previously, Ypsilanti is gentrifying. This is largely due to people moving to Ypsilanti from Ann Arbor, where housing prices have escalated dramatically. In the Ann Arbor metropolitan area rent averages $1,475, having risen 11% during the course of the pandemic, following national trends (Bhattarai et al., 2022). Home ownership is even more out of reach with single family homes currently averaging $538,000 in Ann Arbor, compared to $309,000 in Ypsilanti, and $246,000 in all of Michigan (Zillow, 2022). So, people looking to stabilize their housing costs or acquire any housing that is affordable to them, increasingly look to Ypsilanti, which shares a public transportation system with Ann Arbor, adding convenience for people who work in Ann Arbor, such as myself. Further, Ann Arbor has both implicitly and explicitly used Ypsilanti as its de facto affordable housing solution, despite dire warnings for what impacts that has on increasing racial and economic inequality in the county as a whole (czb, 2016).

Within Ypsilanti, creating and maintaining affordable housing has also been a struggle. For instance, inadequate oversight at the state level has led to private real estate developers exploiting a loophole to shed their affordability requirements far ahead of schedule despite receiving Low-Income Housing Tax Credits on condition of maintaining affordable housing for decades (Housing Affordability and Accessibility Subcommittee (HAAS), 2020). These actions have displaced a number of low-income renters in Ypsilanti, and especially impacted seniors (HAAS, 2020). Moreover, nearly 70% of Ypsilanti residents are renters, with only 30% owning their homes, which is the inverse of statewide trends (HAAS, 2020) and makes Ypsilantians uniquely vulnerable to gentrification. Renters have little ability to control escalating housing costs. The 2008 financial crisis hit Ypsilanti hard and shifted even more formerly owner-occupied properties into the hands of real estate developers (HAAS, 2020). Finally, even housing that is officially designated affordable in Ypsilanti is unlikely to actually be affordable for much of the existing population because the area median income (AMI) that determines affordable housing costs is set at the county level, which is $101,500 for a family of four in Washtenaw County, almost three times the median household income in Ypsilanti (Office of Community and Economic Development, 2021). Finally, the impacts of gentrification from Ann Arbor has disproportionately impacted Black Ypsilantians. While Black residents of Washtenaw County have long been concentrated in Ypsilanti, "the biggest change in the City's racial makeup since 2010 is a decline in the Black population from 31.9% to 27.3%. The loss of Black residents [is] concentrated in the southwest portion of the City…which was 90% Black in 2000, 80% Black in 2010, and 68% Black in 2018" (HAAS, 2020, p. 13).

Some aspects of gentrification, including displacement, that have happened in Ypsilanti are seemingly irreversible, but activists and long-time residents within the city have had a number of wins in halting the gentrification process, including stopping the development called "International Village," passing the country's second Community Benefits Ordinance, and politicizing a large swath

56

of Ypsilanti residents to what is happening in the city. In addition, many of the businesses that were most feared as forces of gentrification, such as an upscale juicery and yoga studio, have gone out of business (Defend Affordable Ypsi [DAY], 2017). This is not to say that all is well in Ypsilanti and gentrification will not continue, but it is to say that Ypsilanti is at a place where the story on what happens with gentrification has not yet been written and many of the people who I interviewed as well as their companions are working to ensure that Ypsilanti remains both affordable and Black.

Population Characteristics

Ypsilanti is a small town in southeast Michigan with a population of 21,076 in 2017 (United States Census Bureau [USCB], 2018). Ypsilanti is best known as the home of Eastern Michigan University, which was formerly Michigan State Normal School, a college for teachers, and as a site of major airplane and automotive manufacturing, particularly during WWII. It sits 6 miles east of Ann Arbor and 18 miles west of Detroit. In 2017, the population was 63.1% white, 27.7% African American, 4.5% Hispanic or Latino/a, 4.5% multiracial, 2.3% Asian American, and 0.1% American Indian (USCB, 2018). From 2013 to 2017 only 31% of the housing units were owner occupied, and the median household income was $35,896 (USCB, 2018). In 2017, 31% of Ypsilantians lived below the federal poverty line (USCB, 2018). However, to get a fuller understanding of Ypsilanti, we must look at some of the history of the town, starting with its history prior to European colonization.

Figure 1

Orienting Map of Ypsilanti
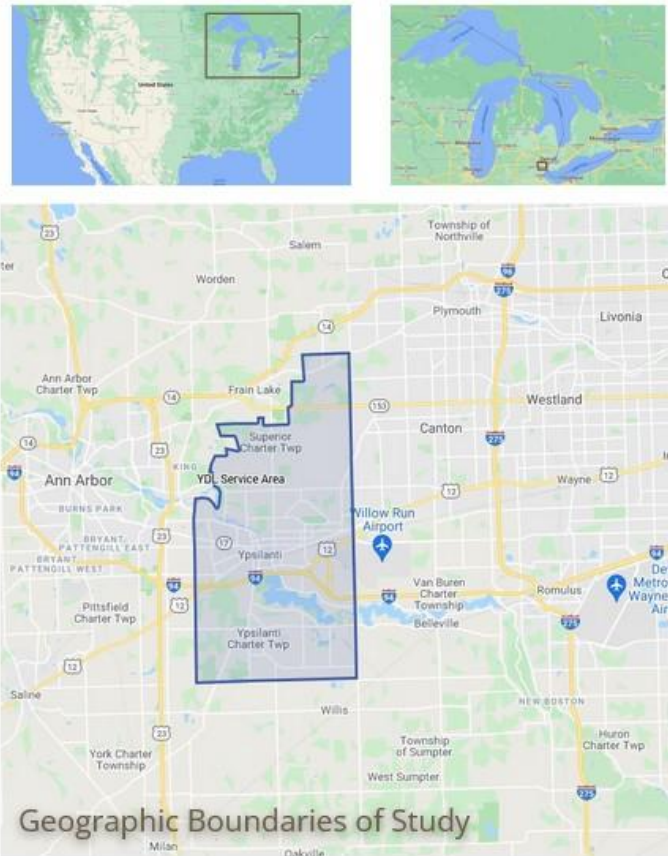
Figure 2

Map of Ypsilanti with Key Features relevant to this Study
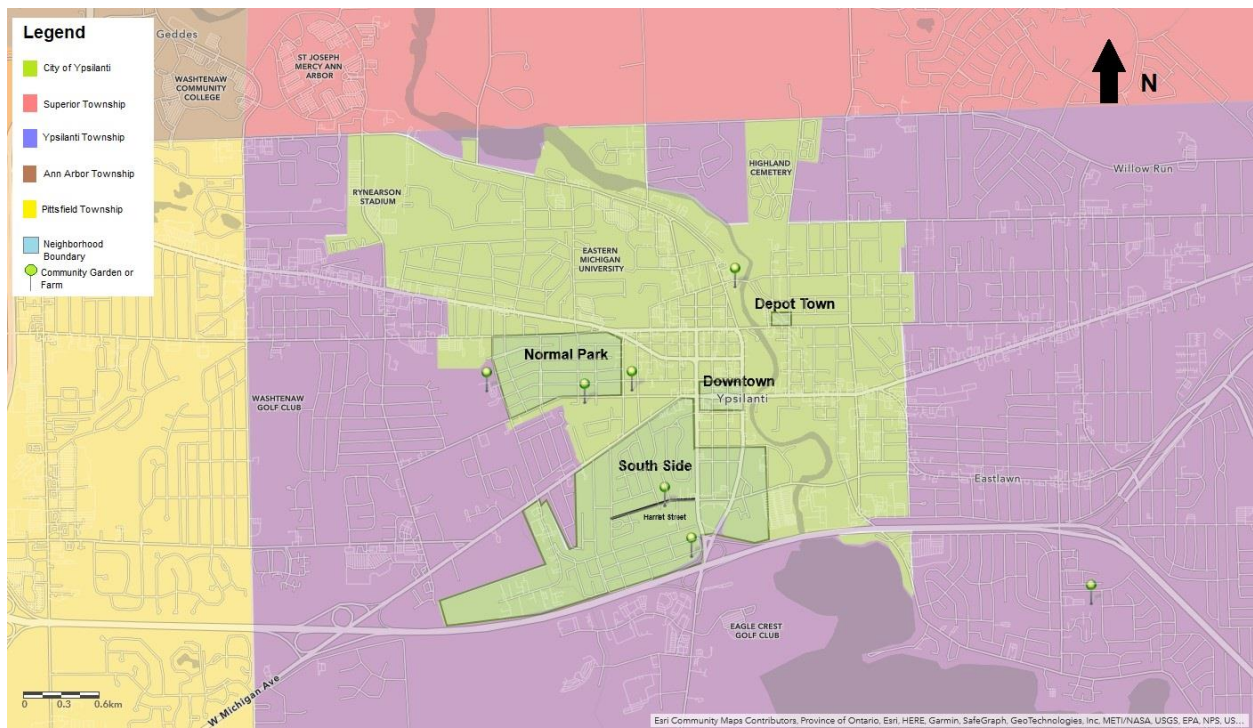
A Very Short History of Ypsilanti

In this abbreviated history of Ypsilanti, themes of dispossession, resistance, and agriculture as a means to ensure collective survival repeat. While a simplification, this history provides context for the battles currently being waged against gentrification and the food growing practices currently being utilized in Ypsilanti.

White land speculators seize Potawatomi lands and other collective resources. Before white settlers named Ypsilanti after a contemporary Greek revolutionary war hero, the land was home to a number of Indigenous groups, including the Ojibwe, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi—collectively the Anishinaabe or Three Fires People—as well as the Wyandot, and at the point of contact with white settlers in the early 18th century, it was the site of a Potawatomi village and Indigenous gathering place (Maynard, 2014a). The Huron Potawatomi practiced regenerative

agriculture as well as hunting and foraging (Maynard, 2014a). Native peoples in Southern Michigan used fire to control the forests, enrich the soil, and attract game (Maynard, 2014a). The soils along the Huron River, which runs through Ypsilanti, were particularly rich, and thus, a prime site for agricultural cultivation (Maynard, 2014a). While the Potawatomi had long used Indigenous, regenerative methods to collectively build extensive gardens, American officials with the support of white Quakers were trying to train Potawatomi people in white, individualist farming methods, as a part of a broader assimilation campaign and to try to contain the Potawatomis into ever shrinking tracts of land (Edmunds, 1978).

Because the first white settlers, thought to be French fur traders, came to what is now Southeast Michigan, and at the time was known as the Northwest Territory relatively late, the impacts of centuries of war and removals that defined settler colonialism had already impacted local Native populations (Maynard, 2014a). Siegfried describes all of the Indigenous villages in Southern Michigan as already being, in part, refugee camps (Maynard, 2014a). Most Native people were removed from this part of the Huron River watershed by the 1830s, but Indigenous peoples in the area fought against the taking of their lands, livelihoods, and lives by white settlers (Edmunds, 1978; Maynard, 2014a). Many of the Huron Potawatomi were forced onto reserved lands west of the Mississippi River, but "during this removal, referred to as the Trail of Death, a group of Tribal Members escaped and returned to their native lands in Michigan" (NHBP, 2019, n.p.). This group now make up the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi (NHBP) Tribe and reside "on the Pine Creek Indian Reservation in Fulton, Michigan" (NHBP, 2019, n.p.).

The white settlers who founded Ypsilanti were mostly wealthy people from socially progressive pockets of the Northeast (Siegfried, 2021a). After the United States Congress mandated the construction of a military road to Chicago, wealthy land surveyors from New York, John Gilbert and Orange Risdon, arrived to plan Chicago Road, which is now Michigan Avenue, a US highway

that runs through downtown Ypsilanti and connects Detroit to Chicago (Anscheutz, 2013). Chicago

Road follows the Sauk Trail, a millennia old trail that ran from the Mississippi River at Rock Island

all the way to Detroit, with smaller trails branching off (Maynard, 2014). A surveyor who was a

contemporary to Gilbert and Risdon, C. E. Woodard, noted that by locating Chicago Road along the

Sauk Trail,

> It was always understood that our most important highways—the Chicago Road and others
>
> followed the general lines of these main Indian trails, thus admitting the Indians' skill in their
>
> part in Civil engineering, selecting the best ground on which to locate our highways (in
>
> Anscheutz, 2013, p. 27).

Gilbert used his position as a surveyor on this project to claim patent on what he saw as the best

supposedly empty pieces of land at the time, seizing sites for mills and downtowns, including

downtown Ypsilanti (Anscheutz, 2013).

History of Black freedom in Ypsilanti. In the early 19th century, free Black farming

settlements dotted the rural landscape throughout the Northwest Territory, encompassing present-

day Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin (Cox, 2018). There were four such settlements

in Washtenaw county between 1800 and 1860 (Cox, 2018). Many of these free Black settlements

provided shelter and material support for people making the journey north to escape slavery, at great

risk to themselves and their families (Cox, 2018). Contrary to popular portrayals of the Underground

Railroad, people escaping slavery were not luggage that white conductors freed by moving them

north along stations (Maynard, 2014b). Rather, although white abolitionists certainly provided

assistance, the Underground Railroad was driven by people literally freeing themselves and much of

the assistance came from free Black communities and households, many of whom had escaped

slavery themselves (Maynard, 2014b). Accordingly, Sayers (2004) argues that we should understand

the Underground Railroad as a long-term process of African American defiance and marronage, the

practice of not only escaping slavery but also creating communities outside of the slaveholders' grasp.

Further, many people escaping enslavement gained their freedom by working as farm hands at safe houses along the way and used their agricultural experience as a way to sustain themselves and build a life as free people, indelibly shaping American agrarianism (Sayers, 2004). Ypsilanti played an important role on the Underground Railroad, and many of Ypsilanti's earliest African American residents had freed themselves from slavery (Marshall, 1993; Maynard, 2014b). This sometimes created a division between the first Black residents of Ypsilanti, many of whom had temporarily fled to Canada after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 due to slavecatchers coming through town and trying to put even legally free Black people into bondage (Marshall, 1993), and later migrants. When Benjamin Neely arrived in Ypsilanti with his parents in 1914 from North Carolina, the existing Black community referred to themselves as Canadians and referred to the newcomers as "all those southern Negroes" (Neely, n.d.).

At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, Ypsilanti was known as a Black city. Ypsilanti's Black population was 58 in 1840, 70 in 1850, 220 in 1860, 440 in 1880, and 600 by 1900 (Siegfried, n.d.). In 1880 and 1900, Black residents were 10% of Ypsilanti's population, which was remarkable for the time; "by comparison, in 1900 Michigan's Black population was .7%, Detroit's 1.4%, and Ann Arbor's around 3%" (Siegfried, n.d., n.p.). Before and directly after the Civil War, Ypsilanti was seen as relatively welcoming towards African Americans with some Black community members owning businesses and having white clientele (Collins-Eaglin & Jones, 2012; Siegfriend, n.d.). The relatively high concentration of African Americans in Ypsilanti made it a notably Black town, but African Americans were still relegated only to specific parts of the cities and "the vast majority worked in low paying, manual labor" (Siegfried, n.d., n.p.).

In the 1880s and 1890s, there was a white supremacist backlash to the gains African

Americans were making, and segregation intensified, effectively cutting off white and Black

communities in Ypsilanti (Siegfried, n.d.). In response, the Black community built "their own

institutions in the form of fraternal and benevolent organizations, religious institutions and,

increasingly, political groups like the Afro-American Protective League of the early 1890s"

(Siegfried, n.d., n.p.). This segregation only increased during the Jim Crow era and the African

American community became concentrated south of Michigan Avenue (formerly Chicago Road) and

west of Washington Street (Siegfried, n.d.). Thus, while Black families originally came to Ypsilanti to

gain their freedom, in the earlier 20th century, their movement and options were increasingly

confined.

Collectively surviving the Great Depression. Like all areas of the United States, the Great

Depression had a deep and lasting impact on people in Ypsilanti. Nonetheless, both Black and white

Ypsilantians were initially shielded from some of the worst impacts due to a robust community

response that focused on protecting and caring for each other. In 1929, essential city services and

businesses in Ypsilanti were still locally controlled (Bien, 2010), and subsumed within social

relations. Local people did not want to turn off each others' utilities or deny neighbors' groceries

(Bien, 2010). Local currencies were developed and used, which were essentially IOU notes (Bien,

2011). All of this had the impact of effectively slowing the rate of change in which the crisis hit

Ypsilantians, which gave people more time to adapt (Bien, 2010).

Inez Graves was a local white social worker who helped families to get their basic needs met

throughout the Depression (Bien, 2010). She helped to organize the movement to make city- and

privately-owned land available for people to grow "thrift gardens" in the 1930s (Bien, 2010;

Smithsonian Institution [SI], 2022). These were subsistence gardens intended to help people with

their immediate need for food, and involved varying degrees of cooperation with the local

government (SI, 2022). In Detroit, thrift gardens were highly planned with pamphlets on the ideal garden layout being distributed (SI, 2022), whereas in Ypsilanti, there is less evidence of central planning, with some homeowners informally offering their backyards as land for subsistence gardens (Bien, 2010). Other forms of mutual aid developed during this time, and were spearheaded by other women leaders, such as Lois Prout, a teacher at Harriet School, which was an all-Black elementary school with Black teachers (Bien, 2010). Prout taught essential community survival skills, such as mending discarded long underwear (which Ypsilanti famously produced) and canning as a way for African American children to help ensure the community's winter survival (Bien, 2010). However, the federal food relief program that Graves helped to administer (Bien, 2010) was discriminatory towards African Americans, and it was only through the political organizing of some early Black union leaders in Ypsilanti that Black families were able to access federal food relief (Neely, n.d.). While Ypsilantians utilized collective survival strategies, such as gardening, mending, and canning, to make it through the Great Depression, Black families still faced discrimination from the government and their white neighbors. In these struggles, a new political consciousness awakened that would become widespread through the radical worker organizing that came to town during WWII.

Radical union organizing and the origin of the housing crisis in Ypsilanti during WWII. Ypsilanti had been home to industry since Benjamin Woodruff opened a mill on the Huron River in 1824, one year after the city's founding (Drummond, 2021), and prior to World War II was the home of textile and automobile factories (Siegfried, 2021b). Nonetheless, when Henry Ford opened the Willow Run Bomber Plant in 1942, it was thought to be the largest factory in the world and Ypsilanti's industrial workforce exploded (Peterson, 2013; Siegfried, 2021b). Willow Run cemented Ypsilanti's place in history and played a vital role in the rise of radical industrial union organizing in the US, which was transformative for African Americans, women, and working people both locally and nationally.

Willow Run is a small tributary of the Huron River in Ypsilanti Township that was the site of a large farm that Henry Ford purchased in 1931 (Bryan, 1990). Ford maintained the farm and opened Camp Willow Run in 1940, as a social engineering project that brought teenage boys from the inner-city of Detroit to live on the farm, thereby learning agricultural skills and other skills thought to be lacking in their home environment (Peterson, 2013; Siegfried, 2021b). Although the automotive industry had been present in Ypsilanti since the industry's inception, Ford eventually was able to push competitors out of the city and establish his first factory in Ypsilanti in 1932 (Siegfried, 2021b). Washtenaw County, unlike Wayne County, was an open shop environment at the time and decidedly anti-union (Neely, n.d.) beyond a small minority of white men who belonged to craft unions. Labor conditions for working people were "semi-feudal" in nature due to the concentration of industry and capital in the hands of so few (Siegfried, 2021b). Industrial union organizing, in contrast, included all workers in a particular industry no matter their skill level, which meant that women and people of color were involved in organizing efforts as well (Lewis-Colman, 2008; Siegfried, 2021b). Industrial organizing first took hold of the auto industry after the Flint sit-down strike at General Motors in 1936-1937, which is considered to be the birth of the modern labor movement (Fine, 2020; Lewis-Colman, 2008).

Because Ford hired African Americans, unlike the other large automobile companies, when the United Auto Workers (UAW) started organizing in Ford plants, they had to take African American concerns and leadership seriously in a way that had not been true before despite their commitment to inclusivity (Lewis-Colman, 2008; Siegfried, 2021b). Benjamin Neely was amongst the most prominent union leaders in Ypsilanti in the 1930s and 1940s (Siegfried, 2021b). In an oral history, Neely recounted his experience of being allowed to eat in an Ypsilanti restaurant that did not serve African Americans when going with other union leaders, because the union did not tolerate racial discrimination and had made an agreement with the restaurant (n.d.). However, Neely

did not know about this agreement and tried to eat at the restaurant one day alone, but the waitress told him that she could not serve him. What happened next was symbolic of the larger shift that industrial unions took in addressing Black concerns. As Neely (n.d., n.p.) told his interviewer, "So I called the police to get my order, get my, uh, come down here and arrested me. Yeah. Y'know? They put me in jail. The union had to come get me out of there. That's something; that's when the cat got out of the bag. Then the union had to come on out and fight this, fight my battles." No longer was it sufficient for industrial unions to refuse discrimination within their leadership and ranks, they now had to confront and fight racism head on at every turn, which was revolutionary at the time (Siegfried, 2021b).

Centering Black concerns and leadership had a transformative impact not just on industrial organizing, but the political landscape in Michigan more broadly (Lewis-Colman, 2008; Siegfried, 2021b). Ford was viciously anti-union and, at one point, literally tried to incite a race war as a way to hinder unionizing efforts (Bates, 2012; Siegfried, 2021b). When Ford workers at the River Rouge plant in Dearborn, Michigan successfully unionized in 1941 despite such opposition, a new era of racial integration and organizing was born, with white workers for the first time being reliant on Black leaders to ensure their welfare (Siegfried, 2021b).

Within Ypsilanti, a new era of political possibility was opened up for African Americans, women, and working people more broadly. The first African American city council members ever elected in the 1940s and the city's Black mayors all came from leadership positions with the UAW (Siegfried, 2021b). Prior to becoming Ypsilanti's first Black mayor in 1967, John Burton, used his position as a UAW leader to help Black women in the city, such as Pauline Dennard, to obtain employment at Ford Motor Company. She recounted this as "the only place that really you could get a half-way decent job" (in Collins-Eaglin & Jones, 2012, p. 21). As a way to break the cross-racial labor solidarity being built within UAW workplaces, Ford recruited white workers from Appalachia

and other areas in the South, assuming that they would be anti-Black and anti-communist (Siegfried, 2021b). However, the opposite happened and instead many of these migrant workers became politically radicalized into socialism, communism, and anti-racism (Bates, 2012; Siegfried, 2021b). Myrtle Dixon, a Black worker at the Willow Run Bomber plant recounts her relationship with a white worker "from the hills of Tennessee [who] had no idea about Black people" saying, "She told me about her history and her life. I said, 'Well, Honey, it's no different up here.' We became friends and worked side by side on the wings of those B-24s." (in Collins-Eaglin & Jones, 2012, p. 22). Black women led cross-cultural exchange and cross-racial solidarity efforts as formal leaders within the UAW and as community leaders (Siegfried, 2021b). The war time Carver Center, created and led by Black women in Ypsilanti, including Mattie Dorsey, was a community center focused on providing for the essential needs of working people, such as childcare, through the establishment of cooperatives and other social programs (Siegfried, 2021b). The Carver Center also served as a point of cultural exchange through music, with Black jazz musicians playing alongside white Appalachian jug bands (Siegfried, 2021b). The Carver Center received much of its support from the UAW and was also involved in more explicitly political activities, such as voting drives (Siegfried, 2021b). It was also home to the Young Communist League, a group of local Black youth Communists who represented the left flank of the UAW (Siegfried, 2021b).

Unionization helped working class and less formally educated African Americans rise both in the city as a whole and within a divided Black community (Neely, n.d.; Siegfried, 2021b). The UAW established "workers' colleges" that taught political education and essential skills of active citizenship and organizing. When Neely was the head of the Political Action Group of the CIO, he helped get Frank Seymour, a factory worker, elected as the first serving Black city council member in 1945 (n.d.). The city council then changed the city charter, including by excluding renters from eligibility to be on council, to prevent another African American from being elected (Siegfried, 2021b).

However, two more Black city council members were elected the following term, as the organizing happening through the CIO united the Black and white working class votes for the first time (Siegfried, 2021b). The power of the union also forced the city to let Black people register to vote without impediment (Neely, n.d.).

While the union was helping to ensure political rights for African Americans, working people of all races were struggling to live decently because there was a severe housing shortage (Peterson, 2013). At its peak, Willow Run employed 51,000 people (Redevelopment of Village, 1954), triple the number of people who had previously lived in Ypsilanti (Siegfried, 2021b). Although Ford was constantly recruiting workers to come to Willow Run, Henry Ford also led a coalition of Washtenaw county leaders against the federal government's plans for housing them (Peterson, 2013; Redevelopment of Village, 1954). Workers who moved to the area for these jobs were living in tents, railroad cars, makeshift shacks, and sleeping in shifts in shared beds because there was no housing available (Bien, 2010). As there was no profit to be made in building housing for these people, the city, county, state, and private market refused to get involved (Siegfried, 2021b). The federal government was the only entity with the capacity and interest to provide housing to their war-time workforce (Peterson, 2013; Siegfried, 2021b). However, the federal government used public housing as a way to entrench racial segregation (Rothstein, 2017), and the housing that was produced reinforced the existing political, social, and racial order (Siegfried, 2021b). The largest public housing project, Willow Lodge, was originally designed to be for white workers, but eventually housed both Black and white workers in different sections of the complex (Siegfried, 2021b). Further, the complex was built on the dividing line between two townships, Ypsilanti and Superior, which was an intentional effort to split the voting power of the working class, unionized people who lived there (Siegfried, 2021b). The housing that was designed specifically for Black workers, Parkridge Homes, was built on the city's South Side in 1943 as

temporary housing but remained one of the city's largest public housing complexes, despite quickly

deteriorating due to its building standards and lack of public investment, until they were torn down

and New Parkridge Homes opened on the same site in 2018 (Slagter, 2018; Ypsilanti Housing

Commission, 2022). The industrial union organizing that happened in Michigan in the 1940s

presaged and indelibly influenced the demands and tactics of the 1960s Civil Rights movement in

the South, but the racialized housing crisis left Black families vulnerable to dispossession.

Black resistance to land dispossession through urban renewal. Despite Ypsilanti's clear

line of segregation, the African American community built a largely self-sufficient and self-contained

neighborhood south of Michigan Avenue with Black-owned businesses lining Harriet St. and

meeting residents' needs. As Connie May White, a South Side resident, remembers, growing up

Ypsilanti was incredibly segregated, "They stayed on their side and we stayed on ours" (in Collins-

Eaglin & Jones, 2012, p. 25). However, White also shared that, to her, much of this felt by choice

because the community on the South Side was so rich and abundant:

> Who wants to go to a White bar when there is a Louise Mahalle [sic] Club down there on
>
> Harriet Street?...Everything was on Harriet Street, so we had no need for the things that they
>
> had. We had our little juke joint around there. We'd go down there and dance we just had no
>
> reason to go any place else. We had the same things they had, maybe more. There was more
>
> togetherness on the South side. (in Collins-Eaglin & Jones, 2012, p. 25)

While White remembers the camaraderie and the thriving businesses on the South Side fondly, the

neighborhood faced constant challenges due to neglect and hostility from the city.

The Federal Housing Authority (FHA) refused to back mortgages to African Americans, no

matter their creditworthiness (Rothstein, 2017). Eugene Beatty (1981), who became the first Black

public school principal in Michigan when he took the helm of Harriet School in 1940, recounts the

impossibility of getting a mortgage through FHA despite his community standing and creditworthiness:

> At that time, um, uh, we purchased a lot and had the lot free and clear. FHA was really coming into its own, but they would not build a house for us because they wouldn't build in this community. And I had tried every place conceivable to get money to build this home and I couldn't get it. Uh, FHA came out and looked and they said, "Well, we won't build in this area," and said, "Go up around the college and purchase a lot and we'll build a home for you." And I said, "Well, I can't, um, buy a lot up there, for the same reason that you won't, uh, build a house for me, see?" Because they don't want any blacks up there. (n.p.)

Further, the city planner's office refused to issue planning permits and regulate zoning on the South Side (Azus, 2020). Taken together, this led to many houses on the South Side being built by residents themselves who did not necessarily have any building experience and were not informed about building codes (Azus, 2020). This was the case for White, whose husband, Charlie, a factory worker, "bought a lot on Harriet Street. He got a shovel and started digging…and that's how we got the house we live in now. He had never built a house in his life, he wanted his own house, so he built it" (in Collins-Eaglin & Jones, 2012, p. 25). In doing so, families, like the Whites, owned houses that they built with their own hands free and clear. However, problems started to arise when the city took a sudden interest in code enforcement in this neighborhood in the post-war era (Azus, 2020).

The Housing Act of 1949 provided federal funding to cities for "slum clearance," as a way to deal with the emerging urban crises of suburbanization, deindustrialization, declining property values, and overcrowding, all of which caused shrinking urban tax bases (Nelson & Ayers, 2022; Thomas, 2017). However, the designation of an area as a target for renewal relied on designating it as blighted, which overwhelmingly happened in poor, and disproportionately Black, neighborhoods (Thomas, 2017). As James Baldwin famously argued at the time, "urban renewal means Negro

removal," and almost nowhere was this more true than in Ypsilanti, where 99% of the families

displaced by urban renewal were families of color, compared to 67% in Detroit (Nelson & Ayers,

2022). Only two white families were displaced by urban renewal in Ypsilanti (Nelson & Ayers, 2022).

Families on the South Side of Ypsilanti were immediately at risk of displacement and

dispossession from urban renewal for a number of reasons. First, there was already a housing crisis

because of the mass migration to Ypsilanti to work wartime industrial jobs (Siegfried, 2021b).

Because of racial covenants in every other neighborhood in the city, the only area available for Black

workers and their families to live was the South Side, which contributed greatly to overcrowding

(Azus, 2020; Siegfried, 2021b). To address overcrowding, families built accessory dwelling units on

their property which went against the city's official building codes (Azus, 2020). Because the city had

refused to provide code support on the South Side, this was only one of many areas where building

standards on the South Side did not match the city's official codes (Azus, 2020). The South Side was

also the last area of the city to receive city services and routine maintenance, such that many of the

Black workers at the Willow Run Bomber Plant, proclaimed the "arsenal of democracy" and largest

plant in the world, did not have running water at home because the South Side was the last area of

the city to be connected to the city's water and sewer services (Azus, 2020; Siegfried, 2021b;

Thompson, 2017).

Despite gaining seats on city council, Ypsilanti's power structure was still dominated by

wealthy white men (Azus, 2020). Thus, from the very first discussions of applying for urban renewal

funds in 1952, the areas deemed blighted were all on the Black side of town south of Michigan

Avenue (Azus, 2020). The city then waged a "slum clearance war" on the South Side, using code

violations and the local media as weapons in declaring properties as "havens for disease and

potential fire" (Lutz, 1953).

However, Black activists and organizers on the South Side fought the urban renewal effort at every turn. They rightfully named that the housing conditions that the city now deemed "blighted" were a result of the structurally racist actions that the city itself had taken (Azus, 2020). From the beginning, there was no discussion of what would happen to the families who lived or owned business in the targeted area (Azus, 2020). Mattie Dorsey led the opposition to the Parkridge Urban Renewal Project in Ypsilanti, as the president of the 500-member strong Ypsilanti Property Owners' Association (Renewal Feud Erupts, 1961). Dorsey was a South Side resident who, with her husband, owned the Progressive Co-operative Grocery on Harriet Street and had completed graduate work in political science and sociology at U-M. Dorsey was a tireless community organizer and one of the leaders of the Carter Center before it was taken over by the federal government, renamed Parkridge Community Center, with leadership being given over to Black male technocrats (Siegfried, 2021b). Dorsey led the opposition to the Parkridge Urban Renewal Project in Ypsilanti, as the president of the 500-member strong Ypsilanti Property Owners' Association (Renewal Feud Erupts, 1961).

Dorsey took a radical, maximalist approach to protecting her neighborhood (Siegfried, 2021b). She attended over 200 city council meetings, forcing council members to answer for and go on record for what they were doing to businesses and families on the South Side. She led protests and sit-ins at the urban renewal office. Dorsey and her husband were arrested multiple times for tarring signs labeling the neighborhood an urban renewal area (Mrs. Dorsey Fined $100, 1965). As "under federal law, two appraisals are required in an urban renewal area before the city can move to buy the property" through eminent domain, she encouraged homeowners to refuse appraisers entrance to their homes, which many did (Parkridge Council Elects, 1962). Dorsey herself knocked a clipboard and tape measure out of the hands of an appraiser when he was trying to take measurements of her grocery cooperative (Azus, 2020). The Dorseys also filed multiple suits against the city to halt the project (Azus, 2020). After Dorsey was the first African American woman elected

to city council in 1975 (Jackson, 1975), she found herself named as both the complainant and a defendant in one of her suits against the city (Azus, 2020). Although urban renewal went through, devastating the Black business district on Harriet Street and dispossessing hundreds of families who had owned their homes free and clear, making them dependent on nonprofit and government programs for housing (Azus, 2021), Dorsey is credited with downsizing the scale of the project (Branam, 1990) and politicizing generations of Black Ypsilantians (Freeman, 2018).

Deindustrialization and the transition to a knowledge economy disadvantages BIPOC and working class communities. Ypsilanti is a deindustrialized city although its deindustrialization narrative differs from dominant ones in that Ypsilanti has struggled with industries leaving almost from the moment industrialization arrived in the city (Kelly, 2017). Since Ford decided to close the Willow Run Bomber Plant at the end of WWII, in part due to the political gains of African Americans within city government and the radical politics that had taken hold within the plant's union, Local 50, Ypsilanti has been bleeding industrial jobs (Siegfried, 2021b). The workers within Local 50 proposed turning the Bomber plant into a worker-owned cooperative factory that provided essential services for its workers to support the building of buses to increase transportation options for working people (Siegfried, 2021b). Instead, Ford sold the plant to Kaiser-Frazier for the production of cars and machine guns (Siegfried, 2021b). Kaiser-Frazier hired only a fraction of the previous workforce and refused to deal with Local 50 (Siegfried, 2021b). When that plant closed in less than ten years, General Motors bought it, again hiring even less people and eventually closing down (Siegfried, 2021b). Much like Du Bois' (1935) telling of the Reconstruction era, there was a possibility in Ypsilanti after WWII that workers would be successful in building a new society based in cross-racial working class solidarity and true democratic institutions, but this was overcome by racial capitalist interests (Siegfried, 2021b).

The deindustrialization of Ypsilanti has had a particularly profound impact on Black communities. As Young (2019) documents, working poor Black men and women have been particularly left behind in Washtenaw county's transition to becoming one of the US' exemplars of a "knowledge economy" (Bailey et al, 2015). While this is no doubt due to large scale trends in structural racism, as industrial jobs got more scarce, white people in charge of hiring ensured that white people were treated preferentially, even continuing to recruit white people from the South rather than hiring the many young local Black people who were looking for jobs (Easley, 1981). As Walter Easley (1981), an African-American factory worker and community leader, argued, Ford only hired enough Black people "to keep the government off their backs" (n.p.). Easley (1981) also relayed how one white supervisor from Ann Arbor was fired for selling jobs to white migrants. Further, long-time Black residents have detailed the disruptive impact this has had within their families and communities, as families have left Ypsilanti in search of better job opportunities and those who are left behind are materially less well-off with every plant closure (Logwood, 2021).

Ypsilanti's current context of deindustrialization may tie in to increasingly visible urban agriculture initiatives. In their articulation of the "subsistence perspective," Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen (1999) show how the failures of industrialization, so prominent throughout formerly industrial towns in Europe and the United States, lead many people, and particularly women, to turn to subsistence activities, such as growing food, that actually make life possible, no matter what happens with the economy. This phenomenon has been well-documented in Detroit. In studies with Black Detroit farmers, researchers have found that the motivation for growing food was often less about economic gain than it was about building community level self-reliance (White, 2011a) and ensuring Black survival at its most basic level (Quizar, 2018). In Ypsilanti specifically, after studying how working poor African Americans see the future of work for them, Young (2019) concludes that

some of the most promising future employment opportunities are in agriculture and the green economy.

Critically reflecting on my own positionalities

As a white person doing work that focuses on BIPOC communities, it is essential that I a) am honest about where I am located in that work, and b) critically look at the power structures and processes that shape BIPOC experiences, including how those structures and processes are designed to benefit white people such as myself. To address this, I want to briefly look at where I am located specifically in Ypsilanti, as well as where "my people" are located more broadly within the processes under discussion—capitalism, racism, and settler colonialism.

I first visited Ypsilanti in 2013 when looking for housing and finding that all of the apartments that were walkable and affordable to me, as a graduate student with a meager economic safety net, were located there. I loved Ypsilanti from the moment I arrived at the downtown transit center. It immediately felt like home to me, and I quickly started putting down roots and getting involved in the community. It was only a few years later, as conversations around gentrification started to intensify in the city, that I realized that my regular Ypsi booster-ism amongst my peers, other U-M graduate students, as a way to counter how the city gets racistly maligned, was a part of the problem. I try to counter gentrification in the ways that I can (for example, buying from long standing and people of color-owned businesses, supporting anti-gentrification activism, and living in an already predominantly middle-class white neighborhood), but I know that my presence in this city, as a white relative newcomer from U-M is inherently problematic. Further, as my partner owns the home that I now live in whose value has doubled since she bought it in 2009, I stand to materially benefit from gentrification's effect on property values.

I also certainly experience oppression as a queer, trans person with a disability and have experienced many micro- and macro-aggressions in my daily life in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor that give me insight into processes of cultural imperialism. However, I must note that queer, trans, and more economically marginal white people play a vital role in the gentrification process, as we often are amongst the first wave of gentrifiers, who make places more appealing to further waves of gentrifiers (Schulman, 2013). I definitely see the ways that my presence in Ypsilanti has contributed to its gentrification. Moreover, this is part of a longer tradition in which I, and my parents before me, moved into racially diverse, affordable neighborhoods that then lost both their racial diversity and affordability through gentrification. People like me are the equivalent of Kivel's (2007) buffer zone for gentrification: our intentions may be good, but we end up serving the interests of the ruling class by making neighborhoods feel "safer" and more appealing to wealthier waves of gentrifiers.

More broadly, I know that "my people" are implicated in many of the historical processes I have discussed. My ancestry is mixed, but predominantly Irish, and thus my ancestors had the dual experience of being colonized by the English, going through their own process of dispossession and cultural imperialism (Robinson, 1983/2000), as well as becoming settlers in North America, participating in the dispossession and cultural imperialism of the Indigenous peoples here. The broad relationship between Irish Americans and African Americans is even more illustrative of how an oppressed people can go on to inflict that same oppression upon others. When the Irish were coming to America en masse at the beginning of the Great Famine, they received a plea from the Great Liberator, Daniel O'Connell, and other Irish luminaries to take on the abolitionist cause in their new surroundings, but most—fearing a worsening of their own precarious standing—chose to ignore this plea, causing O'Connell to disavow them as fellow Irishmen (Ignatiev, 1995; Kinealy, 2011). However, this betrayal was just the beginning; Irish Americans gained economic and political opportunities by fighting tooth and nail to systematically deny access to those same opportunities to

other ethnic groups, most especially African Americans, using the Catholic Church, labor unions, and the Democratic Party as bludgeons in their cause (Ignatiev, 1995). It was specifically on the backs of African Americans that the Irish became white. Thus, in thinking about who I am in Ypsilanti and in doing this work, I consider not only the white, settler privileges that I hold, but also the processes by which I received that privilege.

My social locations also come into play in filtering my environmental subjectivity and how I approached this research. Given my education and status as a white, middle class settler, I have overlap with elite environmental subjectivities that focus on consumer-based, individualist engagement on climate change. However, I am also someone who has accepted that some variety of collapse is incredibly likely, if not inevitable, and would fall into Katz-Rosene and Swarc's (2022) communitarian eco-survivalist category. I am focused on collective survival because all of the scientific evidence on climate impacts points to survival struggles intensifying in the future. This, of course, impacts my standpoint and how I designed this study. Mainstream academics are generally discredited if they openly acknowledge the likelihood of collapse (Kenkel, 2020), so in some ways, I subvert expectations around elite environmental subjectivities, but in other ways, I am very much a product of my privilege, and that influenced my embodied experiences of environmental subjectivity and how I frame this study, including my interview questions and my analysis.

My embodied experiences of environmental subjectivity include many of the practices that interviewees detailed, including growing fruits and vegetables, keeping chickens, composting, and preserving food. Although I have never identified as a homesteader, I share a lot in common with them, not only in my embodied environmental practices, but also in my reaction to the climate crisis (Ford & Norgaard, 2020). Despite my longstanding opposition to capitalism and all forms of oppression, when I really woke up to the climate crisis, it felt like a complete break from the world that I had known. It was not until I read Whyte's (2016) argument that climate change is not a new

dystopia but rather a continuation of an ongoing colonial dystopia that I realized how much my whiteness and settler-status influenced my thinking, and despair about climate change. Recognizing that broke me open, in a most generative way, to really thinking deeply about settler colonialism and my relationships with land, other species, and Indigenous peoples for the first time. I am indebted to Whyte, as well as other Indigenous scholars and colleagues, including Mary Kate Dennis and Leah Prussia, for the continual lessons and challenges that they have generously offered me.

I have been strongly influenced by Aurora Levins Morales' (1998, p. 81) writing on how to teach about racism honestly and responsibly:

> If we can teach the history of racism in the United States as the history of the shifting needs of empire, as a history of both impositions and choices, alliances and betrayals, a history with roots far outside and long before the first colonial encounters, if we can hold the tension between disbelief in race and belief in what racism does to us, we will enable more and more young people to remake old and seemingly immutable decisions about where their interests lie and with whom.

Much of the history that I have covered thus far comes down to people making choices "about where their interests lie and with whom." Many of these choices have been by people who are oppressed in some way choosing solidarity with elites as a way to improve their own status. As a white U.S. settler who continues to gain benefits from racism, settler colonialism, and imperialism, while simultaneously being committed to remaking the world into a just place, I have to constantly question "where my interests lie and with whom," and choose better than many of my ancestors.

Methodology

Qualitative perspective. I used qualitative methods for this project because my broad research question is fundamentally about uncovering mechanisms and tracing processes, which is

where qualitative methods are strongest (Small, 2009; Weiss, 1994). As Lareau (2012, p. 673) makes clear, "Rather than separate a social process from a social context, qualitative researchers want to embed the research in a specific setting." Ypsilanti's specific history and geographical location is essential to understanding the social processes under examination, which is part of why I have chosen not to blind the location. As Small (2009) argues, the blinding of ethnographic studies particularly with low-income African American communities results in a set of stereotypes about the "ghetto" that are completely decontextualized from the communities in which the observations take place, which I want to avoid. Further, qualitative research is an effective way to build theory in an emerging topic area with many unknowns (Padgett, 2008), which is certainly true in this project. Finally, qualitative research fits the community-engaged goals of this project, by giving marginalized community members an opportunity to share their stories and influence policy makers in a more open format (McAleese & Kilty, 2019).

Constructionist epistemology. My qualitative approach is based in a constructionist epistemology, whereby I recognize that I am co-creating knowledge with my participants, rather than objectively discovering existing phenomena (Staller, 2012). I have focused this inquiry at the level of social-structural phenomena, as the best fit for answering my research question on collective survival (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Given that the community is my research domain, I hope for this research to be materially beneficial and produce knowledge over which the community can have some degree of ownership (Shaw & Holland, 2014). Thus, I am not claiming objectivity or treating participants as passive, uninformed subjects. Rather, I offered opportunities for participants to make decisions and provide feedback throughout the research process, as I value their input and expertise.

Community-engaged research. I detail the specific methods of community engagement that I use below, but first it is important to share what I mean by community-engaged research. I would not classify this project as fully community-based participatory research (CBPR), which is

difficult to accomplish within the confines of a doctoral dissertation (Mitchell, 2018). However, I have involved community partners in the research in a way that builds their capacity and connections, which is the essence of community-engaged research (Duran, et al, 2013; Wallerstein & Duran, 2008).

Methods

Community Engagement and Recruitment. I have been building relationships with community leaders and food growers in Ypsilanti since 2013. This project is community-engaged and participatory, so some of the people who I built relationships with have been involved with my dissertation research since its conception, most notably Melvin Parson with We the People Opportunity Farm (WTPOF), which works to create a sustainable local food system that can employ people returning home from incarceration. WTPOF and other small farms and community organizations served as community partners in this project. They helped build this project in a number of ways, including providing background information and feedback, helping with participant recruitment, and introducing me to other community leaders. I provided community partners with financial compensation ($700 each) for their time consulting on the project, as well as offering to present research findings to their stakeholders and acknowledging them in all materials that come out of this project.

I used a combination of purposive sampling to select "the best, information-rich, relevant, broad-ranging, and plentiful data available to gain insights and in-depth understanding" and snowball sampling to ensure that the "selection includes the broadest range of perspectives possible" (Staller, 2021, p. 899). Many of the interviewees who I did not already know were recruited through the partnership with Growing Hope, a nonprofit organization focused on fostering a sustainable and equitable local food system, which allowed me to contact past participants in their

home garden program to see if they were eligible and interested in being interviewed. After potential interviewees expressed interest in participating, I conducted a screening phone call to ensure that they fit the criteria, and if they did to give them more information about the project, answer any questions, and arrange the logistics of the interview. At the end of each interview, I asked participants to give my contact information to anyone else who may be interested and eligible to participate. Participants also shared my information and study flier (see Appendix 1) in online spaces, such as Buy-Nothing and Plant Exchange Facebook groups. I also posted fliers in the local public libraries, local businesses, and gathering places, but the COVID-19 shut-down in Michigan happened days after I did this, rendering such efforts mostly futile.

Sample. I interviewed 20 people who live, grow food, or sell food within the Ypsilanti District Library's (YDL) service area (the city of Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township, and the portion of Superior Township that is a part of Ypsilanti Community Schools), and who identify as working class and/or BIPOC. The interviews were in-depth and semi-structured, averaging two hours and six minutes. I completed pilot interviews with two of the respondents with whom I had already built strong relationships and who agreed to give me feedback on how to improve the interview questions (see revised interview guide, Appendix 2). I paid each food grower $70 in cash, check, or a VISA gift card for their participation, and paid the two pilot interviewees an additional $20 for their extra time and labor. The first three interviews were conducted in person, but the others were all conducted over Zoom or the phone due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I also completed three paid in-person pilot interviews with community leaders and affordable housing stakeholders in person prior to the COVID-19 pandemic affecting our local area. These interviews provided helpful background information and are included in my findings, but after the pandemic severely constrained my fieldwork, I chose to focus solely on interviewing food growers rather than additional community leaders and affordable housing stakeholders, as I had originally planned. Informed consent was

given for each interview, and this study was approved by the UM Institutional Review Board.

Interviewees were given a choice on whether they would like to use their own name or a pseudonym

of their choice. Five chose to use a pseudonym. Interviews were recorded and professionally

transcribed. After I went through the transcriptions to fill in blanks and make any necessary

corrections, I emailed a copy of the transcript to the interviewee asking for any corrections that they

needed to make and gave them permission to use the transcript in any way that is helpful to them.

Some were interested in having them for family history, for organizational development, or as a

reminder for what had worked in their gardens in past years and ideas they had for the future.

Of the twenty food growers who I interviewed, five identified as men, fourteen identified as

women, and one identified as non-binary. Nine identified their race as primarily Black or African-

American, seven identified primarily as white or Caucasian, and one each identified as Mexican-

American, Asian-American, mixed race (Black and white), or Black African. Several respondents

reported Native ancestry, but none identified a specific tribal enrollment, which has a complicated

history for African Americans (Jerkins, 2020; Mays, 2021). The oldest respondent was born in 1942,

the youngest was born in 1993, and the mean birth year was 1979. The educational attainment of the

respondents ranged from one not completing high school to four holding a graduate degree, with

three holding associate degrees, five having attended some college, and seven having completed a

college degree. Interviewees' class background ranged from having grown up poor to upper class,

with most reporting a working class or lower middle class background. In terms of their current

class status, they ranged from poor to middle class, with most again reporting to be working or

lower middle class. Five each reported being upwardly mobile and downwardly mobile with the rest

reporting no change in their class status. Five interviewees worked one full-time job, most

interviewees worked multiple jobs, and a few were unemployed, retired, or full-time parents or

caregivers. Thirteen respondents had children, and three had grandchildren. Eight respondents

owned their homes with the rest either renting or staying with friends or family. Two respondents

were full-time farmers, with the rest primarily identifying as gardeners.

Table 1.

Demographics of Food Growers

Characteristic	Total Sample
Race/ethnicity	
n	20
% Black/African American	50
% White/Caucasian	35
% Mexican American	5
% Asian American	5
% Mixed (Black and white)	5
Gender	
n	20
% Woman	70
% Man	25
% Non-binary	5
Age	
n	20
% 25-29	15
% 30-39	45
% 40-49	20
% 50-59	5
% 60-69	5
% 70-79	10
Current Class Status	
n	20
% Poor	10
% Working class	25
% Lower middle class	50
% Middle class	15
Class Background	
n	20
% Poor	25
% Working class	20
% Lower middle class	40
% Upper middle class	15
Housing Status	
n	20
% Own	40
% Rent	55
% Other	5

Specific research questions & interview guide. To answer the broad question of how marginalized agrarian traditions can help marginalized communities in collectively surviving climate change, I developed five specific research questions to elicit information about the processes involved:

- Research Question (RQ) 1. How do social locations (race, gender, class, etc.) and social contexts (rootedness in Ypsilanti/Michigan, precarity of housing, robustness of familial/ancestral growing traditions, etc.) impact food growers' relationships to how and why they grow, how they access land, how they feel about the environment, and gentrification in Ypsilanti?

- RQ2. How is knowledge and meaning of growing food transmitted culturally amongst marginalized growers in Ypsilanti?

- RQ3. How does ease of accessing land facilitate or create a barrier towards growing food amongst marginalized growers in Ypsilanti?

- RQ4. How, if at all, has growing food helped interviewees to build resilience?

- RQ5. How do marginalized food growers in Ypsilanti think about the future under a changing climate?

From these specific research questions, I developed an interview guide to provide some structure to the conversation and to ensure that I covered important points. The interview guide (Appendix 2) included six substantive sections: (1) Demographic and historical context, (2) Neighborhood, (3) Cultural transmission of knowledge, (4) Land access, (5) Resilience from growing food, (6) Environment/Climate. I completed two pilot interviews with food growers, during which time I refined the interview guide, pruning duplicative questions, adding relevant questions, and condensing the interviews from taking place in two parts to just one. Further, I used an iterative,

participatory process with the interview guide, changing it slightly throughout both individual interviews and the fieldwork as a whole. For instance, one participant asked why I was not including questions about foraging, fishing, and hunting when talking about how people acquire food, so I added a question that addressed this gap in subsequent interviews. As another example, one interviewee found some of the questions about climate change to be upsetting, so I only asked a couple of the questions listed in that section of the interview guide.

The interview guide for the pilot interviews that I completed with the community leader and the two affordable housing stakeholders had similarities with the one I used for food growers with some differences. For the community leader, I asked questions on their thoughts about growing food as non-food growers. For the affordable housing advocates, I asked more in-depth and specific questions about gentrification and ties between growing food and affordable housing.

Analysis. While I was correcting transcription errors to send the transcripts back to the participants, I did an initial read of each transcript, taking detailed notes on potential codes, commonalities, and dissimilarities. I then imported the corrected transcripts into NVIVO (release 1.4.1) which I used to complete thematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019), by first systematically coding the data. I began with attribute coding of demographic and other basic personal information and structural coding of large blocks of the transcripts to organize topical areas (Saldaña, 2009). This included codes such as PATH TO YPSILANTI, CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES WITH GROWING FOOD, and MENTORS. I then completed line-by-line initial coding to understand and examine the contents of the interviews, identifying differences and similarities, and starting to look at the nuances both within and across interviewees (Emerson et al., 1995; Saldaña, 2009). This stage of coding included very specific codes and subcodes, such as FARMS and FARMS: FARM ECONOMICS and AFFORDABLE HOUSING and AFFORDABLE HOUSING: ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. I then divided these codes into broad categories such as ABUNDANCE,

RELATIONSHIP TO LAND, and COMMUNITY. I completed additional focused coding to identify variations across the data, using codes and subcodes such as FEMINISM, DE/ANTI-COLONIAL, POLITICAL, and SELF-RELIANCE: SELF-CONSUMPTION.

From there, I used a theory-informed deductive process to generate initial themes—building resilience, cultural transmission, land justice, and self-reliance—from the coded and categorized data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). I re-organized the codes and categories to develop and review the initial themes. In doing so, I realized that the initial codes of building resilience and self-reliance overlapped extensively and should be combined into a single code. I also realized that cultural transmission was only one part of a larger story about connections that interviewees were telling. Further, in every interview, food growers mentioned, and sometimes talked extensively about, how growing food was tied to health and healing for them, which my initial codes did not adequately consider. Finally, while land justice issues were a clear barrier to growing food, gentrification, understandably, loomed larger in most interviewees' minds than just the impact it has on growing food. When defining these themes, it became clear that three of them were about processes related to growing food: building resilience, promoting health and healing, and deepening connections. One theme was about a barrier to growing food, land injustice, and one was larger than growing food and in opposition to the other themes, gentrification.

These five final themes are: (a) growing food as building resilience; (b) growing food as promoting health and healing; (c) growing food as deepening connections; (d) growing food as difficult because of land injustice; and (e) gentrification as a destructive force in movement towards resilience, healing, connection, and justice. In the next chapter, I explore these themes in detail. Following Indigenous methodologies (Smith, 1998), I often selected lengthy quotes from participants to give them space to tell their stories in their own words as much as possible and to communicate the nuances of their experiences and perspectives. For participants who chose to use

their real names, I checked with them to ensure that they approved of the quotes that I used as well as how I described them. None of the participants asked for substantive corrections or changes.

Chapter 4: Findings

Jackie, a 68-year-old white gardener, relayed how starting to garden was essential in helping her to get through "tough times" that got worse after the COVID-19 pandemic started. A widow whose sole source of income is social security from her late husband's job as a custodian for the public school system, Jackie went back to school later in life and had just completed a masters degree with the intention of teaching at the community college when the pandemic hit and derailed these plans. Although she lives in one of the most affordable housing complexes in Ypsilanti, her rent climbed $300 per month after a new company bought the complex and opted out of providing affordable housing in exchange for tax concessions from the city. The new management also changed how they billed for water, causing her to pay ten times what she had previously. These changes left her with less than $200 a month income after paying rent and water bills, which caused her to cut back severely on her food budget. Although she says,"I'd rather eat vegetables than anything else, be it meat, desserts, anything. I like vegetables best," she could not afford fresh vegetables. Living in a neighborhood where the only fresh food option is a gas station and being reliant on public transportation or rides from her children to get to the grocery store restricted her options for fresh food even further.

When Growing Hope, a local nonprofit that has a program to provide low-income families with materials and mentorship to start their own gardens at their homes, helped her to install pots to

grow vegetables on her concrete patio—the complex management would not allow a raised bed in either the front or backyard of her townhouse—Jackie was ecstatic. Her patio was transformed into an oasis, and she felt empowered that she was able to provide herself with fresh vegetables and herbs. Prior to the garden going in, she rarely cooked for herself, often eating toast for dinner, until she was embarrassed by one of her grandchildren telling her that they "didn't know that [she] could cook!" Having an aversion to wasting anything, she makes good use of what she grows on the patio, making vegetable soups, having choose-your-own-toppings pizza nights with the grandkids, and preserving some food for the winter by drying herbs and freezing vegetables. Although only about a quarter to a third of her total diet during the growing season comes from her garden, having that garden has improved Jackie's diet and quality of life, by giving her access to the kind of food that she has long desired but has been out of reach due to her political economic reality. She decided to start gardening after seeing her daughter-in-law go through the Growing Hope program, and now two of her daughters who recently bought houses in the city have started gardening as well. Jackie shared seeds that she got from Growing Hope with her daughters and they are hoping to coordinate and share their harvests, with Jackie providing herbs and lettuces, her specialties, and her daughters growing more space-intensive crops (like melons and squash) that she cannot on her patio. Overall, Jackie relayed how starting a garden has had a transformative impact on her:

> When I think about it, not spending the time to cook things for myself, it's almost like you're thinking to yourself, "Do I really deserve to spend the time to do that just for me, if I'm not doing it for other people, too?" And then, growing a garden sort of makes you feel like, yeah, it is worth it. Yeah, I'm gonna do this 'cause this is nice, this is fun…And I also find that not only do I get more vegetables, but I get more variety because again, I don't have to worry about what they're now charging for two of these or three of those.

Jackie's experiences encapsulate the themes that I found in marginalized people's experiences of growing food, something that I examine throughout this chapter. For Jackie, starting to grow food increased her resilience and self-reliance and enabled her access to healthy foods even as a low-income person living in a food apartheid neighborhood, as well as deepening connections to her daughters and the nature that surrounds her. However, growing food was also difficult because the management company of her apartment complex limited the space she had to grow.

Through thematic analysis, I identified five main themes on how people talked about the usefulness of growing food in a changing climate, by which I mean both the social, political, and economic changes that are happening in Ypsilanti as it experiences gentrification and global human-caused climate change. These themes are: (a) growing food as building resilience; (b) growing food as promoting health and healing; (c) growing food as deepening connections; (d) growing food as difficult because of land injustice; and (e) gentrification as a destructive force in movement towards resilience, healing, connection, and justice. Following Indigenous methodologies (Smith, 1998), I present expansive quotes from participants to give them space to tell their stories in their own words as much as possible.

Growing food as building resilience and self-reliance

Independence from oppressive racial capitalist systems. For some respondents, including Jackie, a large motivation in starting to grow their own food was a distrust of the food choices available to them. This was in part due to the kinds of food markets that were easily accessible to low-income people in particular neighborhoods, but also because as people learned more about industrial agricultural practices, they had a desire to move away from processed foods and conventionally grown agriculture. As Alena, a 42-year-old Black gardener and herbalist, said when discussing her distrust of the government in regulating agricultural corporations, "I'm not a

conspiracy theorist, but I know how to read." For some like Helen, a 76-year-old white gardener and retired teacher, who had to downsize her garden due to health problems, this meant having a large portion of her income go to purchasing food so that she was able to buy all organic. For others, this was not a possibility, and, as Jackie says, becoming more self-reliant in growing her own produce meant that "it's right there for you to have, and it's healthy. And you have control of whether it has nasty stuff sprayed on it or not." As Melvin, a 57-year-old African American farmer argues:

> I see growing food being beneficial in a way that creates some sort of independence. There's a saying that I once saw that says "Agriculture is culture," and I believe in that, especially with the big Agri-businesses that we have now. The ability to be able to control as best you can what you eat, I think is super important, especially for people on the low end of the [class] spectrum. Because otherwise we're subject to eating a lot of processed foods, a lot of fast foods and we don't have the money, the collective financial wherewithal to eat healthy, consistently. Because foods become monetized, fresh, healthy food organically grown food has become monetized.

For marginalized people whose socio-political and economic realities gave them very little choice over their food, growing even a small amount of their own food was a way to regain some control over larger systems that they did not trust to keep them and their families safe and healthy. This was in contrast to other interviewees of higher class statuses who expressed that they spent more than they saved on their gardens and saw gardening as being a luxury.

This has interesting implications for how we think about growing food as building resilience in a changing climate. While building resilience is often conceived as being able to secure the staples that people need to live on, respondents talked more about climate change as making fresh healthy foods that are already out of reach for them even more inaccessible, so they are focusing on provisioning those things for themselves in the present. This points to a prefigurative politics on the

part of the respondents: focusing their daily practices on creating the world that they want to live in, in the here and now. Veronica, a 38-year-old Black gardener and youth coach, stated this explicitly when describing how gardening helps her to live closer to the farming life that she would ideally like to have as a "country-city girl" while still maintaining her family and urban community, which is difficult to achieve when living on a limited budget in an area that is racially stratified.

Tiffany, a 30-year-old Black gardener and full-time caretaker to her husband, identified growing food not just as a way to have more control over what goes into her and her children's bodies, but also as an essential survival skill:

I feel like it's always good just to have the knowledge to know that you can grow stuff...It's definitely a skill to have as far as survival. I'm always kind of serious, but kind of joking around about, there might come a time when we have to trade tomatoes. Money might not be a thing anymore. So it's always nice to have a thing that could help us out later should we need it.

Like Tiffany, a number of participants, often at first jokingly and then as we built rapport increasingly seriously talked about how it made them feel more secure to know that they could provide at least some of their own food in the here and now, and more should the need arise in the future.

For interviewees like Herman, a 37-year-old white gardener and full-time parent, who grew up in a more rural part of Washtenaw County, their families provided a model for what being self-reliant and resilient could look like:

Because it's such a big lot, [my parents] had a very big garden for the vegetable garden, and grew most of the vegetables that we ate all summer long, and most of the winter too, with canning and preserving and food storage.

Although she grew up with a model for self-reliance and resilience, Herman does not focus on gardening as a potential survival strategy, unlike her husband, who she identified as a "prepper," saying "it's probably one of the reasons I choose to ignore it, 'cause he likes all the conspiracy theories and end of the world theories and... I'm like, 'I'm just gonna go plant flowers. Not worry about the stress of the world.'" Although I did not interview Herman's husband, he was the closest occurrence of the conventional, individualist "prepper" to appear within my sample. The prepper or survivalist stereotype that elicits a Hobbesian landscape of all against all war is what is commonly associated with people who grow food to become more resilient to whatever the future may hold, but the food growers who I interviewed defy this stereotype. While white and middle class respondents were generally less focused on collective survival than BIPOC and working class interviewees, none of the food growers who I interviewed displayed a propensity to try to ensure their own survival at the expense of anyone else. This could be due to interviewees not wanting to share antisocial sentiments, or because everyone I interviewed was marginalized in some and, often, multiple ways, and people from marginalized identities tend to focus more on collective rather than individualist survival.

COVID-19 and the need for self-reliance. Nonetheless, building self-reliance was a common motivator in growing food as well as learning many associated skills, such as seed saving, food preservation, and using food as medicine. As Payton, a 28-year-old Black gardener and full-time community organizer, shared, the COVID-19 pandemic made these concerns much more palpable across working class communities:

There's a deep anxiety in people, and COVID has really kind of, once again, unveiled that looming anxiety of, "Oh, my God. What happens if I don't have work for a month?" You're on the street, and the landlords are proving it, and the police are there to enforce it. And the

94

entire framework of our society is coming apart at the hinges right now…So we need to

figure out…how we become self-sustaining.

The COVID-19 pandemic came up in many interviews as a wake up call that respondents could not rely on businesses and governments in meeting their basic needs. Brother Noah, a 36-year-old Black urban farmer and cook, also shared how hard it has been in working class Black communities whose employment and income was more severely impacted by both shutdowns and actual disease from COVID-19 than their white and professional class peers. This motivated him to set up free pop-up food pantries throughout the city, so that people could at least access food if they were sick or out of work. Alena started growing and storing garlic and ginger, essential medicines for her, so that she was not reliant on the grocery store to access them, which felt particularly important after seeing shortages during the COVID-19 crisis. Most respondents had long felt a drive to try to build their self-reliance, but the COVID-19 pandemic made this drive feel much more urgent to working class participants in particular. In contrast, for the few interviewees who had not thought much about resilience and self-reliance in their lives, who were most often middle class, the COVID-19 pandemic forced them to seriously questions their reliance on far away producers and complicated supply chains.

Self-reliant and resilient practices. For many interviewees, starting to grow some of their own food led to other natural, sustainable, and self-sufficient practices, such as seed saving and composting. For instance, Veronica started saving seeds from her plants and keeping them as well as seed packets she gathered in her freezer, lessening her dependence on buying seeds or seedlings the next gardening season. Veronica also started to compost her fruit and vegetable waste at home, much to her children's and partner's dismay who complained that it was "gross". To make it easier, she started putting the food scraps directly into her planting containers, "I would go and get the free compost [from the city]…and then I put it in the pots, but then when I started saving the scratch

food, I would put the food in the bottom of the pot and put the compost on top of it." In doing so, she used both free municipal resources and her family's food waste as a way to feed the garden with no-cost nutrients, while simultaneously diverting waste from landfills.

A self-reliant practice that a number of respondents identified as important with Michigan's short growing season was preserving food. Lize, a 32-year-old Black African immigrant gardener and accountant, talked about the impact that growing a garden has had on her in terms of her health, finances, and emotions: "when I see the plants growing…I'm so happy and [it] help[s]…financially. Yes, because like the tomatoes, the last time I bought the tomatoes was I think in June…So from July, I started to harvest until this April. So the last time I cooked my last tomatoes that I [grew] was in April." By freezing the tomatoes that she grows, she went almost a whole year without needing to purchase tomatoes from the store, despite tomatoes being a staple in her family's diet. Lize also reported drying herbs that she grew to provide tea and medicine throughout the year. Freezing fruits and vegetables and drying herbs are fairly simple practices that were widely utilized by respondents, but people were intimidated by more technical preservation methods, such as canning. Veronica expressed this tension when she says:

> I would like to get off more into preserves. I have not started canning or anything like that. I would love to get… I feel like that's a whole nother arena that I have yet to tap into… I think I tried to do pickles one time. That was the only thing that I've ever gotten into as far as canning or preserving, so I feel like I need more of an introduction to that in that field. I feel like I need to link up with somebody who can actually walk me through, tell me, show me exactly what to do, but soon as you show me that one time, I'll just take off in it. Like when I did that garden, I took off in it.

Veronica's experience points to a need for programs and mentorship experiences that teach people preservation methods, and particularly more technical/potentially risky methods like canning.

Although Veronica's grandparents had a farm in the South, when her parents moved to Detroit, she was cut off from family growers who may have otherwise taught her these skills.

Other growers had additional ways of conserving resources and dealing with Michigan's relatively short growing season. Jasmine, a 31-year-old African American gardener and preschool teacher, invested in a grow tent so that she could start her plants inside from seed. Jen, a 41-year-old white gardener/aspiring homesteader and non-profit worker, shares a greenhouse as well as other materials with her neighbor, also allowing them to start their own seedlings. Given her extremely limited space, Jackie chooses crops, like lettuces, herbs, and green onions, that she can harvest many times without pulling up the whole plant. Doing so allows her an outsized harvest for growing in pots on a small patio. Alex, a 28-year-old mixed race (Black and white) vegetable farmer, built extensive greenhouses and grow tunnels to both protect the crops from extreme weather that he has experienced in past years, as well as to allow year-round harvesting. Alex also practices interplanting where he will plant different crops close together in an intentional way that allows him to use one bed for multiple crops in multiple seasons. Gary-Bey, a 40-year-old African American gardener/farmer and sales manager, created a gray water system so that water is used multiple times and always available to water crops. Herman reported saving her potato harvest in a makeshift root cellar made of galvanized steel trash cans and leaves in her garage. Her family ate those potatoes all winter and then she planted the leftover potatoes that spring, starting the cycle again.

Collective self-reliance and community resilience. While these self-sufficient practices help individuals and families to be more self-reliant and resilient, many respondents were also concerned about building collective self-reliance and community resilience, especially in the face of a changing climate. For example, in addition to growing food, Veronica also filled her home with non-perishable food acquired from food pantries when COVID-19 hit Michigan. Through her church, she was able to distribute this food to people without transportation who were not able to make it to

the food pantries. The pandemic made her concerned about widespread food insecurity, and she plans on using many of the same food growing and collective care skills that she used to help people during the pandemic to also help her community to collectively survive whatever challenges climate change may bring.

Veronica, with support from her church, is taking community-wide food security on more or less as an individual. On the other hand, Payton is part of a national network of people looking at how to build community resilience to disasters in a way that is liberatory through mutual aid. Payton echoes the Black Panther Party in describing his mutual aid organizing and food growing as being about "survival pending revolution":

Mutual Aid Disaster Relief is an organization that I've been a part of for a number of years. It's a grassroots autonomous disaster response network of people who are trying to figure out what it means to not just recover from a disaster. We understand that there are no natural disasters, that the Earth has its own patterns, and human beings have learned to live outside of the relation to those patterns. Thus, we have coupled with that bad relation, the class disparities and race disparities that we have. This is where we get a Hurricane Katrina that turns into a public health crisis and genocidal act in New Orleans. And so a part of what Mutual Aid Disaster Relief is trying to do is approach the prefiguration of how to respond to disasters. So when we're thinking of why it is that Black, and Brown, and working-class communities are hit the hardest and left behind when it comes to disasters, it's because they don't have the resources. And so building those resource pools pre-figuratively to build the society that we know we deserve and defending it...And growing food is a part of becoming sustainable by way of responding to climate chaos.

Organizations like Mutual Aid Disaster Relief (MADR) and the Mutual Aid Network of Ypsilanti (MANY), another project that Payton is involved in, are about building community-level, rather than

individual self-reliance. In contrast to MADR, Payton says that the MANY focuses on addressing the everyday disasters that BIPOC and working class communities experience under racial capitalism, such as having "to choose between groceries and rent." Yet, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the MANY was able to quickly pivot to organize community members to meet each others' needs in a much larger-scale disaster, in which many marginalized people felt abandoned by the government. When people lost their jobs and stores were closed down, the MANY used the food pantry that they were already supporting as a way to distribute fresh produce that neighbors were growing in their gardens, as well as seeds, which became very difficult to access as gardening centers were considered not essential and closed in Michigan via the Governor's order, the seed library at the local library was closed, and online retailers were selling out. Payton's mutual aid work shows the importance of community-level self-reliance rather than the individualistic ethos that is so often associated with self-reliance.

Community resilience is an important goal when thinking about how communities can adapt to climate change. In the last few years, we have experienced more extreme weather events, but very few home gardeners reported having extreme weather issues impact their ability to grow food because it was being done on such a small scale. When we had drought, they just watered more or built shade structures to protect their plants. Many saw this as one of the benefits of growing on such a small scale, rather than being subjected to price fluctuations at the grocery store caused by the impacts of extreme weather or shipping costs rising for far-away growers. As one of the largest-scale growers interviewed, Alex had taken significant actions to try to more or less climate-proof his farm, including installing drainage systems, row tunnels, and irrigation systems. He took on these endeavors after suffering massive losses from flooding on the farm in a previous season. However, it is difficult for small farmers like Alex to afford the infrastructure needed to adapt their farms to a

99

changing climate. As Alex shared, despite having gathered most of the supplies to build his new greenhouse for free, he was not able to install it until he received a grant:

> It wasn't a lot of money, it was 500 [dollars], but that was for increasing farmers market diversity…so that money was going to build my new greenhouse. I had the frame already up, but I needed to get the lumber and the shutters, so I needed a little bit of money for those, help with those kind of things. Bolts here and there. That's why I hadn't built it over all those years, I didn't have enough money.

As Alex's experience shows, small farmers who come from marginalized communities face barriers accessing capital to build the infrastructure needed to make their farms more climate-resilient. Although the grant that he received may seem small to some, it made an impact in building food security in his community.

Climate resilience even a possibility without decolonization? All respondents were very concerned about climate change and other environmental crises. However, only a few were able to name ways that they could prepare for climate impacts. Many focused on barriers that they face in reducing their carbon footprints, as renters, low-income people, or people living in an area without sufficient public transportation. I see this as a failure of the mainstream white-dominated environmental movement in focusing on consumer-based personal changes to reduce environmental damage, rather than a just transition that focuses on building climate resilience and adaptive capacity for the most vulnerable people, who are also the least responsible for climate emissions overall. The most common strategy that people used in preparing for the impacts of climate change was growing food. Many were concerned about climate change affecting food prices and making fresh produce even more inaccessible to them, which is part of why people identified growing food as one of the most important things that they and others in their community could do to prepare for the effects of climate change. There were a number of other personal strategies that people used, including

building a DIY gray water system in their home, having emergency kits (with one respondent including seeds in it having been inspired by Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*), including flood insurance in their renter's insurance policy, deciding to stay in Michigan, and motivating them to buy land, if possible.

Some interviewees were critical of mainstream responses to the threat of climate change as being an extension of colonial logic. Alena was particularly critical of techno-optimist solutions to climate change, saying that it takes "great arrogance and hubris" to decide to colonize Mars because of what we have done to the Earth. "I don't think anybody invited us there and I don't think they want our asses there, and I don't think we should go there. I think we should just focus on not fucking Earth up, that's what I think." Rather than extending colonial logics to new planetary frontiers, Alena would like to see us return to the "old ways" of living intergenerationally and collectively, where growing food and making medicine is not even "a thing" because it is just what everyone does. Her dream is to convert a nearby golf course into an eco-village for her community which she sees as essential to surviving climate change.

Nuola, a 32-year-old Black gardener and early childhood educator, also identified how she is trying to decolonize environmental movements through collectively asking new questions. Rather than focusing on how the environment has been degraded, she believes that focusing on the interbeing of humans and the non-human world is a way to elicit pro-environmental behavior on a much deeper level:

> And even if it's just around the Huron [River] watershed, let's not be like, "Ugh, PFAS, ugh", let's be like, "What's your happiest memory here? What's the thing that you most love to do here? What's a hope that you have for people 100 years from now to be able to experience here?" And then the ask to preserve, then the ask to care, then the ask to stop throwing plastic water bottles in the river and broken glass and all the crazy shit, condoms,

like all the crazy shit that's in that river, then the ask is different, and that's what I would

invite us to do. That's where I think our collective work lies, and I think the other approach

is the approach of colonizers to be honest, of divide and conquer, elicit fear, make people

feel powerless and dependent, as opposed to saying, "No, this is you and you are this and

you matter. You just do. You matter and you're part of this ecosystem, and this ecosystem

needs you and relies on you and wants you."

Nuola contrasts the messaging of white-dominated environmental movements that focus on how

destructive humans are to the Earth, which implicitly requires a Cartesian dualist separation between

humans and nature, to a liberatory ecofeminist alternative that she is creating in her curriculums to

decolonize early childhood education, especially for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)

children. In helping children to see how they are a part of their local watershed and how they matter

to it, Nuola is countering harmful messages that children receive, while also building their capacity

and desire to care for the local environment on which they are interdependent. Most respondents

were not analyzing these dynamics as explicitly as Nuola, but many voiced similar feelings, as is

perhaps seen most clearly in that when I asked people how they feel about the Earth, the most

common response was some variation of "I love the Earth" and "the Earth is my home."

Growing food as promoting health and healing

  Physical health and healing. For some respondents, the desire to have a healthier diet on

a limited budget was a key motivator in starting to grow food. After Veronica watched a

documentary that convinced her to become a vegan in addition to switching to organic food, she

gave away all of the animal products in her house and started a garden with assistance from Growing

Hope. After completely changing her diet with help from her garden, Veronica wanted to spread the

word about the health benefits of eating an organic, plant-based diet. She started teaching nutrition

classes at her church and started a catering business offering healthier, plant-based versions of traditional American foods which became a huge hit amongst her vegan-suspicious family members. As she recounted, "you can't believe it when you taste my banana pudding. You can't believe it. They were scraping the pan at Thanksgiving." For Veronica, focusing on her own health and healing was not enough, rather she used her experience of growing food as a way to promote health and healing through her church and familial networks.

Having been raised by her aunt after her mother's death when she was just a child, Jasmine was also very focused on changing her diet to interrupt the cycle of early death that she saw in her family and attributed in part to the diet trends that had developed in African diaspora communities as a consequence of enslavement:

What motivated me [to start growing food] was learning about my history as a Black woman and my family members having hypertension and [being] overweight, and losing their lives to different health issues. That was really concerning to me. And I'm trying to figure out, "Okay, why is all my big mommas, big mommas?" And so, learning the history of health and food going hand in hand in the history of back in the day in slavery times, like Black and Brown people were just given the light leftovers. And so, they had to do what they had to do with those leftovers, and it kinda got into our culture to where we love butter, we love lots of flavor in our food and stuff like that…So I just did a lot of my own research and figured it out, like "Okay, my goodness! I wanna live for a long time and I wanna be healthy and that's so important to me." So then, I was always just like a science kid, and I was always into exploring my environment and growing seeds and watching them grow…And then, creating food that I can eat and nourish my body. So, that's what really motivated me…just access to all those things for everyone who I come into contact with, if you need access to these foods because it may be so expensive in the market that instead of buying it, "Hey, we could figure

103

out a way to grow it and we'll still have that nourishment." We don't have to feel like, "Oh, since I'm not rich, I can't afford to go to Whole Foods to get it." I can plant a seed and grow it right out of my backyard.

For Jasmine, growing her own food is a way to level the playing field in a structurally racist, capitalist society where access to healthy foods is overly determined by race and class. While Jasmine sees this as essential for her own health and well-being given her family history, she also focuses on democratizing access to healthy foods by helping other people in similar situations learn how to grow their own food. A common thread between Veronica and Jasmine's story is that knowledge and experience that they gained was always brought back to the collective to help lift others' up as well. This was a common occurence amongst African American and/or working class food growers, but did not show up in the same way amongst white or middle class food growers who generally saw themselves as a minority swimming against the tide of industrial agriculture.

For other respondents, growing food helped to encourage their physical health by keeping them active in a way that was accessible but challenging. As Becky, a 48-year-old white gardener and teacher, shared "I…have back problems and hip problems and knee problems, and I can't lift a lot of heavy things, but I'm capable of moving things around and being…At least a little bit active, and so it's sort of the perfect level of activity for me." Likewise, Nuola found herself being in awe of what her body could do, saying "I never felt strong before, but knowing that I can haul obscene amounts of compost and toss wheelbarrows into the back of pick up trucks, and work for hours and hours outside in the summer…those things have really changed the way that I see myself and experience my own strength now." For Becky and Nuola, gardening was a way of not just encouraging healthy physical activity, but also a way of shifting their relationships to their bodies to recognize their power and capability.

Passing on healing traditions. In addition to promoting their own health, some respondents who were parents also saw growing food as a way to promote healthy living and access to lifelong healing for their children. Lize, who grew up helping her parents to tend their farm from the time that she was a small child until war forced them to move to an urban environment where they still kept a garden, wants to make sure that her children grow up with the same ethos on growing food that her parents instilled in her, saying:

> I'm doing it for [my children] too. I want them to learn... Because the Bible tells us, "Let your food be your medicine." So if you grow your food, you know what you're eating. Because at the market, unless you have enough money, you can't have organic...So you're thinking of eating to be healed but you're eating to be sick...And they will remember, "When we were little, our mom used to grow." Like me I'm growing because the way my parents raised me, it really affect[ed] me, so I want them to be affected by the way I'm raising them too. They will be like, "Oh, our mom used to do this, so we're gonna do it too"...And they will show [it] to their kids too, so I want the cycle to keep going.

Despite now living in a very different environment and climate than the one she was raised, Lize is intentionally passing on a cultural and religious tradition that she received from her parents and ancestors to her children, with the express hope that they will continue to pass it down to their children.

Similarly, Nuola intentionally leaves some "weeds" in the garden that are medicinal and edible to teach her children that food and medicine are always available.

> The weeds to me are just as important as the flowers and just as important as the tomatoes. My hope is that kids can start to, or continue to see that food and medicine is always around, and that even things that we don't necessarily think of as food or medicine are…so that we

can almost just step outside and within any one square foot, be like "Oh wow! Oh, there's so much here…That could help me or help someone else or whatever."

Nuola wants to ensure that her children and all children can recognize the abundance that surrounds them, especially with plants that are disregarded as nuisances but have incomparable healing and nutritious properties. For Nuola, the hope is not only that children will be able to recognize and use these plants, but also that they will be able to share that knowledge and abundance with others.

Others reported intentionally growing herbs and using them medicinally, often learning about how to use herbs from parents or grandparents. Alena reported having an intuitive sense of what herbs and wild foods are safe and which ones are not, in addition to learning about foraging and growing herbs from her grandmother. Sigrid, a 79-year-old white gardener who immigrated from Germany when she was 17, relayed how one crop of fennel provided health and healing not just for her, but also for the local wildlife at her low-income senior housing complex, "When I put the fennel seeds in, I was hoping for the node part on the bottom. But they turned out to grow six feet tall, and the birds and butterflies come, they like it. And when the flowers are gone, I take the seeds, and the seeds I crush and make [medicinal] tea out of it." Sigrid's experience also points to abundance. In allowing other creatures to enjoy a crop that she had intended on pulling to harvest as a vegetable, the plant still provided her with healing medicine and has been reseeding itself in the garden ever since, giving her a perpetual supply of fennel to use as either a vegetable or an herb, as well as supporting local wildlife. She learned to use fennel seed as a digestive aid from her father who used it to prevent colic in a baby that her family took in after WWII.

Promoting mental health and healing. One of the most common ways that respondents said that growing food helped them was by increasing their mental well-being. This was true for both BIPOC and white respondents, and helped with a variety of mental health challenges, including body image issues, anxiety about navigating racism and transphobia that they face in the world

106

outside their garden, and general anxiety. Unsurprisingly, female and nonbinary respondents generally talked more openly and explicitly about mental health struggles than male respondents, who were more likely to frame similar benefits as being about lifting spirits. Payton described how he finds growing food to be healing:

I definitely like to say that growing food is meditative. It's healing; it's frustrating; it's a challenge; it's an experimental process, so it opens your mind up to a new mental and physical geometry. You're using your body and your mind in a new way that I think is, once again, becoming more like the Earth. You're not ordering your food on GrubHub. You're not going to a box store. You're actually working in your environment, and you have to relate to your environment. You can't just extract from your environment. This is of course where we get the Dust Bowl. You extract, and extract, and extract and you destroy the environment to the point that it's gonna kill you. And so being able to form relation, and good relation, to your environment is, I think, healing in and of itself. And I think it also connects us to our ancestral paths if we choose that. I think that for myself, personally, being a part of the African diaspora, I can trace a part of my lineage back to Nigeria. So thinking about your people and culture is something that's in my mind, but I'm in a different bio-climate. I can't just practice the type of indigenous farming that my ancestors even brought to the United States when they were in the Carolinas and Mississippi. Now, I have a different growing climate...So what do I do then to connect myself back to my ancestors through my food?

As Payton clearly identifies, being in good relations with your environment through the practice of growing food is a path towards individual and planetary healing, but is also complicated by the legacies of slavery and settler colonialism.

Healing ancestral and intergenerational trauma. Payton was not the only Black participant who talked about how growing food intersects with the history of enslavement. For Melvin, the practice of growing food was essential to starting his own process of ancestral healing from the intergenerational trauma of enslavement:

> Having my hands in the soil is like my religion. It grounds me. It centers me. It slows my mind down. Allows me to think. I remember also...a couple of summers ago...I was working out there, just the heat of the summer, really hot time back in July. And man, I remember one day being out there and I swear I could see my ancestors out there on my farm. I could see [a] young African American woman laying out in the field...and the midwife mothers come around and she's... giving birth...out there in the field, and then being forced to go back to work shortly thereafter, minutes after....And so seeing that made me think of, "How do I honor them? In what ways do I honor them?" I think one of the ways I honor them is to learn more about their stories and to share those stories with other people. And also...on those hot days, around noon or one o'clock and it's super hot outside, I stop working...as a show of honor to them, because they couldn't stop working, they had to work from can to can't. And I was in a position where I didn't have to work from can to can't.

Melvin identifies that working the land brings up painful ancestral memories of how enslavement is tied to agriculture in the United States. However, Melvin also identifies how, for him, growing food on his own terms, with time for rest, has been healing in confronting that intergenerational trauma, and a way for him to honor his enslaved ancestors.

The relationship between enslavement and agriculture was reported as widespread for African Americans and was sometimes identified as a cultural barrier to growing food for Black people. In a previous position, Nuola got the opportunity to unpack this relationship with Black youth:

I was doing one of the tours at the farm at Growing Hope and there was a huge group that I did not know was coming, of 30-something Black teenagers who were part of the summer camp experience and it was really beautiful to have them there, and I was like, "There's a lot of you, let's split up"…And so we did that…and as I was walking around, I kept hearing the kids be like, "Oh, this feels like slavery, blah blah blah." And so we stopped our work time early and we circled up and I was like, "We have to talk about this. We have to have this conversation. Let's go there. Let's unpack this idea, why for you is 30 minutes of harvesting lemon balm or weeding a garden, why does that evoke slavery for you? Why does that feel like that for you?" And, we talked about it, we talked about ancestral trauma, we talked about a lack of exposure, we talked about perceptions of safety, we talked about all of those things…And so I think that that trauma is very present for a lot of folks, especially folks whose families moved from the South…and intentionally separated themselves from that type of relationship with land. So yes, there are obvious barriers, I also think there are some clear solutions including shifting our relationship with the land, shifting our relationship with food production, healing, using that time of growing food as a moment of ancestral healing and veneration and not as a moment of re-traumatizing, and…the only reason that that experience was able to happen the way that it was is because I was there, the only Black staff person. There's literally nobody else on that staff who could have had that conversation, and if it had been anybody else, I can very easily see why, for those kids, it still evoked slavery, and so that's the other thing; is all of these organizations that are talking about food justice and access and equity and environmental stewardship, are still mostly white, not even white-led…white-staffed, and so how are young people…gonna see themselves as part of this…if nobody who looks like them is anywhere around?

Nuola shows how important it is to have Black leaders and staff in organizations that are working towards food justice and sovereignty. She brought not only her skills and experience as an educator specializing in decolonizing curricula, but also her lived experience as a Black person who has had to process her own relationship to growing food. While those kids no doubt benefitted from having her there to process that experience, she also points to how, if she had not been there, the experience would have very likely reinforced their ancestral trauma of enslavement and exploitation by white people, rather than helping to heal it.

Growing food as deepening connections

Building community. Gardening with others is a very effective way to build community, especially within vulnerable communities. Sigrid talked about how gardening serves as a cultural exchange and point of unity within the low-income senior housing complex where she lives. Despite engaging in subsistence gardening since childhood, she has learned many lessons from her neighbors who come from other parts of the world, such as using green tea as a fertilizer from her Filipino neighbor. Even the neighbors who do not garden themselves benefit from the massive community garden that Sigrid helped to build at the complex. As she said:

> Having a garden makes a nice community, 'cause the gardeners all talk to each other. And we have some people that only knew that food comes from the grocery store. Suddenly, they got curious about it...So a lot of people learned how to grow food, or find out where their food comes from, and it makes their life social. Some of us in the winter time, we would have dinner in our community [room], where we'd cook whatever was in the kitchen, and the gardeners would have a nice thanksgiving in February. And that made the good community lovely.

People primarily choose what to grow based on what they and their families eat, as well as what grows well in our climate. For people who grew up in more tropical climates, they are not able to grow many of the foods that are most meaningful to them, but some reported still appreciating being able to grow crops such as tomatoes that go into the dishes that are most meaningful to them culturally and sharing that with their loved ones. As Jess, a 36-year-old Asian American urban homesteader and researcher, shared "when it's not a pandemic, I can feed [food I grow] to my friends. So I can make a meal. It's a way of expressing love and care. It's like, 'I grew this thing and I turned it into food and now I'm gonna feed it to you, this is how I express affection.'" Other respondents also talked about the sheer joy it brought them to harvest their own produce and share it with others. As Becky says, "it's sort of my greatest pleasure to bring a bag of stuff over to somebody's house that I know that they want." Growing, cooking, and sharing were identified as key ways to show love and care, as well as to build community. Interestingly, the focus on sharing prepared food was discussed almost exclusively by female food growers who had gardens at their homes, rather than male or nonbinary food growers who had farms or managed community gardens, which tracks with what is traditionally considered "women's work."

Connecting to family and ancestral traditions. For many interviewees, growing food is a way to continue traditions of their family members and/or ancestors. Even for those who do not have a direct experience of having family members grow food, the practice still ties them to their lineage, particularly for African American respondents whose family came from the South during the Great Migration. Such was the case for Jasmine who said:

> Well, when I think about my ancestors and how they were harvesting the land, it makes me think of, like, I am doing something that has soul ties, that have been passed down from my ancestors, because they say that our ancestors, whatever they did back in the day, it's passed down generationally through us, right? So, with my family being from Birmingham,

111

Alabama, I know that a few of my ancestors were working the land, and also my dad is

Native, his mom has had some Cherokee Indian in her. And so when I talk to my dad about

that, that really means a lot to me, because before the United States were colonized, there

were Native people already growing on the land. But then during colonization, a lot of them

were murdered and killed, so, and there aren't a lot of Native people nowadays because of

that. So when I think about that, and culturally what that means to me, I celebrate that in...

when I'm growing, I think about them, and I think about their sacrifice and their hard work,

as well as my African ancestors as well, who worked the land to build our country. So I think

that I have that inside of me ancestrally, it was passed on from generations, and I think that I

have that skill and that knowledge because of them, if that makes any sense.

For Jasmine, growing food is an almost spiritual experience because of how it ties her to her

ancestors, who experienced colonization and enslavement. Despite these traumas, Jasmine sees the

desire and knowledge to grow food as something that resides deep within her and that deepens her

connections to her ancestors. Other people, including Black, white, immigrant, and Asian American

interviewees, have a direct, and often matrilineal, connection to growing food, such that when I

asked about how they learned to grow food, they were not sure how to answer the question. They

grew up growing food, and they learned by watching their family members and by doing it

themselves, even at a very young age.

Connecting to the Earth. Growing food also deepened respondents' connections to the

Earth itself, sometimes in truly transformative ways. For Jen this connection comes in part from the

long-term stability of owning a home, which engendered a sense of groundedness that came from

committing to and building a relationship with a specific piece of Earth. Melvin shared that "prior to

growing food, I didn't have a connection to the environment. And so, growing food has given me a

connection to the environment and it has been a gateway in terms of me wanting to do something

to address what I can, even if on a very small minute scale, just to do my part in that." Melvin started gardening after being bequeathed a garden plot at the residential treatment center where he was living, due to the plot's former steward passing away. While this start is rather happenstance, Melvin has become a community leader for environmental and social justice through the process of growing food. He hires formerly incarcerated people to work on his farm in an effort to "change the soil" literally at the farm and figuratively in the community.

Gary-Bey has created a number of community gardens in the area that are free for the picking for community members. He is very concerned about global warming and what it means for how long humans have on this planet. As someone who grew up in Michigan, he has noticed how different the seasons are from when he was young, in particular how much milder and more erratic the winters are, sharing "I'm sure there's a lot of people that just don't pay attention to it. But to me, that scares me." Growing food is the one thing that gives him hope, saying "if more people could grow food, it would definitely help the environment. And that's definitely something that we need." For many respondents like Melvin and Gary-Bey, growing food deepened their connection to the Earth and the environment and increased their interest and motivation to take pro-environmental action, including as a food grower.

Growing food as difficult because of land injustice

Home ownership. Renting, particularly in low-income apartment complexes, is a barrier to being able to grow food. When talking about barriers to growing food, Jackie specifically named renting:

> And so I think that for people who don't ever own houses, can't ever afford to have a house
> of their own and rent pretty much their whole lives, I think it is harder to do things like
> [growing food]. And low income... A lot of times for some odd reason it seems like they're

113

stricter when it's low-income housing, it's like they think you're gonna go nuts or something planting unsightly food around or something.

As Jackie identifies, low-income people face additional scrutiny in their desire to grow food, with a strong focus on how they will impact the appearance of the area. Access to growing food in one's own outdoor space is just another way that the poor are punished in our society. Veronica shared how even established gardens were subject to landlord approval:

This one tenant had some raised beds built by the Growing Hope program onto her grass, her front lawn, and [management] made her remove it, and it was fully up and functioning. And they made her remove that whole gardening system that they had installed for her. I was discouraged by that, I was disappointed. Like I said, they wouldn't let us do it.

Whether purposefully or inadvertently, the complex management's decision to make the tenant remove her garden served as an example to other would-be-gardeners in the complex, including Veronica. She felt so discouraged that she waited until moving into a new apartment home to have Growing Hope help her install her first raised bed garden. In contrast, interviewees who were long-time homeowners, all of whom were white, reported that accessing land to grow food was quite easy. One white interviewee relayed how prior to buying her home, she prioritized access to a yard when selecting apartments so that she would always be able to have a garden, but as affordable housing is often concentrated in large complexes, this is not an option for many lower income people.

A number of respondents were able to buy houses through Habitat for Humanity's program, which allowed them to build large gardens, often for the first time. Tiffany shared how Habitat for Humanity was essential in enabling her to set up her first garden, a lifelong dream as a child growing up in Chicago:

114

Had we not moved into the house, I feel like if I was still apartment living, I just felt like it

just wouldn't have been possible for me to garden, even though I know that's not true, but I

just felt like, I just can't do it here, and then I know that if we hadn't gone the Habitat way to

get our house, I'm not sure if we would have our own space, land to do stuff.

Tiffany utilized a partnership between Habitat for Humanity and Growing Hope that shows how access to affordable housing can be essential to accessing land on which to grow. This program shows a connection between affordable housing (and homeownership specifically) and food security and sovereignty.

For renters who want to grow food, community gardens often came up as a potential solution to the barrier of accessing land. However, in Ypsilanti, many of the community gardens are primarily located in the wealthier, whiter, and primarily owner-occupied parts of the city, which made them difficult to access for many respondents. Sam, a 28-year-old working class Mexican-American gardener and full-time student, was interested in growing at a community garden, but was completely unaware of their existence in Ypsilanti, despite volunteering at the organization that manages them and living in close proximity to one. This showed that there needs to be greater outreach for community gardens to be a viable option for many gardeners, as well as siting them in lower-income and BIPOC neighborhoods.

Land access. Many respondents talked about their desire to own/have access to far more land than they do now. When asked about how they feel about the land that they grow on, some people referred to an emotional attachment to the land and others assessed their soil and other growing conditions. Land ownership came up frequently even before being prompted to talk about it. When prompted to discuss how their race/ethnicity has impacted their ability to access land to grow on, most respondents (BIPOC and white) talked about how race/ethnicity impacts the class/financial resources available to purchase land, rather than talking about other direct impacts of

115

racism, such as discrimination, redlining, race-based land dispossession, etc. Multiple Black respondents reported feeling torn between wanting to live in a more urban/suburban area where they felt welcome and safe and their desire for access to large tracts of their own land and the ability to have livestock.

Owning land was often framed as a matter of freedom. This was primarily expressed as freedom from landlords. However, farmers and community garden leaders also expressed a desire to own their own land specifically to grow on in order to be free of constraints imposed by community groups who owned the land of their existing farms and community gardens. These community group landowners were concerned with making sure that the space looked respectable in appearance, which often constrained the practices of farmers and community gardeners and held them up to standards that they found unfair without additional support from the landowners. However, owning land was also problematized by some of the more politically radical Black respondents, such as Nuola, Payton, and Shalina, who recognize it as a colonial and oppressive institution, while also acknowledging the importance of being able to have secure access to land for marginalized growers in particular.

Racialized access to information and funding. Land was not the only essential resource that had white gatekeepers. Multiple Black interviewees identified access to information as a specifically racialized barrier to their desire to access land. For example, Jasmine reported white people demeaning her when she was trying to get *information* about how to access vacant land in her neighborhood to turn it into a community garden, saying:

> And that's not a good feeling if you wanna build something in a community and when you
> go to people and you lobby and you ask for support and information, they act like they don't
> wanna give you that information and then it comes across as a micro... Micro, macro
> aggression, because you may not have the knowledge that they have, so they have the upper

hand on you. So you feel excluded, and that doesn't feel good. So yeah, I have experienced a lot of different, just harmful things being a woman of color, because the skin that I have, people are like... May have these assumptions, misconceptions, they're like, "She's just a person like me. Who would have thought?" Yeah, if you would've just came with an open heart from the beginning, then we wouldn't have went through all these harmful rhetoric and we could have just been sharing information, build a community from the get-go. And we all have our...own implicit biases and old ways that we look through life, so do I hold a grudge? No. Is it a bit discouraging or harmful? Yes. Has there been barriers? Mm-hmm. Do I stop? No. Do I keep going? I sure do.

In relaying her experience of trying to access information about how to access land for the community, Jasmine shows how racism excludes BIPOC people on an interpersonal level as well as on more structural levels. Jasmine also hints at the toll that these aggressions take on her, despite her determination to not give up her vision for her community. When talking about barriers to growing food for marginalized communities, it is important to acknowledge how often food-growing spaces are dominated by white people. White food growers in this sample sometimes attributed a lack of BIPOC involvement in food growing initiatives to the very real intergenerational trauma of enslavement being tied to agriculture but did not identify ways that nonprofit and community cultures can be hostile towards BIPOC people.

Similarly, Brother Noah identified lack of funding as one of his biggest obstacles to growing food. Brother Noah maintains multiple gardens throughout the city, all of which are free for the picking since he believes that the harvest from a community garden should go directly to the community, a sentiment shared by other Black gardeners but in direct conflict with how most of the "official" community gardens in the city are run. Brother Noah receives no funding for his community work, and everything that he does comes out of his own pocket, at no small cost. To

avoid expensive citations from the city for overgrown grass, he just purchased his third lawnmower after the first two were stolen. He reported being frustrated when he sees how white-led gardening initiatives are able to easily access grant funding, including by trying to co-opt his work building a community garden in the historically Black, but rapidly gentrifying South Side:

One of the things I've been learning out there at Parkridge is there's a lot of groups that's been attracted to that space that we have created, a little land for the community garden. So there's multiple groups, funded people, mostly Caucasian group of people, that have grants and things like that, that want to expand their programs to get more grants. And they see Parkridge as that investment. And so that's been, like it goes back to the culture part. That's been a culture part of why I'm probably still on that land is because I represent the neighborhood. So you will see a lot of these different activities going on where people who don't represent the community come and do these types of program, and it builds some more distance in the community versus more community involvement. Even if it's not an interest, there's not that many people on the South Side that's interested in gardening, but the fact that it's in the community is shaping their mind of [what's] possible for them. It's a promotion for them, it's a commercial for them. If you were to change me and make me a white woman, it wouldn't be that same commercial. It would make them feel like their community is being stepped upon and they are being pushed out.

Brother Noah identifies the racial disparities that exist between white and BIPOC gardening initiatives, wherein white initiatives receive external funding and BIPOC initiatives come out of the pockets of people who are already low-income, yet are seen as potential opportunities for white-led initiatives to receive additional funding, often in the name of supporting BIPOC communities. Further, Brother Noah shows that the social locations of gardeners, including their race and class, and the context in which they are gardening is vitally important to whether the surrounding

118

community will feel supported by that effort or alienated by it. Importantly, Brother Noah identifies how gardening initiatives can play a vital role in gentrifying a neighborhood, which is a well-documented phenomenon (Alkon & Cadji, 2020; Krings & Kopic, 2020; Maurer, 2017) and one that I have witnessed first-hand in my time in Ypsilanti. Jen was one of the few white gardeners who I interviewed who identified how Ypsilanti's racial segregation is a key barrier in establishing resilience to climate change, particularly in terms of having a robust local food system. As both Jasmine and Brother Noah's experiences show, segregation extends beyond direct land ownership to include access to information and funding.

Gentrification as a destructive force in movement towards resilience, healing, connection, and justice

In late February 2020, just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic arriving in Michigan, I met with Omer Jean Winborn (who goes by Jean), a 70-year-old African American retired teacher, for a three hour interview at the local public library. I got to know Jean when I took a genealogy class with her at the community college in an effort to better understand my own family history as it relates to the racial and political structure of the United States. Jean is an expert in African American genealogy and brought her vast knowledge of local African American history into the classroom. I wanted to meet with her as a community leader who I knew would provide important context to the topics that I was studying, but when setting up the meeting, I had no idea that her family would have such rich agrarian traditions themselves and be so entwined in local struggles for environmental justice and against gentrification.

Jean's parents came to Ann Arbor as a part of the Great Migration in the 1940s from Brownsville, Tennessee. Her parents were sharecroppers, and it took her father two years picking cotton to save the $17 that a one-way train ticket North cost. Although her father did not learn to

read until late in life, her parents, through work as a custodian and a domestic worker, were able to buy a home in what is now Kerrytown, which at the time was an almost entirely Black neighborhood, being one of the few places that African American families were allowed to live in Ann Arbor. Jean remembers growing up in this tight-knit African American community fondly, as the children were protected and cared for not just by their own families, but by the whole community, sharing this story that she learned only recently:

> When my sister passed away, one of my neighbors that…lived right next door to my mom, she said, "Your mom really looked out for me and she would watch me at night." She called me and she said, "Sometimes it would get on my nerves," but she said, "But then I started thinking about it, and she would never say anything but she would always cook and say, 'Come on over here, I got some greens, I had this and that.'" She was able to share because she had vegetables and stuff.

As alluded to in this story, keeping vegetable gardens was vital to enacting the ethic of generosity, care, and hospitality that was the norm within Jean's neighborhood growing up. Jean's mother fed the neighborhood from the garden they grew. Although they were poor, Jean's family always had plenty to eat and share because "like I said, my dad had a garden, beautiful vegetables: Collard greens, tomatoes, cabbage." The ethic of generosity and abundance extended to the garden itself, as Jean relays "anybody could come over and pick whatever they wanted. He made us go over there and he showed us how to work it, and then people could go and get whatever they wanted out of it, it was open, but that's what they were used to in the South." Jean's family is emblematic of Black agrarianism, in that their approach to growing food was about not only ensuring survival in the face of racist conditions, but also about caring for and protecting the whole community, with special attention on those who are most vulnerable, as Jean's mother did for the child next door.

While Jean reports a feeling of care and protection within her neighborhood, there were very real dangers that racial segregation produced as well, one of which was environmental injustice. Jean attributes her lifelong struggle with asthma and allergies to growing up in a neighborhood with "heavy" air. Within their small neighborhood sat both a slaughterhouse and a junkyard, which produced understandable fear in the local children. Jean shared an indelible memory of unwanted interaction with the neighborhood swine:

> So I [got] up before my brothers and sisters…and went down [to the Summit Street playground] and got on a swing…and I could remember swinging back, closing my eyes, just getting with the swinging. And all of sudden, I opened up my eyes and this pig came out of the slaughterhouse, running straight towards me. This Peter Sausage man was running after it, he had on his white coat and these hip boots and he was running to grab that pig…And I was up in the swing, my eyes frozen and he did finally get it, and slaughtered it. And then they kill 'em, and then the blood would run in the street and then about three or four o'clock, they would give you cracklings, and then sometimes we'd be swinging and rats would come out of the Lansky's Junkyard that was right across the street.

When discussing African diasporic food traditions and health, Jean references this story, saying that African Americans have disproportionately high blood pressure not because "we ate too much pork, it's that we lived in communities where the pork was chasing us." In early environmental justice wins, adults in the neighborhood, including Dr. Albert Wheeler and Jean's mother, Minnie Dixon, successfully petitioned City Hall to get the slaughterhouse and, eventually, the junkyard removed. That land is now Wheeler Park, named after Dr. Wheeler, who was also Ann Arbor's first and only Black mayor and the first tenured Black professor at the University of Michigan, and his wife, Emma, who founded and led the local NAACP chapter (Albert H. and Emma M. Wheeler Papers).

However, Jean recounts that the neighborhood improvements that her community and elders fought hard to win largely failed to benefit the existing community and their descendants as integration, rising taxes, urban renewal, and gentrification pushed African Americans out of the neighborhood, which is now predominantly white, the home of a number of high end shops, and is one of the hottest housing markets in Ann Arbor (Slagter, 2019). As the neighborhood was increasingly developed, Jean's father lost access to the land on which he grew his abundant garden. Jean shared with me a 1986 article from the *Ann Arbor News* on the "City's Black neighborhoods disappearing" that features her now deceased brother and parents. In it, her brother, Steve Dixon, laments that "Not until white people got interested in our neighborhood did things start to change" (Owens, 1986, A1). Minnie Dixon, who refused to leave the home that they bought despite pressure and the neighborhood changing so drastically as to be nearly unrecognizable, agreed with her son, saying "All they're trying to do is get Black people to move out of this neighborhood" (Owens, 1986, A4). As adults, Jean and her siblings mostly ended up in Ypsilanti in search of affordable housing. Jean was never able to find the same kind of nurturing Black enclave that she had as a child, but she is now watching her Ypsilanti neighborhood slowly change from majority older African Americans to young whites. Although she likes her neighborhood, she no longer has relationships with many of her neighbors, and, as a genealogist, she is particularly disturbed to see so much of Washtenaw County's African American history being erased. Jean has experienced the wholesale destruction of a thriving Black community in Ann Arbor and is loath to see that happen again in Ypsilanti.

The impact of gentrification. Jean's experience highlights an essential misconception about gentrification. There have been politicians, homeowners, developers, and real estate agents in Ypsilanti who have argued that gentrification can be a good thing because it builds wealth for homeowners, increases the tax base allowing additional funding for public services, and revitalizes

business districts (DAY, 2017). While gentrification can certainly have all of these effects, and many of the people who I interviewed would agree that each of these effects could be good in isolation, the larger question is who benefits from gentrification? Desiraé Simmons, a 38-year-old Black affordable housing advocate in Ypsilanti who I interviewed, got at this question, saying "I think people want nice things, we just want the nice things to be for us, and not for other people." Visual indicators of gentrification that the food growers who I interviewed identified were (a) restaurants opening that looked really nice, but they could neither afford nor feel comfortable patronizing, and (b) luxury housing developments that were entirely out of reach for them and their peers.

Most respondents brought up gentrification without me introducing the word, showing how effective anti-gentrification activists in town have been in shifting public consciousness. People reported different feelings about gentrification, but it was seen as overwhelmingly negative, even by people who themselves identified as gentrifiers, being a part of the gentrification process, or appreciating some aspects of gentrification. People who recently moved to Ypsilanti from Ann Arbor often reported feeling complicit in the gentrification of Ypsilanti, but also felt that they had few choices available to them given the skyrocketing costs of housing in Ann Arbor. Some long-time residents relayed a satisfaction with new businesses opening, so that some commercial areas were no longer vacant, but also an uneasiness about what this might mean for the costs of rent and property taxes, which were uniformly considered to be increasing considerably. Two of the older white homeowners who I interviewed were the least concerned about gentrification and the most welcoming of new businesses and nonprofits moving into the area, seeing them as harbingers of change in longstanding problems they see as plaguing the city, such as an anemic tax base, a struggling school system, crime rates, and vacant buildings.

There were a number of respondents who identified landlords, and a specific landlord, Stewart Beal, who has a reputation as a slumlord and who recently developed Civil War-era barracks

into luxury lofts, as drivers of gentrification. This development was mentioned by name in a number of interviews as emblematic of gentrification in Ypsilanti. They suggested that when new housing and high end businesses open in the city, it is clear that they are not being built for the people who already live here, but rather to attract different types of people to replace current residents who are deemed undesirable.

Respondents were not opposed to change in and of itself, but rather saw the problem in specific people being pushed out. Jackie, who has a multiracial family and has lived in low-income majority-minority apartment complexes throughout her life, saw an intentional effort on the part of the new out-of-state leasing company that bought her complex to push out people of color and start renting to Eastern Michigan University (EMU) students who they think will be able to afford higher rents. However, she noted that EMU actively discourages students from living there because of a couple of high-profile student murders. The new leasing company has been making incremental changes to the complex that are pushing out long-standing tenants, including increasing costs as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, but also cutting down the bushes, trees, and other greenery that attracted her to this particular complex to begin with. She sees this as part of a longer-term effort to gentrify the city that started before the 2008 recession. As she bluntly states,

> They are trying to gentrify Ypsi, and that's behind a lot of the things that are going on in Depot Town and downtown and so on. They're actually trying to gentrify it, and unfortunately, when they gentrify things, the things people used to be able to afford... You have trouble finding stores that are cheaper or that are close by. They start getting higher end stores and restaurants and things like that, that people can't afford. I like Depot Town, but I can't afford any of their restaurants there. I couldn't afford to just go in there and sit down and eat something.

Increasing prices, not just in housing, but also in terms of higher end businesses, were alienating to many respondents. Sam shared how they used to frequent a Black-owned convenience store to treat themselves to an occasional soda, but when they most recently tried to go there, they found that it had been replaced by an expensive new restaurant with a very different clientele. They wanted to try the restaurant, so they bought a sandwich, but blew their monthly food budget in doing so.

Causes of Gentrification. Interviewees identified a number of causes of gentrification generally as well as ones that are specific to Ypsilanti. Herman pointed out that Ypsilanti is land-locked as it is surrounded by townships. With EMU taking up much of the city's landbase and no ability to expand geographically, Ypsilanti is dependent on development to expand its tax base, which was hurt in the 2008 recession, and is essential for funding services in an economy that is dependent on constant growth. Jen blames the housing crunch in Ann Arbor as fueling gentrification in Ypsilanti. In addition to higher income people coming in, she also sees how property managers like Beal and flippers are fueling the costs of housing by paying cash and then making money off the properties, which disadvantages first-time home buyers. She sees this as an area where policy changes are important. Alena identified Ypsilanti as a hidden gem and thought that gentrification was inevitable as Ann Arbor and metro Detroit populations both expand. This saddens her though, as she believes that she will likely never be able to afford to buy her own home in the neighborhood where she grew up and still lives with her parents. Jackie pointed out how what is considered "affordable" housing is determined by the mean income at the county level, which in a county as vastly unequal as Washtenaw makes even housing designated as affordable out of reach for most Ypsilantians.

Lize shared knowledge that she gained on one of the causes of gentrification in Ypsilanti, when she discussed a meeting that she was at with housing developers:

125

One day I was at…like a meeting for…they buy old houses, they build them, and they resell it. That guy was telling us that Ann Arbor is growing, economically speaking, so it's attracting many entrepreneur, people to invest. I think that was before Corona, so I don't know if it's still the case now. But that meeting was like, I think it was in early 2020. So that's what he told us that…people are coming from the other states to invest here, because it's stable. Ann Arbor is stable. Let's say even in the climate, there was no hurricane here like you see in Texas, like flooding. Since I came here, I never heard of something like that. So it's attracting investor[s] here. And the more people moved in, the more occupied Ann Arbor [is]. So since Ann Arbor is more occupied so it's raising up the rate of...rent. So the rent is going higher…And beside the rent going higher, there is no more space, people are just renting, renting despite the rate. So since there's no more…space, so people are tending to move in Ypsilanti, so to the closest city from Ann Arbor. So the closest one is in Ypsilanti. And Ypsilanti is…cheaper than Ann Arbor. So some of them are moving here buying houses, so if you look at the houses market too, the price are just rising and rising, and rising, because people are moving in.

Lize relays how out-of-state investors are targeting the Ann Arbor area specifically as a potential refuge from the worst ravages of climate change, which causes housing prices in Ann Arbor to skyrocket and fuels gentrification in Ypsilanti from Ann Arborites seeking affordable housing.

Part of the problem with land being bought up by out-of-state developers in a capitalist system is that their developments are, unsurprisingly, designed to maximize profit without concern for the impact on the local community. As Payton argues, "It's not that rich people are buying up this land and getting all of the resources because they wanna share them. It's being privately held. And so this is something that terrifies me a lot when it comes to climate catastrophe." Jess shares

how this pattern leaves few choices for people like her who were happy living in Ann Arbor, but could no longer afford to do so:

> They're developing that old site along the river in Ann Arbor that used to be the gas refinery plant, and they're planning on putting in, again, luxury condos and high-end retail, which I'm not saying we shouldn't have those things available, but that means that a lot of people are getting pushed into the next town over. And so I'm part of that force too. I got priced out of Ann Arbor. So we bought in Ypsi, but...we can afford to buy. And so I don't know who we're pushing out.

Jess' experience shows that individuals seeking housing they can afford have constrained options when they are facing off against the forces of global capital, even if they are concerned about the displacement that inevitably is a part of gentrification. When choices around where and what kind of housing is built is left to the private market, developers focus on what will make them the most profit, even if there is a glut of luxury housing in the surrounding area and people who can afford that housing need to then be recruited to live there from other places, rather than building what is actually needed for the existing population. Further, Jess was not the only one to relay a concern for who is being displaced by her decision to move to Ypsilanti.

Gentrification represents not only a change in the character of a city and a displacement of its long-standing residents, but it also often represents an erasure of the culture and history of a place. As someone who both identifies as a gentrifier and is deeply troubled by gentrification, Sam shared how they try to grapple with their place in the city:

> But I am also troubled by the fact of like who... How was this place before? Who has been here and where have they gone? And if these people that have been residents for a while...now are homeless, I just wonder [what] of the other people who are not vocalizing that they have needs. And maybe I'm coming to assumptions, I don't know, but...I just feel

so unsettled by these strangers. And people sometimes say gentrification is complex and stuff, but I think it's pretty straightforward. You're just appeasing people with money and maybe eventually, I'll get pushed out even though I'm not a long-term resident, but I do see gentrification rising and it's just a bit unsettling. It's just unsettling.

Sam shows how a person can both be a part of a gentrifying force that displaces long-term residents and eventually be displaced themselves by further waves of gentrification. In grappling with the erasure that they see of what came before their time in the city, Sam is also pointing to how gentrification has the effect of erasing the culture that is often what attracted earlier waves of gentrifiers to a place to begin with. It is also interesting to note that Jess and Sam are both non-Black people of color who are deeply wrestling with their place living in historically Black neighborhoods, which was not always true of white interviewees in similar positions.

Although not opposed to change overall, Nuola also expressed concern about history being erased and the city no longer being accessible to working class people:

My concern is as the neighborhood and as Ypsi overall continues to change, and, yes, be gentrified, I try to look at it from an ecosystem standpoint, which is, where's the balance? I don't think it's healthy for any ecosystem to stay exactly the same all the time, that's not real, so change is gonna happen and it's not inherently bad, but are people going to be able to afford to live there on $14, $15 an hour salary, or is it going to be a situation where only folks who are super greedy and have really relatively well-paying jobs gonna be able to raise families in Ypsi, which is what it feels like in Ann Arbor. So is that just gonna continue to spread? Is the history gonna continue to be erased? Change is okay. I don't think it's inherently bad. I think it's just when it makes [it] impossible for everyone to thrive that I find it concerning.

Nuola was not the only Black respondent who ended up in Ypsilanti after originally moving to Ann Arbor and finding it racially hostile. As people seeking more affordable housing continue to move from Ann Arbor to Ypsilanti, Black food growers were concerned about Ypsilanti no longer feeling like a place that is for them. Payton relayed how it was really dissociative to live as a Black person in a majority white neighborhood that is increasingly populated by former Ann Arborites, where people are constantly displaying their liberal sentiments via yard signs but not following up with any kind of action to make the county more just. Nuola, also found the dissonance between what people who consider themselves to be politically radical say that they believe in and how they actually live their lives, particularly when it comes to land ownership:

> A question that I keep coming back to is, white people who believe, supposedly, in Indigenous sovereignty and Black liberation, what are y'all gonna do with all these extra properties you have that you're renting out? What's your plan there? Because those two things are diametrically opposed, and how are peers in my age group who are like, "Oh, I wanna retire by the time I'm 40" how do y'all reconcile that with the fact that there's plenty, plenty people who are experiencing houselessness and there are plenty, plenty people who can't make rent and have to choose between food and paying their bills, while you're trying to retire at 40. What's the plan?

There was understandable frustration for Black interviewees about how land is concentrated in the hands of white people in a supposedly politically progressive city and county, leaving them few choices in how they are able to access land to live on and to grow on.

Although interviewees did not generally identify specific solutions to gentrification, many of them pointed out how they were heartened to see increasingly organized opposition to gentrification. Jen said that she believes that Ypsilanti is experiencing an uprising due to the skyrocketing housing and rental prices. Payton relayed how the proposed International Village

development served as an awakening for many Ypsilantians who had been tuned out of local politics. The defeat of International Village led by a group of young anti-gentrification activists, and then the creation of the community-benefits ordinance in the city, both showed the power of an organized community in defending itself against the onslaught of global capital. Payton further underscored how working to create true participatory democracy feels so much more doable in a small city like Ypsilanti.

Conclusion

Multiple interviewees shared visions of a resilient, sustainable, and just community in Ypsilanti. For Payton, that involves moving away from an agricultural system that relies on the exploitation of poor people around the globe and the dependence that we have on industrial farms to:

> One in which I'm required to grow my own food and do that with my community, not as an individual once again, but we're all growing the food together. We have harvest ritual. We have planting ritual. We're doing this work together as a community. It would be easier to grow food if it was worked into and woven into the fabric of my society.

For Jackie, this would involve having the city make abandoned land that they own into community gardens in low-income neighborhoods so that everyone would have easy access to land on which to grow food no matter their housing or transportation situation. For Jasmine, that involves getting the chance to work with her neighbor to access the vacant land across the street from them to open a community garden where anyone can contribute to the garden and anyone can pick from the garden. All of these visions move beyond an individual level of resilience or self-reliance and focus on how growing food can benefit the larger community. All of these visions have the potential to help marginalized communities adapt their local food system to a changing climate, thereby building food

sovereignty. And all of these visions are reliant on being able to access land on which to make these

visions a reality. The problem is that gentrifying forces see this land, some of which is vacant, and

some of which is contaminated from industrial legacies, as the most valuable thing that the people of

Ypsilanti have going for them.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Summary

I started this project with the hope of understanding if and how growing food could be helpful to marginalized communities in collectively surviving a changing climate. As I read the work of Monica White (2018), and other food sovereignty scholars, I learned how marginalized agrarian traditions were deeply tied to movements for liberation, as well as collective survival. This impressed upon me the unique, radical potential that agrarian movements have not just in dealing with the effects of the climate crisis, but also in transforming the conditions that fuel the crisis. However, considerations around climate change within marginalized agrarian traditions at this point were largely theoretical, and in designing this project, I hoped to see what this looked like in action with marginalized food growers in the small de-industrial city of Ypsilanti, Michigan.

To answer the broad question of how marginalized agrarian traditions can help marginalized communities in collectively surviving climate change, I developed five specific research questions (RQ) to elicit information about the processes involved: RQ1. How do social locations (race, gender, class, etc.) and social contexts (rootedness in Ypsilanti/Michigan, precarity of housing, robustness of familial/ancestral growing traditions, etc.) impact food growers' relationships to how and why they grow, how they access land, how they feel about the environment, and gentrification in Ypsilanti? RQ2. How is knowledge and meaning of growing food transmitted culturally amongst marginalized

growers in Ypsilanti? RQ3. How does ease of accessing land facilitate or create a barrier towards growing food amongst marginalized growers in Ypsilanti? RQ4. How, if at all, has growing food helped interviewees to build resilience? RQ5. How do marginalized food growers in Ypsilanti think about the future under a changing climate?

Little did I know that my project would be indelibly shaped by another crisis that impacted food security, the global COVID-19 pandemic, which hit Michigan right after I completed pilot interviews for this project. While I will go into more detail below on how the pandemic created limitations for my research, I want to note here that in addition to the impacts it had on the scope of the study, the pandemic also impacted how people in general were thinking about growing food as a collective survival strategy, including the food growers who I interviewed.

With help from community partners, I recruited 20 BIPOC and/or working class people who grow food in Ypsilanti to complete in-depth, semi-structured interviews focused on their history in the area, their experiences growing food and accessing land on which to grow food, and their thoughts and feelings on the environment and the impacts of environmental change. I used theory-informed thematic analysis to develop five themes from this data that constitute my primary findings.

I found that for marginalized people, growing food was a way to build resilience and self-reliance in different ways and at multiple levels, including (a) feeling empowered through the process of growing food; (b) adopting strategies that reduced reliance on outside resources in the process of growing food; (c) adapting the growing site and practices to increase resilience to extreme weather events; (d) challenging the focus of elite environmental subjectivities on consumer-based actions to shrink carbon footprints; and (e) building community-level self-reliance as an essential political goal within marginalized communities, including through mutual aid (RQ4).

I also found that growing food was essential to promoting health and healing within marginalized communities, which was not an area that I was originally focused on. This happened in a number of ways, including (a) promoting physical health through access to fresh organic foods and through approachable exercise; (b) promoting mental health for a variety of struggles, including anxiety and depression; (c) promoting ancestral healing, particularly for African American food growers whose ancestors' agrarian experiences were indelibly intertwined with enslavement (RQ2); and (d) promoting healing of the Earth itself through transforming people's relations to it (RQ5).

Growing food was also essential to deepening connections for many interviewees, including connections within families, communities, and neighborhoods, as well as connections to ancestors and the Earth more broadly (RQ2). However, interviewees found growing food to be difficult because of land injustice that they faced based on their race or class (RQ1, RQ3). This was particularly true for people who were renters, who were being priced out of Ypsilanti due to gentrification, or who were reliant on people with more privilege than them to access land (RQ1, RQ3).

Gentrification in Ypsilanti was a large concern for most respondents, even those who considered themselves to be a part of the problem. As long time area residents like Jean have experienced, this is just the latest wave of dispossession for BIPOC and working-class people, but it is coming at a pernicious time, as interviewees identified growing food as one of the most important ways that they think their communities could build resilience to climate change (RQ1, RQ3, RQ4, RQ5). Growing food is dependent on having access to land on which to grow it, and gentrification is threatening that already tenuous access for many of the people who I interviewed. Thus, gentrification is an obstacle to the self-reliance, resilience, health, healing, and connections that marginalized people are building through growing food.

134

Interpretation of Findings

Differences between food growers. My sample consisted of Black, people of color, and white food growers, most of whom were working class or lower middle class. People's culture and lived experiences impacted their environmental subjectivities and approach to growing food. Overwhelmingly, people had a **collective focus**, which matches the cultural legacies that they've inherited. Ford and Norgaard (2020) note that people's environmental subjectivities are based in their relationships to the root causes of the climate crisis: capitalism, racism, and colonialism. People in my sample were broadly critical of capitalism, particularly as it relates to gentrification. The relationship to colonialism was more complicated. Amongst Black, white, and people of color food growers, there was a combination of Indigenous erasure, claims of Indigenous ancestry, and scattered recognition of Indigenous lands, contrasted with a few Black radical food growers who were actively engaged in decolonizing work around the environment and agriculture.

While some white homeowners reported ease in finding land to grow on, most renters and BIPOC people I interviewed struggled to find either affordable housing or land to grow on. The differences in land owning and homeownership clearly followed racial and class lines, sometimes even with a person's own family—for instance, multiracial people whose white side of the family owned and Black side of the family rented. Gentrification was a concern for almost every interviewee, but it seemed most concerning to long-term residents who had seen the city change over time and people who had just moved to Ypsilanti within the last few years, many of whom identified as a part of the problem of gentrification. Renters had, unsurprisingly, more concern about displacement from gentrification and were more likely to have already felt its impacts.

Cultural transmission of knowledge and meaning of growing food. The practice of growing food meant healing, connecting, and building sovereignty for many. For some this was a

continuation of meaning imbued from cultural traditions that they had inherited, but for others, this was a reclamation of deeper cultural traditions that they had lost along the way.

Loss of land or being unable to access land interrupts the cultural transmission of growing food amongst marginalized people. This matters in terms of the knowledge and cultural practices that are lost and could be incredibly beneficial as we move into a new era of food insecurity under climate change. It also matters because it too often forces BIPOC and working class people to seek out information and learning opportunities in white, middle class dominated spaces, particularly in majority white cities like Ypsilanti. While these spaces may, on the surface, welcome the participation of BIPOC and working class people, as differences between their environmental subjectivities, including their relationship to colonialism, capitalism, and racism, emerge, these spaces become increasingly hostile to marginalized participants. Thus, land dispossession is often a precursor for cultural imperialism. This process continues a long-term trend of Black land dispossession that leads to Black communities being dependent on nonprofit and government services to get basic needs for housing and food. As the people who are often planning and staffing these nonprofit programs, social workers have a moral responsibility to build an awareness of how land injustice specifically structures our present and to include land justice for BIPOC and working class people as a part of the social work agenda, with the understanding that all land in the US is Indigenous land.

However, informal and formal networks of food growers that center BIPOC and/or working class leadership allow marginalized people to learn and recover growing practices in a safe and culturally relevant way. This looked like learning from more experienced local growers, through volunteering at their farms or gardens, or through less formal learning opportunities such as for one participant whose hair stylist happened to be a master gardener. On a broader level, organizations like the National Black Food and Justice Alliance (NBFJA) are "designing, building and protecting

136

the nourishing, safe and liberatory spaces our communities need and absolutely deserve" (NBFJA, n.d.). Further, food growers use accessible technology, like Youtube and Facebook, to follow, learn from, and connect with other food growers, expanding their range of mentors and compatriots beyond the local area.

Land access as a barrier. As covered extensively in the findings and in the prior section, access to land and gentrification were barriers to growing food, particularly for BIPOC and working class food growers.

Building resilience. Growing food built resilience on multiple levels and in many ways, as covered in the findings. However, the impact on food security as a key concern in a changing climate is important to note. Small-scale food growers, such as those who I interviewed, demonstrated resilience to extreme weather events that are increasingly common in a changing climate. Growing at such a small scale helps people to be more resilient to extreme weather conditions because it is easier to protect a small garden than a large farm. In addition, having lots of people growing in different places increases diversity and redundancy, rather than depending on a few large growers who have to ship products across the world.

The future in a changing climate. Marginalized agrarian traditions counter much of the current popular discourse around growing food, in that they are actually based in enduring cultural traditions, rather than being framed as a new trend. Black agrarian traditions have a particular power in building climate resilience within Black communities because of the focus on acting collectively to not only ensure survival but also to work towards liberation from oppression. When thinking about the future, the food growers I interviewed are very much aware that most impacts of climate change are well out of their control, but they also recognized that the only way to survive a changing climate is to work collectively both to transform our relationship with the Earth and to adapt as a community. The food growers also recognized how the existing (and potential for worsening)

137

injustices in Ypsilanti and the US more broadly hinders capacity for adaptation and community-level resilience. In addition, while most interviewees were relieved to learn that they lived in a potential climate refuge if that was new information, there was unease amongst about half of them for what that might mean if people with more wealth and political power migrate here.

Advancing Collective Survival Strategies, Refining Environmental Subjectivities, and Drawing Attention to Climate Refuge Cities

This project builds on the community resilience framework, collective survival strategies, that I developed with my colleagues Mary Kate Dennis and Amy Krings (2019). Collective survival strategies (CSS) are fundamentally about how communities protect and care for each other and are recognizable by this shared criteria: (a) they are communal and cooperative; (b) they are rooted in place and existing cultural traditions; (c) they focus on basic survival needs; (d) they are self-organized and autonomous; and (e) they address both everyday and spectacular disasters (p. 287). For most respondents, growing food was a collective survival strategy. While food growers who built community gardens or grew within collectives were the most explicitly communal and cooperative, the backyard gardeners who primarily grew for their own consumption talked explicitly about sharing produce, knowledge, and physical resources with others. As many food growers expressed, the practice rooted them in the cultural traditions of family members and ancestors. Growing food is always rooted in place, which was a difficulty for some people who had to learn to grow in dramatically different climates or struggled to access land. Further, food is clearly a basic survival need, and for a number of respondents, healthy, fresh, organic food was hard to come by without growing it themselves.

The CSS criteria around being self-organized and autonomous is more complicated. Several people who I interviewed had built their own farms, businesses, or nonprofits that I would

categorize as self-organized and autonomous. However, due in large part to my sampling strategy, many of the home gardeners had their gardens initially built by a local nonprofit, Growing Hope, who provides all of the supplies as well as mentoring for the first season. So while Growing Hope built many of the home growers' gardens, what they then choose to grow and do with the garden is entirely up to them. Further, my findings show the difficulties that marginalized communities face in self-organized and autonomous endeavors, most visibly in accessing land and funding. One way for nonprofit organizations and foundations to be of assistance to these endeavors is to offer low-barrier, no-strings attached help with funding, long-term land access, relevant information, and materials. As Alex shared, a $500 grant enabled him to finally build the greenhouse he had collected all of the materials for, significantly increasing the productivity, profitability, and resilience of his farm. Finally, growing food was clearly a way that people were able to address the everyday disasters of racial capitalism, including living in low-income and food apatheid neighborhoods, as well as more spectacular ones, such as the COVID-19 global pandemic that started during my fieldwork and threatened the food security of many participants.

Respondents focused intensely on the need to work collectively. For some, this was a source of frustration as they wished that people in their community had more time, capacity, and interest in growing food. For others, they recognized that what happens in the future is largely out of their control, but that they would be dealing with it as a community, and that growing food as a community was an important first step in preparing for whatever may come. Growing food as a way to regain independence and sovereignty was a recurring theme, but, for marginalized growers, such self-reliance was never at an individual level, which is one of the key differences between this group and the mainly white subcultures of preppers and homesteaders in the US. For many of the food growers who I interviewed, questions of survival were not new, but the answers always involved somehow working collectively. As COVID-19 and the climate crisis are laying bare, working

collectively is increasingly important, as we can no longer deny or ignore our interdependence. Social work needs to learn from the communities who have long practiced collective survival strategies without appropriating their experiences.

While all communities are unique and can not be flattened into one monolithic experience, CSS connects trends between marginalized groups. Black agrarianism is specifically liberatory in a way that did not show up with other marginalized agrarian traditions in my sample, yet CSS is broadly relevant within many marginalized communities, as it is a resilience practice that emerges in the face of oppression.

My project also extends Ford and Norgaard's (2020) work on environmental subjectivities outside of the mythical norm, first, by including how enslavement is a key part of colonization in the US and how enslavement has shaped environmental subjectivities for African Diaspora people in the US. While Ford and Norgaard (2020) focus on how people's relationships to colonialism, capitalism, and racism impact their environmental subjectivities, they are not including slavery as a part of colonization. There are similarities between people whose ancestors were enslaved and the Indigenous people of North America, many of which stem from the ongoing apocalypse of enslavement and settler colonialism that indelibly shaped both communities. However, there are key differences as well, in particular the complex relationship with agriculture that many African Americans have articulated, given that it was both the site of exploitation and can be a site of freedom.

Further, for working class white people and immigrants to the US, growing and preparing food was less a return to homesteading pioneer ancestors as it was a continuation of the practices that their parents and grandparents did to ensure collective survival and well-being. Working class white people were not problematizing being settlers on this land, but they also were not valorizing pioneers in the same ways that Ford's sample was, and many were actively critical of capitalism and

racism. Ford and Norgaard (2020) acknowledge that changes in critical consciousness can shift environmental subjectivities, but white working class people in my sample had a different relationship to capitalism based on their class status. For some, particularly those with multiracial families, their lived experiences also resulted in greater consciousness around racism. Further, working class immigrants grew up engaging in subsistence growing activities and have continued these traditions with their own children.

CSS show a way to survive the epic times that we are living through. When we are all overwhelmed by constant stressors and crises, how do we still support each other? CSS are how marginalized people have done this historically. As climate change shrinks resource bases and increases the precarity of life for everyone except the most elite, CSS becomes more relevant to all of our lives. CSS prefigure the world that we want to live in and are not always explicitly political in terms of advocating for policy or structural change but certainly can be. As the need for broad political transformation is necessary to address the root causes of the climate crisis, capitalism and colonialism, and avert its worst consequences, CSS should be used in conjunction with more traditional social movement organizing. However, CSS offer an interstitial space for marginalized people to take care of themselves and each other in the here and now without waiting for structural level change.

CSS are, by definition, a collective endeavor. Despite elite Western socialization encouraging individualistic thinking and solutions, people from marginalized communities have long known that survival is a collective activity. Complete self-sufficiency is a fantasy in an interdependent world. However, building community-level self-reliance and fighting for land justice offer some level of security and freedom for many people as we move into an increasingly precarious era.

Finally, this research project brings attention to the impact that climate migration could have on already vulnerable groups living in places that are likely to serve as a relative refuge for people

whose lives and livelihoods are more immediately threatened. I have not found other research looking at this issue, but there is a significant need to balance the needs of marginalized people already living in these places with the needs of people who are migrating by challenging elites' efforts to buy up land in these places. Building solidarity between people already living in a potential climate refuge and those migrating is an essential social work task moving into the future, as a way to counter the "armed lifeboat" approach that has dominated US immigration and national security policy in a changing climate (Ghosh, 2016) and led to xenophobia and white supremacy disguised as environmentalism.

Sociological Implications

Sociology, and particularly the sociology of race and ethnicity, turned away from the study of culture as it became increasingly associated with "culture of poverty" arguments that were weaponized against working class African Americans (Patterson, 2019). However, as a field, sociology lost much in abandoning culture as a site of study. One such loss is the dehistoricization of sociological studies that do not account for differences across time and space (Patterson, 2019). Part of a renewed call for challenging presentism in sociology (Greenland & Steinmetz, 2019) is to seriously consider the histories that constitute the present. In the US, slavery is foundational to both our history and the present configuration of our racially stratified society, but slavery is massively understudied and undertheorized in sociology (Patterson, 2019). This study counters that trend in sociology by focusing explicitly on how historical processes of colonization, including slavery, and structural racism shape not only the present but also the future.

Further, by starting literally from the ground up and attuning to time, space, and meaning, the food growers who I interviewed show the importance of oral histories and cultures. Black food growers clearly expressed that a part of the cultural violence (Göçek & Greenland, 2020) that slavery

imposed on them and their ancestors was a severing of their relationship to the land and food growing practices. This was done through the perversion of agriculture and the Earth from life-giving to life-taking. For these food growers, part of healing from that intergenerational trauma is specifically recovering the cultural practices that were violently stolen from them, as "without cultural practices, a group loses its social compass—its sense of identity, or its place in the world. It loses the possibility of *being*" (Göçek & Greenland, 2020, p. 2). Questions of Black futurities are intimately tied to recovering cultural practices, and as Melvin recounted, "agriculture is culture." In addition, gentrification, in its destruction and displacement of BIPOC and working class communities, is further cultural violence, and understanding gentrification as an issue of culture and not just economics is essential to countering it.

Theoretical Implications

Everyday people as theorists & political actors. The food growers who I interviewed clearly showed that their agrarian practice is tied to larger worldviews and theories about how the world works, as well as being a political act. As anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and geographers have shown through tellings of "history from below," seemingly non-political acts amongst marginalized and colonized people are often deeply political when we closely examine the context in which such action is taking place and let people speak for themselves (Black, 2022; de Certeau, 2011; Du Bois, 1935; Scott, 1985; Simpson, 2017; Thompson, 1993).

Food sovereignty, which is the broader movement in which many of the struggles around growing food takes place, was founded by peasants for a reason (Patel, 2009). While the resistance that peasants mount is often not recognized as such, no one has a better understanding of oppressive systems than the people who are living them, despite the efforts of the powers-that-be to block their access to political education. Feminist consciousness-raising, such as that promulgated by

the Combahee River Collective (1977), has helped us to understand the interconnectedness of all struggles against oppression, which is as important now as it has ever been. Black agrarianism, as practiced by everyday people, is explicitly a political practice, and growing food in a way that is focused on collective liberation has transformative potential.

Elite environmental subjectivities as a barrier to resilience. Elite discourses on climate change have focused primarily on climate mitigation through individual, consumer-based behavior change. The lack of focus on climate adaptation is harmful to communities who have relatively little means to shrink their carbon footprints, but are in vital need of assistance in adapting to climate change. This is not to say that mitigation is not important, as without mitigation even places of relative climate refuge will quickly become unlivable, but rather that assuming that consumer-based choices is the solution to the climate crisis is alienating to people who are not heavy consumers to begin with, and does not help those communities in planning their response to the climate crisis.

The work of organizations like Movement Generation (MG) who center marginalized communities and environmental justice in crafting responses to the climate crisis is vital. MG focuses on the systemic change that is needed to lessen the harm that climate change will cause while also building community resilience in the marginalized communities most impacted first, by helping communities to organize for a just climate transition (MG Justice and Ecology Project, n.d.). Just recovery from disaster requires root cause remedies, revolutionary self-governance, rights-based organizing, reparations, and ecological restoration for resilience (MG, n.d.). MG is a co-conspirator with Mutual Aid Disaster Relief (MADR), an organization that Payton mentioned. MADR focuses specifically on a solidarity, not charity response to disasters, that builds community power to address the root causes of injustice (MADR, n.d.). As social workers are pulled more and more into disaster response in a changing climate, I hope that we will look to the theoretical and practical infrastructure

144

that organizations like MG and MADR have built to counter the prevailing neoliberal norms within disaster response.

Policy Implications

Housing justice. As many food growers identified, programs to make homeownership affordable, such as Habitat for Humanity, were essential in enabling them to have a garden, as renting was a major barrier to growing food for many participants. While programs like these do not solve the larger justice issues that make housing unaffordable or address the dispossession that many BIPOC families have experienced, they do make a profound difference in the lives of the individual families who they serve. Further, when housing programs are paired with programs, such as the one at Growing Hope, that help low-income people to set up gardens, the impact in terms of enabling people to grow food is amplified. Partnerships between affordable housing programs, for both homeownership and rentals, and food growing programs make growing food more accessible for low-income families, which has increasing importance as the climate changes.

However, gentrification displaces marginalized communities and makes them more vulnerable to a host of negative health and well-being outcomes (Fullilove, 2005), including making it more difficult for them to grow food, which promoted health and healing for interviewees. Thus, people who are working on socially just climate planning or food security need to also work to halt gentrification across US cities and towns. Gentrification is a consequence of racial capitalism, so radical actions are needed at the root. Nonetheless, policy changes that give more power to the people most likely to be displaced by gentrification can help stem the tide. In Ypsilanti, after extensive community engagement and research, the Citizen Committee on Housing Affordability and Accessibility (2020) outlined 11 strategies that the city could implement in three phases over a period of ten years to combat gentrification within the city. These strategies included: (1) tenant

right of first refusal in the case of landlords who wish to sell rental properties; (2) just cause ordinance to protect tenants from wrongful or retaliatory displacement; (3) affordability and accessibility ordinance that would shift the definition of affordability to reflect the median income in the city of Ypsilanti rather than at the county level and require new developments to include a percentage of affordable and accessible units; (4) construct an overnight homeless shelter; (5) establish a community land trust to ensure long-term housing affordability; (6) assist low-income residents with home-buying; (7) establish a minor home repair program for low-income and disabled homeowners; (8) enact a visitability ordinance to ensure that new construction is accessible to people with limited mobility; (9) increase the number of unrelated adults who may occupy a dwelling; (10) lobby state legislators to grant municipalities the authority to enact rent control; and (11) ask local universities to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund and to actively support other county-wide housing affordability measures (pp. 5-6). Perhaps most importantly, organized communities are essential to holding local officials accountable and protecting vulnerable communities from the forces of global capital.

Finally, as increasing extreme weather impacts housing, funding and programs for adaptation and recovery are needed in low-income communities to enable people to have a decent place to live and to hold onto their properties. Disasters are often used as a pretext to further dispossess marginalized communities of land, so proactive planning is necessary to ensure that being able to stay in or rebuild a home is not only available to those with the economic means to do so.

Proactive planning in places of climate refuge. There is a need for futures-focused, proactive planning in communities that are expected to serve as climate refuge, such as the Upper Midwest and Northeast US. As this research project shows, socially just planning for climate migration must balance the needs and concerns of the most vulnerable people who already live within these places of expected refuge with the need to build capacity, interest, and infrastructure to

welcome climate migrants. This is especially important as white supremacists, such as the Christchurch mosque and El Paso Walmart shooters, are increasingly turning towards ecofascism by using the climate crisis as justification for xenophobic and racist violence and terror (Shifflett, 2021). Outright climate denialism on the right is being replaced with a white supremacist argument that if climate predictions come true, "it will be okay because people will just move" without acknowledging who has the ability to just move either across or within national borders (Heglar, 2022). Consequently, ensuring that all proactive planning in climate destination cities is explicitly pro-immigrant and challenging militarized borders is essential. Immigrants and refugees are not the problem, rather inequitable distribution of resources is the problem.

Thus, the resilience of these regions matters beyond their borders, and is essential to ensuring that relatively protected places can serve as safe havens for those who need to seek refuge. For this to be successful, planning must focus on investing in the public institutions that serve those who are most in need of help, such as public libraries, shelters, and public housing. Finally, to ensure that there even is a place for people to seek refuge, protections need to be put in place to prevent the owning class from buying up land as investments.

Reparations and rematriation. In order to think about how to enact housing justice now and plan for a just transition that includes climate migration in the future, we need to take the foundational injustices of the United States and the long reach that they have seriously. As I completed historical research and the qualitative interviews for this project, the ways that colonization, including slavery, is the structure of US society rather than a historical event became all the more apparent.

As Sharpe (2016) has argued, we can not understand the ongoing racial disparities that African Americans face in the US unless we look at how those disparities are all in the wake of slavery. Many African American interviewees, both food growers and non-food growers, recounted

how enslavement affected phenomena as diverse as access to land, diet, health concerns, the lived experience of growing food, and how wealth is distributed or passed down. Further, as the history that I have presented demonstrates, Black families and communities continued to be dispossessed of their land and homes from the time of enslavement to the first freemen who were able to legally purchase land through post-war urban renewal to currently occurring gentrification. As Jerkins (2020) argues, African Americans have long been a people on the move because of ongoing racist expropriation. This is a massive debt that governments and private actors who fueled this dispossession, and all of us who have benefitted from it, owe to Black communities. It is not a debt that could ever be repaid in full, but that fact does not excuse us from trying.

As Darity and Mullen (2020) outline, reparations are not just for the horrors and losses that came from slavery and the promises that were made in its abolition, but also for the material and physical losses that have continued through discriminatory housing practices such as redlining. Owning a home is where most wealth is generated for working- and middle-class people in the US (Darity & Mullen, 2020). However, too often for BIPOC people more generally, and African Americans specifically, being able to purchase a home or property does not ensure that you will be able to keep it or pass it down. Eminent domain is disproportionately used to seize properties in BIPOC neighborhoods (McCarthy, 2020). Full reparations are due to all Black communities. Further, new work is showing how reparations for slavery are essential to climate justice (Táíwò, 2022). In addition to reparations for African Americans, climate reparations to the countries who face the most risk from climate change despite having the least responsibility for it are a first step in undoing the ongoing damage from colonialism and imperialism.

We must address the other foundational injustice, which is that all land in the US is Indigenous land. In addition to reparations for enslavement, we need to return stolen land to Indigenous peoples, which is increasingly referred to as land rematriation as a way to acknowledge

that returning Indigenous land to Indigenous stewards repairs our spiritual relationship to Mother Earth and challenges settler-imposed patriarchal notions of land ownership. The LANDBACK movement has risen in public consciousness and is consistent with reparations for enslavement and collective liberation of all BIPOC people (LANDBACK, 2021). There are a variety of ways that people can support land rematriation efforts (Gray, 2022), such as the Shuumi Land Tax, which is a voluntary annual "rent" payment that non-Indigenous people living in the Bay Area can make to support "Sogorea Te's work of rematriation, returning Indigenous land to Indigenous people, establishing a cemetery to reinter stolen Ohlone ancestral remains and building urban gardens, community centers, and ceremonial spaces so current and future generations of Indigenous people can thrive" (Sogorea Te' Land Trust, n.d.). However, as Winona LaDuke argues and this research project makes clear, there is no substitute for land, and Indigenous peoples do not want money in exchange for land (Belfi & Sandiford, 2021). LANDBACK movement leaders clarify that they are not asking non-Indigenous people to give up the homes that they live in, rather they are asking people to join the fight for collective liberation, which includes giving public lands back to their original stewards (Belfi & Sandiford, 2021), as well as recognizing Indigenous sovereignty and that those of us who are settlers need to be willing to give up power in order to live in Indigenous sovereignty (Carlson-Manathara & Rowe, 2021). Further, in this moment of climate crisis, Indigenous stewardship of land offers the greatest promise of reversing the crisis, as Indigenous peoples have, by definition, learned to live in harmony with the natural environment over thousands of years. Within ecosocial work there have been calls to learn traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) from Indigenous peoples to enact sustainability, but as Whyte and colleagues (2018) argue, Indigenous knowledge can not be extracted for the benefit of all humanity, rather, we need to shift our whole society to one in which the original caretakers of the land are those who are making decisions for everyone who now lives on it.

Practice Implications

      Environmental justice, land justice, climate justice. As we move into an era of climate crisis that impacts every aspect of our lives and communities, we need to prepare social workers to meaningfully and thoughtfully engage with how the climate crisis is and will impact their professional domains, including client populations. Bringing environmental justice, land justice, and climate justice to the forefront of social work practice and education is essential to not just helping social workers to react to the climate crisis, but also to empower social workers to take collective action in addressing the root causes of the climate crisis, including settler colonialism, structural racism, imperialism, capitalism, and patriarchy.

      The beginnings of this is happening on environmental and climate justice with the advent of ecosocial work as a subfield (Krings et al, 2020; Rambaree et al, 2019), but there is very little conversation about land justice in social work. What work is being done on land justice is, unsurprisingly, led by Indigenous social work scholars (Beltrán et al, 2016; Billiot et al, 2019; Walters et al, 2011) and the few scholars who publish on gentrification (Thurber et al., 2021). This work is vitally important and needs to be amplified within the field. So, what would it look like to center environmental, land, and climate justice? There are models that we can draw from. For example, the University of Denver's (DU) Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW) has created an MSW track devoted to ecological justice, which has shifted its focus from sustainable development to degrowth as the incompatibility between capitalism and ecological justice has become clear (GSSW Communication Team, 2021).

      Anti-colonial and anti-racist practice and education. Indigenous social work scholars are leading the way in bringing anti-colonial principles and practices into the social work classroom in the US, which lags behind other settler colonial societies such as Canada and Australia in at least

recognizing the colonial context in which we do our work. Anti-colonialism is likely a less familiar

concept to many than anti-racism, but anti-colonialism is an analogue to anti-racism in that anyone,

including settlers, can practice anti-colonialism (Hart, 2009). Adopting anti-colonial principles and

strengthening anti-racist practices within social work practice and education is essential to addressing

the root causes of the climate crisis and creating a more just world to live in, in the here and now.

So, what would it look like to center anti-racism and anti-colonialism in social work practice

and education? Again, there are models that we can draw from. In social work education, Nyshourn

Price and Daicia Price at University of Michigan's (UM) School of Social Work created a New

Leaders In African-Centered Social Work (NLACSW) scholars program to train MSW students in

Afrocentric social work, countering the colonial foundations of the field and training future social

work leaders in Afrocentric values and care practices (New Leaders, 2019). Similarly, Samuel Bradley

Jr. and Tyrone M. Parchment lead the Black Leadership Initiative at Boston College, another

Afrocentric program with emphasis "placed on community, collective action, cultural context, and

Ubuntu- the West African concept of shared consciousness and group cohesion" (Boston College

School of Social Work, n.d.). Conversely, at the University of Manitoba, there is a MSW program

specifically focused on Indigenous Knowledges which focuses on helping students to work from

Indigenous perspectives, understanding the colonial context and practicing anti-colonialism (Bell et

al, 2019). While these programs are open to anyone, they were primarily designed for social work

students working within Black and Indigenous communities, respectively. On the other hand, the

classes on disrupting privilege at DU are an example of social work education that takes a deep dive

into anti-racism and other forms of anti-oppression, specifically from the perspective of those who

hold privilege (Walls et al, 2010). More social work schools adopting or further developing programs

such as these would go a long way towards moving anti-colonialism from the far margins to the

mainstream. Nevertheless, as we have seen as more schools have embraced anti-racism, a challenge

that then would emerge is how to move past performative actions to meaningful change? One of the ways that could happen is by reflecting and taking action not just at the level of our personal ideology and actions, but also at how our institution's history has shaped the present and how to enact institutional change to create a more just future.

Recognition & accountability for institutional harm. UM's refusal to deal with the student housing crisis in Ann Arbor is fueling the gentrification of Ypsilanti (Becker, 2018). Thus, for people like me who moved to this area because of UM and are employed by UM, I must recognize the role that UM is playing in the displacement of BIPOC and working-class communities in Ypsilanti. This is true beyond the local context, as universities across the US are either complicit or active drivers in gentrification efforts (Revington et al., 2021). As a young person, I experienced this firsthand, as Washington University in St. Louis fueled the gentrification of the neighborhood that I grew up in. However, recognizing how institutions that social workers are embedded in cause harm is not enough. We also must work to actively combat such land injustices. For example, Ramona Beltrán has centered land justice in work that she has done to push DU to formally recognize the colonial atrocities that make up its history (Billiot et al., 2019).

Anchor institutions, such as universities and hospitals, often fuel gentrification, but there are models for how these anchor institutions can serve as a stabilizing force in neighborhoods and invest in the local economy in a way that supports the people who already live there. The Cleveland model is a partnership between Evergreen Cooperatives, a network of worker-owned cooperatives, and anchor institutions such as Cleveland Clinics, Case Western Reserve University, and University Hospitals (Song, 2014). Like Ypsilanti, the African American neighborhoods surrounding these anchor institutions were decimated by the transition from an industrial to a knowledge economy, but the creation of these worker-owned cooperatives that provide green laundry, fresh produce, and renewable energy to the anchor institutions and beyond has provided transformative opportunities

for the communities that live there. Thus, rather than using gentrification as a way to replace the communities surrounding anchor institutions, the Cleveland model shows a way for anchor institutions to invest in their surrounding communities. Further, Evergreen Cooperatives create opportunities for workers to purchase homes in the surrounding neighborhood in as little as four years, creating some degree of protection from gentrification (Funes, 2015).

Limitations

COVID-19 pandemic. Fieldwork was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, both in terms of the number of interviews and skewing the sample younger than originally planned. When designing this study, there were a number of elders who have grown food for decades who I wanted to interview. However, the COVID-19 pandemic made this virtually impossible, as even after some of the initial UM restrictions on fieldwork were lifted, we still were not allowed to meet in person with elders for non-clinical research. While I did complete some interviews with elders over the phone or zoom, not everyone had access to video chat technology, and long phone interviews proved exhausting for everyone involved. Further, the stress of living in a global pandemic and the disproportionate impact it had on marginalized communities amplified barriers for me as a researcher and for participants. The result was a shrinking of the scope of my fieldwork and skewing the sample to be much younger than originally intended. Finally, as food shortages occurred because of the pandemic and more people turned to growing their own food, the pandemic itself may have shifted the perspectives of interviewees in a way that could be unique to the time in which they were interviewed.

Emerging areas of research on emerging social problems. This research project engages with emerging areas of research—urban agriculture in the Global North and climate resilience—on emerging social problems—the relationship between gentrification and climate refuge—which

presents a limitation. The qualitative and exploratory nature of this research is well-suited to emerging areas of research and emerging social problems, but this research is not generalizable. Yet, the processes that were uncovered could help inform future studies on these emerging areas of inquiry in a way could help to lessen the limitations of this particular study.

Participants played a role in designing and providing feedback on the study. In line with community-engaged research standards, participants played a role in designing and providing feedback on the study as I was developing it. While this is standard for community-based and participatory research paradigms, it is a scientific limitation. In addition, some participants played more of a role than others, particularly relatively larger scale growers, who were formative in conceiving of this study and were the food growers who completed pilot interviews with me and provided feedback on my interview questions. This may have made some of the initial questions less pertinent to backyard gardeners.

Sampling. The sampling strategy also presents some limitations. I built relationships with many of the more visible gardening leaders in Ypsilanti, who mostly identified as men. On the other hand, most of the food growers who I recruited through my partnership with Growing Hope and word of mouth identified as women. As these food growers were primarily backyard gardeners, my sample is primarily made up of a larger subset of people who identify as women and non-binary who grow food in more private spaces, and a smaller subset of people who identify as men who grow food in more public spaces. This may be representative of actual growing practices amongst marginalized people in Ypsilanti or it may be an artifact of my sampling strategy. Additionally, as the home growing program at Growing Hope is offered to all families who buy homes through Habitat for Humanity, findings about the ties between affordable housing programs and access to land to grow food is coming from people for whom that tie has explicitly been made organizationally.

Role of interviewer social locations and community involvement. As someone who lives in this community, there were ways that not just my social locations, but also my literal geographic location and community involvements, undoubtedly impacted what interviewees chose to share with me. For example, the knowledge that I have as a fairly experienced gardener appeared to build bridges with people and encourage them to share their experiences in more depth than perhaps would have been true if I did not grow food myself. However, as a white person pursuing a PhD at U-M, there were significant racial and class differences between me and the majority of the people who I interviewed. When discussing issues like housing affordability and gentrification, interviewees would often say things like, "Well, I don't know what your experiences have been…" which I read as a way to hedge what they were saying and/or invite me to share briefly about my experiences so that they could place me in the segregated landscape of Ypsilanti. In these moments or other moments where it was relevant, I would often share that after being a life-long renter, in marrying my partner, I am now a homeowner in Normal Park, which is one of the whitest and wealthiest parts of the city. As one of the neighborhoods closest to Ann Arbor, Normal Park's home prices are skyrocketing and although the neighborhood has always been one of the most privileged in Ypsilanti, many of the families who are moving in are of a very different class status than the existing community, which makes the neighborhood increasingly exclusive. My status as a white homeowner in such a relatively privileged neighborhood could have limited how candid some interviewees felt they could be with me when discussing fraught issues like gentrification. In addition, as a white person with class and educational privilege, there are undoubtedly pieces of my interviewees' stories and perspectives that I just did not fully understand and could have misrepresented in my findings. To try to mitigate this, I shared what I wrote about specific people back to them to ensure that my analysis was accurate.

Further, my community involvement in several gardening initiatives in the city may have impacted both how comfortable interviewees felt with me and their willingness to participate in the first place. I got to know several participants and community partners through my involvement with the Cooperative Orchard of Ypsilanti (CORY); through serving on the advisory board, volunteering, and hosting fundraising events for We the People Opportunity Farm (WTPOF); and through having a plot and serving as a steward for the Normal Park Community Garden (NPCG). These involvements, as well as having a community-supported agriculture (CSA) share with Old City Acres, meant that I had dual relationships with many of the interviewees and community partners. While I assured participants and community partners that involvement or non-involvement in this project would not impact our relationship or my support of their organizations, these dual relationships still could have impacted how free people felt to decline participation as an interviewee or community partner, as well as how they chose to present themselves during the interviews.

Areas of Future Research

Measuring social-ecological climate resilience. Future research should go further than this project by measuring the social-ecological climate resilience of growing food, specifically for small scale food growers in the Global North. Some of this research exists (Newell et al., 2022; Taylor & Lovell, 2014), but how can this work be done within a food sovereignty and Black agrarian lens to ensure that the cultural traditions and powerful history of marginalized communities is the center of climate resilience planning? We must acknowledge that not all of the old collective survival strategies will work in the new reality of climate change, just as the COVID-19 pandemic challenged existing strategies, but what are the ones that will work and what is the spirit of the ones that may no longer work? And how can that spirit be harnessed? For example, intergenerational living may have exposed elders to increased risks of contracting COVID-19 early in the pandemic, but the spirit of

intergenerational care and honoring elders was vital to protecting the people who were most vulnerable to COVID-19, particularly before vaccines are widely available within any given community.

Land and social protections in places of relative climate refuge. Further research is also needed to understand if and at what scale elites are buying land in areas that are expected to serve as potential climate refuge and what social and economic inequalities already exist in such places. Understanding this is essential to planning how to enact land and social protections in these areas to not worsen already existing inequalities, particularly in the absence of large-scale transfers of land back to Indigenous stewards. Any further research on the impacts of climate migration on already vulnerable people living in relative climate refuge must be done in a way that is actively anti-xenophobic and recognizes global solidarity and collective liberation. Otherwise, this research could lend credence to ecofascism.

Role of social work. Who do we, as social workers, need to be in this moment? How can we respond to the "epic times" (Ramos, 2022) that we are living in? How can we grow our souls as Grace Lee Boggs (2012) challenged us to do, in this moment of transition that is no less profound than that from feudalism to capitalism? As social work is facing a reckoning over our complicity in structural racism and settler colonialism, causing some to question whether the field should continue to exist (Maylea, 2021), how can we embody the transformations that we want to see in the field as a whole? One way forward is to divest ourselves from the professional charity model and instead work in solidarity with BIPOC and working class communities globally. The emerging literature on mutual aid within social work (Bell, 2021; Izlar, 2019; Littman et al, 2022) provides a way forward in the context of ongoing global crises.

Conclusion

Ever since she asked it, I have been thinking seriously about Nuola's question of "white people who believe, supposedly, in Indigenous sovereignty and Black liberation, what are y'all gonna do with all these extra properties you have that you're renting out? What's your plan there?" Although I do not own extra properties, one of the things that her question elicits for me is thinking about what do I have that really should not belong to me? As a white settler in a white supremacist colonial society, the most obvious and true answer is everything. However, there are some things in my life in particular that really obviously should not belong to me. The most glaring example was the land that makes up CORY. I collectively owned a tiny piece of land in the historically Black but rapidly gentrifying South Side with other CORY members who were predominantly white. I originally became involved with CORY at the request of an existing member to help with anti-racist organizational development, but as time went on, it became increasingly clear to most of the people involved in the orchard that the land should not belong to us and needed to be passed on. In the last year, we worked collectively to devise a process of passing ownership of the land, the legal entity, and all collective funds to Brother Noah and Gary-Bey of King-Dome Builders, who had been involved in the orchard for a number of years prior to the transition. This transfer of land was in the spirit of acknowledging and beginning to repair past harms, but it was not reparations nor could it be a substitute for the kind of massive, transformative reparations that are needed to start to repair the harm that has been done over the last four centuries. However, I do think that white people like me, who aspire to be anti-colonial and anti-racist, need to answer Nuola's question by taking stock of our lives and seriously considering what we have that should not be ours and how we can prefigure the world that we want to live in by voluntarily giving those things back to the people who they should belong to.

For white people like me who want to start to repair the harm that has happened over hundreds of years, we both need to push for the structural change necessary to do that at scale, but

we also need to take the relatively small actions that we can right now as a start to this process, and as a way to shift our relationship to our own whiteness. What does it mean to actively try to give up power and privilege? Not just by giving away money that was created through racial capitalist processes, but using money to give decision-making power over to BIPOC people. This could involve tithing a significant amount of income to BIPOC-led organizations, getting involved with organizations like Resource Generation for people with inherited wealth, or selling rental properties at below market prices to BIPOC families/long-time residents of a gentrifying neighborhood. However, as important as wealth redistribution is, focusing solely on giving money can easily promote a charity mindset rather than solidarity. Indigenous communities are calling for white people and settlers to also engage in organizing and direct action (Carlson-Manathara & Rowe, 2021). As people who are not used to feeling unsafe due to our race or ethnicity (but certainly may due to other oppressed identities), taking more radical action can feel especially risky, but white people face less danger in doing so than BIPOC people because of how our privilege protects us.

On a broader scale, social work needs to go through a similar process. No longer can or should we see ourselves as arbiters of community conflicts or planners of community change without acknowledging all of the ways that we as individuals and as a field are implicated in these conflicts and why the changes need to be made. As we navigate the epic times that we are living through, the knowledge, skills bases, and logic that was developed within a profession so squarely formed in a modernist anthropocentric and industrial capitalist perspective are not sufficient to address the existential problems that we currently face, most especially in a changing climate. Rather, we need to humble ourselves to acknowledge the ways that we are just one part of this broader ecosystem of people and communities who are trying to make change and care for and protect each other. There are many lessons for us to learn from these people and communities, such as the food growers who I interviewed. Perhaps one of the most salient lessons is that our skillset may best be

suited to helping to remove barriers and facilitate access for community members who are already

doing the work, rather than seeing ourselves as driving forces behind planned community change.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Study Flier

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR STUDY ABOUT GARDENERS AND FARMERS IN YPSILANTI

I am an Ypsilanti resident, affiliated with the University of Michigan, and am conducting a research study on access to growing food and the impact that gardening has on people. I am looking for people (over 18 years of age) to interview who grow food in and around Ypsilanti, Michigan. I am especially interested in learning from the wisdom of long-time growers, communities of color, and working class communities.

If you participate in the study, you will be asked to talk about your growing practices, how you access land to grow on, your neighborhood, and your thoughts on the environment.

I will ask to interview you twice — the first interview should take 15-20 minutes, the second around an hour. All research participants will be compensated for their time at the end of each interview (up to $70 total).

If you are interested in participating or learning more about the study, please contact:

Finn McLafferty Bell, MSW
PhD Candidate, Social Work and Sociology
University of Michigan
stephbel@umich.edu
734-███████

Appendix 2. Food Growers' Interview Guide

Historical/Demographic Context (Stories that locate them within Ypsi)
-First, I'd like to gather just a few demographic variables. Would you mind telling me what year you were born? Your race**/ethnicity[2]**? Your gender? If I refer to you using pronouns, what pronouns would you like me to use, if any (i.e. he, she, they)? What do (or did) you do for a living? Growing up, would you say that your family was well off, not well off, or somewhere in between? What is the highest level of education that you received (i.e. some high school, high school graduate, some college, technical school graduate, graduate degree)? **Do you have children? Grandchildren? Do you own or rent your home? Who do you live with?**
-**Where did you grow up?** How did you or your family first come to live in Ypsilanti/Michigan? How long has your family/you lived here?
-**Would you describe yourself as a farmer, a gardener, or something else? If you're part of an organization that's related to growing food, could you describe that organization?**

Neighborhood (Stories about their neighborhood specifically and any changes to it)
-What neighborhood do you live in?
-How long have you lived in this neighborhood specifically?
-How do you feel about your neighborhood? What do you like best about your neighborhood? What do you like least about it?
-What kind of changes have you noticed during your time here? How have the kinds of people who live here changed, if at all? How do you feel about the changes you see occurring? How have these changes affected you? What do you think is causing those changes?
-What kind of changes have you observed in the area more generally? How have these changes affected you? How do you feel about these changes? What do you think is causing those changes?
-Has it become easier or harder to get good housing **during your time** here? What made it become easier or harder?
-Has it become easier or harder to grow food **during your time** here? What made it become easier or harder?

Cultural Transmission of Knowledge (Stories about how they came to be food growers and what it means to them)
-How did you first start growing food? **What motivated you to start growing food?** How did you learn how to grow food?
-Did anyone in your family grow food? Who? What did they grow? Where did they grow?
-Who have you interacted with in growing food (i.e. people you garden with; people who have helped you or you've helped; people who have taught you things or who you've taught things to)?
-Have other people helped you learn how to grow food? Who? How did you meet them?
-Have you helped other people learn how to grow food? Who? How did you meet them?
-Have you taken or taught any classes or workshops on how to grow food? What were they?

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[2] Items in bold were added during fieldwork.

-What do you grow? **How did you decide what to grow?**
-What do the varieties of vegetables and fruits that you grow mean to you? Where did you get the seeds or plants of these varieties from? Are any of them varieties that are hard to get? Are any of them varieties that have been passed down to you? (From who?)
-How does growing food fit into any cultural traditions that you might have?
-**What are some barriers that you have faced in growing food? What would make it easier for you to grow food?**

Land Access (Stories about land and potential difficulties in accessing it)
-Where do you grow food? How did you first start growing on that land? (*If landownership unclear*: So, who technically owns that land?) How easy or difficult was it to get access to land to grow on? Do you own any other land?
-Where else have you grown food?
-There have been reports both historically and currently of it being harder for people of color, and particularly African Americans **and Indigenous peoples**, to get access to land to grow food on than it is for white people. What have your experiences been like? Do you think your race **or ethnicity** has shaped how you've been able to access land to grow? (*If yes*: In what ways?)
-There have been reports both historically and currently of it being harder for working class and poor people to get access to land to grow food on than it is for middle class and upper class people. What have your experiences been like? Do you think your class has shaped how you've been able to access land to grow? (*If yes*: In what ways?)
-How do you feel about the land that you grow on?
-Have you ever lost access to land that you grew on? What happened? Who was involved?

Resilience from Growing Food (Stories about how growing food has helped them to weather storms)
-What have been some of the benefits of growing food for you? Has it helped you in any way? How? Has growing food ever helped you or your family to get through "tough times"? In what way?
-What do you do with the food you grow (i.e. eat it, preserve it, share it, sell it, etc.)?
-About how much of the food that you eat would you say that you grow yourself? For the food that you don't grow, where does it come from? **Where does the majority of the food that you eat come from?**
-**Do you do any foraging, fishing, hunting or other similar types of food gathering?**
-If you had to for some reason, about how much of your diet do you think that you could grow yourself?

Environment/Climate (Thoughts on the environment and climate crisis)
-How do you feel about the Earth? **What feelings come up for you when you think about the environment?** Does growing food influence how you feel about the Earth and the environment?
-In the last few years, we've had some extreme weather (flooding, early and late frosts, drought) that has been hard for some people who grow food. How have weather changes impacted you? How have they impacted your ability to grow food?

-As the climate continues to change, we're expected to have more flooding, weather extremes, and disruptions to the growing cycles, as well as increased health issues. How do you think these effects will impact you? Your family? Your community? How concerned are you about these impacts? What ways do you think you or your community could prepare for these potential challenges, if any? How are you currently working to prepare for these challenges, if this is something that you're currently working on?

-In a recent article from the magazine *Popular Science*, Michigan was identified as the safest place to be as the climate changes. What do you think about this? **How does this make you feel? Pros or cons?**

-**Anything else that you want to share that we haven't covered yet?**

Oral History Interviews

-Eventually, I would like to record oral histories from food growers in Ypsilanti who would like to make their knowledge and experiences available to the wider community. Would you potentially be interested in recording an oral history in the future?

-**Do you know other working class and/or Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) food growers who might be interested in being interviewed by me? Would you be willing to help me get in touch with them?**

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