EATING IN URBAN FRONTIERS: ALTERNATIVE FOOD AND GENTRIFICATION IN CHICAGO

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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While scholars and activists have analyzed the consequences of a largely white, middle-class membership in the alternative food movement, lesser consideration has been given to the relationship food has with gentrification processes. On Chicago's West Side, alternative food spaces such as gardens, restaurants and farmers markets are staking a physical and cultural claim in longstanding communities of color. Food is perhaps unique and more powerful than prior initiators of gentrification such as art due to its mundane, everyday qualities that intersect with its ability to uphold class distinctions. Using qualitative interviews, participant-observation and a literature review, I will examine how alternative food contributes to and is a form of resistance against the uprooting of longstanding Puerto Rican and Mexican communities on Chicago's West Side. Readers who have an investment in the alternative food movement must be conscientious of these tensions and consider resisting gentrification by creating inclusive, intercultural food spaces.

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CONSUMING FOOD SPACES

"We recognized that food is at once a very personal and intimate thing while at the same time part of a political system that can at times unite and at others further stratify society. Few other systems touch people's daily lives in such an intimate way and offer an opportunity to exert larger political influence." Ona, SF Food Systems Project (Coburn 2009:114).

Introduction

On a scorching summer afternoon in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood, several hundred friends, families and individuals gather on Logan Boulevard to purchase their weekly groceries from farm stands filled with local foods such as tomatoes, peaches, grass-fed beef, smoked Lake Michigan whitefish and freshly baked bread. Vendors selling fresh produce come from Wisconsin and Michigan, or in some cases, urban farms in Chicago. Young, trendy market goers sit under maple trees, eating tacos from a nearby stand and drinking *horchata* while instagramming their market purchases. Mothers and fathers rock their babies in strollers while talking to friends about their recent apartment renovations. The neighborhood is known for its "Slow Food culture," or the marked opposition to the loss of pleasure and hospitality within food production and consumption. The Slow Food movement represents people with an appreciation for food culture, and a reverence for farming methods that are less harmful to the environment (Pietrykowski 2004). In Logan Square, Sundays at the farmers market are the best day to observe this shared representation of culture.

Logan Square and its neighbor to the south, Humboldt Park, are both located northwest of Chicago's central business district (CBD) and are actively experiencing the process of gentrification; the cultural and economic displacement of lower-income

residents by an influx of higher socioeconomic residents. They are often young professionals seeking affordable housing and middle to upper-class lifestyles (Rose 2010). Logan Square (Fig. 1) was built by European immigrants in the late 19th century and once heavily concentrated with small farms, indicating that food production was central to the neighborhood's economic origins. Residents would haul fruits and vegetables on horse-drawn carriages to downtown patrons in "the Loop." Since then, Humboldt Park and Logan Square have shifted in composition. The early German, Danish and Norwegian populations transitioned into Polish residents in the early 20th century (Fernandez 2012). Post WWII, many of those European families received Federal Housing Authority (FHA) mortgage loans and left the city for the suburban dwellings, a lending system that was only made available to white families. This systematic and racist policy became popularly known as 'white flight' as European-Americans left urban centers en masse for suburbia living (Fernandez 2012). Since the 1950's, Latinos/as, primarily Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, and African Americans have largely inhabited Logan Square and Humboldt Park, exhibited not only statistically through US Census data but also visibly through the vibrancy of cultural activities in the neighborhoods.

On the whole, 82,715 people live in Logan Square and approximately 65% consider themselves Hispanic or Latino, while 26% are white (2000). However, Census data demonstrates that although still largely Latino, Logan Square has witnessed 16,545 Hispanics leave the neighborhood between 2000 and 2010. Overall, the neighborhood's population has dropped by 12 percent since 2000, while non-Hispanic whites have increased by 31 percent (McCarron 2011). While the Census is not necessarily the most accurate in its racial or ethnic categorizations, nor does it explain *why* people are leaving

the neighborhood, these statistics still demonstrate a dramatic population shift. So too are there spatial and cultural shifts. Swanky, sustainably focused restaurants and direct-trade coffee shops have swept the neighborhood. Long known for its affordability and diversity, it was named one of the US's "hottest neighborhoods" in 2013 (Ellis 2013) and Bon Appetit called it "Chicago's new restaurant row." It is also home to the "best farmers market in the city" and the "best local grocer" (Best of Chicago 2013: Food & Drink).

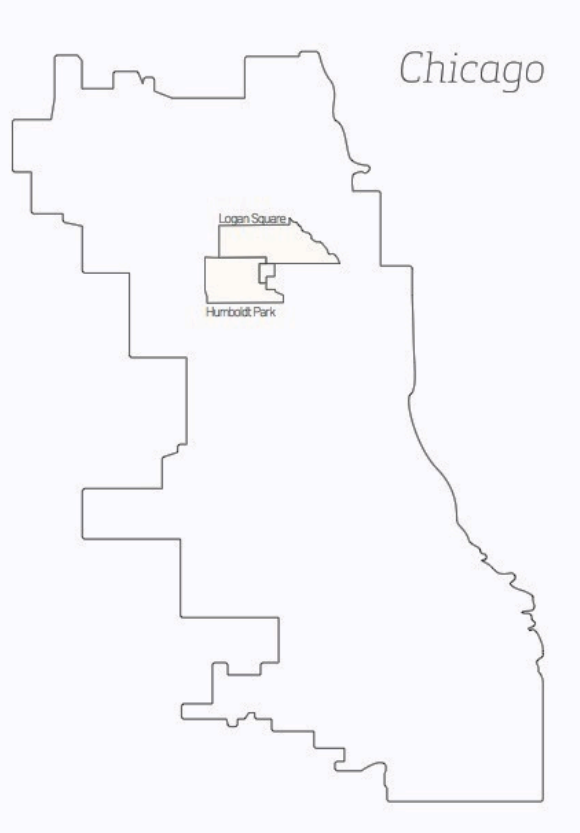

Figure 1. Logan Square and Humboldt Park's neighborhood boundaries (2013).

A mile south in Humboldt Park (Fig. 1), there is a mixed community with Puerto Ricans primarily in the east section, African Americans to the west and increasing populations of Mexican-Americans and European-Americans. Humboldt Park is also

home to a 207-acre park bearing the same name, created in 1869 and named for the German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt. The neighborhood has been self-described as a "Well-organized, outspoken, sometimes fiery community" that has "mixed reactions to the growing number of higher-income, predominantly white newcomers" (*Humboldt Park: Staking Our Claim* 2005). Humboldt Park is approximately 48% Hispanic, 48% African American and 3% white, however that low percent has certainly risen since Census data was collected in 2010 (2000). Estimates of shifting populations are harder to generate regarding the Puerto Rican community's status. Nonetheless, scholars have estimated that Puerto Ricans populations have dropped in Humboldt Park from 32,000 in 1990 to 24,000 in 2000. A similar drop in population occurred throughout the city for Puerto Ricans (Rinaldo 2004: 171). The lively and colorful Puerto Rican corridor, called *Paseo Boricua*, is witnessing nearby growth in white residents, alternative restaurants and a resurgence of community gardens, particularly between Western Avenue and California Avenue. An active resistance to gentrification is present in the neighborhood through physical signage, voices of leadership and community-based organizations. The majority of this research will focus on the Puerto Rican community in the eastern portion of the neighborhood considering their physical proximity to gentrification processes and the presence of resistance.

Chicago has been called a "city of neighborhoods" because they are culturally distinct and highly defined (Douglas 2012). As the third most populated city in America, it is also the most racially segregated (Glaeser and Vigdor 2012). In the 1990s, 92 percent of Latinos were residentially segregated according to housing advocates (Perez 2004: 130). The city's legacy of segregation makes it visually evident when gentrification is

occurring through changes such as heightened property values, an influx of white residents, new commercial or residential developments, infrastructure and elite culinary or entertainment destinations. Gina Perez has even observed that the process of gentrification "reconfigures a neighborhood's racial and social landscape" (2004: 145).

In fact, so racialized is the development any aspect of American society, it would be difficult to talk about urban landscapes without considering how power, race and space intersect during gentrification processes (Kobayashi and Peake 2000). Fig. 2 shows the loss of Hispanic populations and rise in non-Hispanic whites in the city's core over the past ten years. The map is a visualization of a growing shift in the residential landscape. Thus, the emerging popularity of these neighborhoods does not start with a blank slate, but its part of a larger structural change in urban spaces.

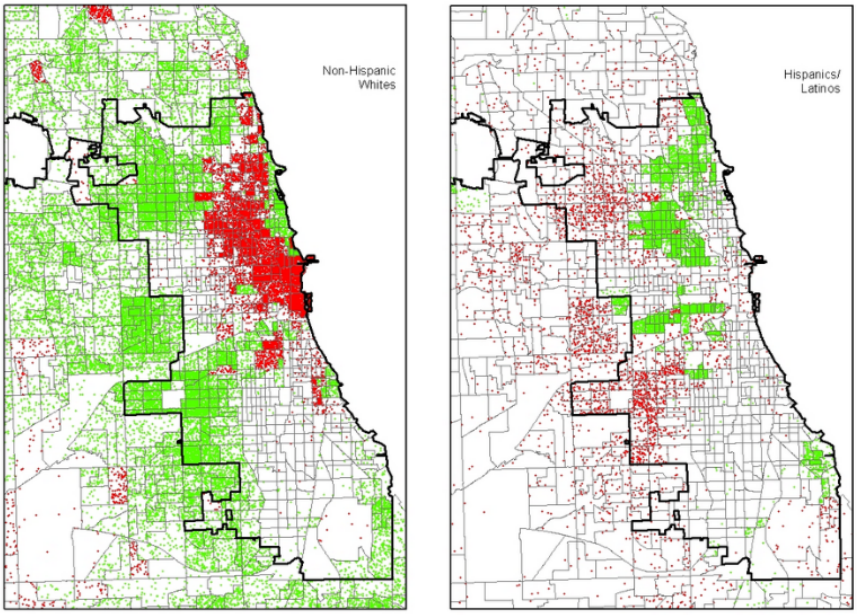

Figure 2. Population loss and gain in Chicago, 2000-2010. Green symbolizes loss and red symbolizes gains in population (Population Change by "Race" and Hispanic Status 2000-2010: Chicago and Vicinity)

Chicago is not alone as gentrification is a process that is happening throughout the United States and increasingly throughout the world. Nationally, the population of gentrifiers – the cadre of artists or other members of society who live alternative lifestyles, are largely white, seeking low rent and are willing to live "on the edge" – is rapidly expanding as more and more young, college-educated US residents urbanize to major metropolitan cities. And now, almost a third of Chicago's population is between the ages of 20 and 35 (U.S. Census 2010).

This demographic shift, coupled with the growing acceptance of the sustainable food movement has allocated popular food culture and those who participate in it more power to stake a claim in urban spaces than ever before. Although any definition of sustainability should include social justice (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, Curran 2012), the booming alternative food movement has been slow to address issues of race, class and privilege. Sarah, a white, middle-class and ten-year resident of Logan Square remarked:

> …the farmers market has made a big impact on the neighborhood. Even the square, like I said, there was no draw to come to the square really before the market. There were a couple of restaurants; I think because of the farmers market there is a lot more activity on and around the square. So, it might be a coincidence, but I think it might be the farmers market that did it.

Here, Sarah demonstrates her observations regarding the farmers market's power to change the neighborhood. In a sense, making informed, ethical decisions on food purchases involves spatial relationships of power just as much as economic power. Therefore, space is not just physical location, but also a group of people with shared representation or cultural zone (Rinaldo 2002).

Often the discourse in urban food systems examines *food deserts*, a term that United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) applies to more than 23.5 million Americans to designate neighborhoods that do not have financial or spatial access to healthy foods. However, outside of a few scholars (Alkon 2008, Guthman 2008, 2011), lesser attention has been given to why some groups have more cultural access to these resources. Given that more and more farmers markets offer financial accessibility programs through federal assistance, attention must be brought to cultural access such as types of foods made available and diversity among farmers and shoppers within the space. One does not need a scientific study to walk through the Logan Square Farmer's Market and observe the makeup is predominantly homogenous and white (Fig. 3), while statistically Logan Square is predominantly Latino (US Census 2000, "Logan Square" 2013).

Figure 3. Sunday at the Logan Square Farmer's Market, (*Logan Square Farmer's Market*).

So too are there spatial juxtapositions in price and affordability when dining out between the rising number of swanky farm-to-table restaurants with average prices of fifteen dollars for an entrée while nearby restaurants sell *mofongo*, a popular Puerto Rican

dish, for about eight dollars on average. In this paper I seek to illuminate the discourses and practices that have not only normalized whiteness into alternative food culture, but also created uneven spaces for food and local redevelopment.

Food, Space and Power

Indeed, consuming alternatively produced and handcrafted food is now a daily cultural act among urbanites that seek to counter the effects of globalization, industrial agriculture, corporate food production, disempowerment and alienation from food. *Alternative food* has been defined as the practices and programs which work to educate and bring consumers access to local, sustainably grown and seasonal food (Guthman 2011). Despite diversity among people involved in the global food movement, such as the work of *La Via Campesina or* Slow Food International, several scholars have already noted that much of the American alternative food movement is coded through whiteness, which works simultaneously to color the movement and exclude those who do not participate in it (Guthman 2008; Alkon 2010; Slocum 2010), yet little to no consideration has been given to the impact that it has on urban spaces, particularly those in the process of gentrification.

What was once deemed a radical, progressive movement has become increasingly mainstream in its approach. This may be due, in part, to the ease to which complex sustainable solutions are proposed through better consumer purchases, rather than political change. The movement's largely white participants have been critiqued for their elitist consumption, such as dining out at expensive local restaurants, shopping exclusively at local farmers markets or environmentally marketed stores such as Whole

Foods. From twenty-dollar glasses of biodynamic wine to local suckling pig with curried cauliflower, daily food choices reproduce social class positioning or what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls 'class fractions' (1984), which have contributed to coding sustainable food as a white or affluent space.

In the 1990's and early 2000's the act of "claiming" space in a gentrifying neighborhood was characterized through bohemian cafes, artist galleries and lofts in deindustrialized working-class neighborhoods. In Logan Square and Humboldt Park, it is increasingly symbolized through farmers markets, local food restaurants, co-op grocery stores and community gardens. Food is, perhaps unique and more powerful than prior initiators of gentrification such as art, due to its mundane, everyday qualities, which intersect with its ability to uphold social class distinctions.

But what brings white culture the power to claim the movement and space? Racialization is an active process in which whiteness occurs as the normative power that enjoys social or environmental privileges by controlling both the dominant values and institutions. Power persists because those in the dominant culture often ignore or deny race-based symptoms of larger problems. And even more, white culture gains power "by *occupying space* within a segregated social landscape" (Kobayshi and Peake 2000). And although the sustainable agriculture movement is now just beginning to address concerns of racial and class inequality, there is still work to be done (Schaniberg and Gould 1994, Allen 2004, Alkon 2008). Since gentrification is a class tactic that symbolically and materially displaces power in urban space, most often towards a higher social class (Bridge 2001), America's rising food culture must be considered during the process of gentrification and displacement.

Further, those who have an interest in the alternative food movement, strengthening communities and reviving local economies must reflect that even their presence may be agents of community change. Zukin notes, "Whether the specific discourse of consumption is based on distinction or inclusion, alternative consumers are not so innocent agents of change. Their desire for alternative foods, both gourmet and organic, and for 'middle class' shopping areas encourages a dynamic of urban redevelopment that displaces working-class and ethnic minority consumers" (2008: 724). Often, however, these conflicts regarding space go unseen in dominant, white culture. Therefore, urban food spaces "in transition" are ideal sites to study white privilege and power because they are locations where a racially marked culture and space are being interrupted by the unmarked culture of whiteness (Ramos-Zayas 2001: 349).

Zukin also remarks "Gentrification receives its greatest boost not just from a specific subsidy, but from the state's substantive and symbolic legitimation of the cultural claim to urban space" (2008: 42). These spaces of alternative food production are often legitimized by the state, perhaps even more than art galleries because the common-held belief and mission to contribute social good for local and global challenges. Certainly, it is critical that the government supports local and sustainable production of food. However, just as purchasing low-cost properties and renovating them to meet "yuppie" desires has been at the heart of the gentrification debate, farmers markets, gardens and alternative restaurants are able to stake similar claims to low-cost, foreclosed and abandoned property to meet the needs of their social and environmental missions.

I want to be clear that this is not an argument that good, clean and fair food should be or is currently limited to white and affluent populations. As this research will note,

there are many groups who do not fit the description listed above and are working for food justice, food sovereignty and *just sustainabilities*, which is what Julian Agyeman and other scholars have loosely defined as the sustainable use of resources and the just distribution of environmental risks and benefits (Agyeman and Evans 2004, Alkon 2008).

Further, assuming the current process by which mainstream alternative food is conducted is the only viable or sustainable practice would be a mistake. Mares and Pena note that the activities deemed "alternative" such as saving heirloom seeds, using the whole animal or consuming a seasonal diet are "the traditional place-based practices of Native, Chicana/o, and other marginalized communities" and that failing to acknowledge the sources of alternative practices results in white, local food advocates asserting a privileged positionaility (2011: 201). Therefore, despite numerous calls for public participation and community development through local and sustainable food, this is one argument in which mainstream discourse may be appropriating cultures or excluding diverse cultural practices when considering how to rebuild the food system. Further, Mares and Pena argue there is an:

> …inability to account for an understanding of food as more than just a nutritional commodity, but rather, a set of social relations and cultural practices, including foodways and heritage cuisines that constitute a larger whole (2011: 199).

As this thesis will argue, the whiteness and commodity driven aspects of alternative food have come to inhabit both a cultural symbol and physical space, which can further stratify classes within urban spaces. However, understanding how the process of gentrification unfolds can illuminate that it is *not a naturally occurring process*, but the result of highly politicized and racialized origins. Therefore, gentrification is also a process that can be interrupted.

Gentrification, Struggle and Resistance

In February 2012, dozens of protestors gathered outside the padlocked bakery Tipsy Cake in Humboldt Park. Waving Puerto Rican flags and homemade signs bearing the words "No Se Vende!" and "Humboldt Park is Our Community and We Love it," local leaders spoke out in resistance to remarks made by the bakery's owner, Naomi Levine and called for a boycott of her products. Levine's bakery is marketed as combining "wholesome and fresh ingredients with a unique design sense to create beautiful cakes and pastries for all occasions" ("About Us," 2013). During a recorded interview in 2012, Levine revealed that her decision to move her successful business away from the Humboldt Park neighborhood was due to "too many gunshots in the cake." Her new bakery is now located in Bucktown, a white, middle-to-upper class community that was highly gentrified years prior to her statements. Levine, "…really wanted Bucktown for a location" because she "could get any type of client in here not feeling nervous." The video concludes as the interviewer takes a bite out of a Tipsy Cake pastry, which Levine jokingly nicknamed, "Humboldt Crack" (*Tipsy Cake Local Video*). Clearly food, through the act of producing and consuming in public and private, can serve both to bring groups together and to set groups apart from each other with distinct cultural identities (Slocum 2010, Mintz and Du Bois, 2002).

Back at the rally, Alderman Roberto Maldonado of the 26th Ward remarked that these comments were untrue and perceived as racist towards the historically Puerto Rican, Latino and African American community. Juanita Garcia, a volunteer at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center voiced:

> I am a Puerto Rican woman who lives in Humboldt Park, within one block from Tipsy Cake. I have lived in Humboldt Park all my life choosing to also raise my child here, and my perception, like most residents of this community is completely the opposite of Naomi Levine. How does someone open a business in a community without an interest in learning about it? Clearly, there are lessons to be learned. The business and owner reflect the common occurrence of people coming to this community knowing nothing about its history, people and culture and not wanting to learn about it either. This also serves as an example of how gentrification, which are we are consciously struggling against, unfolds within a community (*Humboldt Park Residents 2012*).

Although it is now a household name that many can identify when they see it (Brown-Saracino 2010; Jager 1986), gentrification in US neighborhoods continues to be a contentious, unequal and violent process that is experienced with high levels of disparity in urban spaces (Wilson et al. 2004; Munoz 1998). It has been shown to disrupt existing social structures of support and exchange within communities, most dramatically among people such as the elderly, the poor and non-white racial and ethnic groups (Bentacur 2010, Brown-Saracino 2010). While physical displacement may contribute to increased poverty and homelessness, displaced residents must also navigate new support networks, places of business, services and they often become more dependent on automobiles as they are pushed farther away from public transit and infrastructure (Brown-Saracino 2010, Levy and Cybriwsky 1980, Perez 2004).

In Chicago, over 87 percent of federal funding for low-income Illinois housing has been cut since the 1980's, making these families and individuals particularly vulnerable to the political pressures on housing stock. While making up more than 25 percent of Chicago's population, nearly a quarter of Latinos live in poverty within city limits. Even more, Puerto Ricans have the highest poverty rates among poor Latinos (Perez 2004:131). The losses of community development and subsidized housing

construction, coupled with highest populations of working poor residents, have perpetuated the struggle of Chicago Latinos for decades. Further, food plays a special role in Humboldt Park's struggle for community resiliency. Humboldt Park is classified as a food desert in several areas, has the 2nd highest rate of childhood obesity in Chicago and maintains an adult diabetes rate three times the national average, at 48% and 21% respectively (Margellos-Anast et al. 2008 *Diabetes in Humboldt Park* 2006). However, current poverty rates, residential mobility, obesity and housing crises among Latinos in Chicago were historically produced through highly political decisions.

The majority of Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and other Latino groups were residing in the Near North Side and Near West Side until the 1960's and 1970's when urban renewal projects were implemented in high concentrations (Fernandez 2012). Urban renewal was a public project to reinvest into old and decaying inner city buildings and to fight the decentralization of cities. Supported by millions of dollars in city, state and federal funding, massive demolitions, slum clearances and the use of eminent domain forced most Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and other Latinos to move to the west side of the central business district, where Humboldt Park and Logan Square are located. They were met with high levels of housing discrimination and verbal assaults by white residents, which were reinforced by police and civil institutions (Fernandez 2004). Chicago, like many other cities, followed a pattern of "uneven development" which meant the "unequal distribution of both public and private resources and capital along racial and class lines (Fernandez 2012:141).

For Chicago's Puerto Rican communities who have been oppressed through a history of spatial marginalization and gentrification in other Chicago neighborhoods, the

memory of forced displacement is fresh (Personal interviews 2013). Today's issues of health crises and food injustice are deeply intertwined with politics and history. While being thoughtful as a researcher not to conflate the experiences of people of color in Humboldt Park who have extremely diverse backgrounds, the neighborhood continues to represent a space for resistance against oppression and platform for the voices of Puerto Rican politics and activists (Personal interviews 2013, Rinaldo 2004).

East Humboldt Park is home to *Paseo Boricua*, the commercial and cultural capital of Puerto Rican culture in the Midwest, which spans between Western and California Avenue on Division Street. Metal arches (Fig. 4) in the shape of Puerto Rican flags, Puerto Rican-owned businesses, murals, old San Juan building facades and restaurants send a clear message that *Paseo Boricua* is a significant cultural and physical space.

Figure 4. *Paseo Boricua's* welcome flags on Division Street and building facades that replicate Old San Juan architecture (Personal photographs, 2013).

On the whole, Puerto Ricans have high levels of pride in their culture and the space of Humboldt Park, as evidenced through the annual Puerto Rican Day Parade in June and Puerto Rican Fiesta in late August. One block east of the metal flags is the culturally

divergent Division Street in Wicker Park, a street full of bars, boutiques, yoga studios, restaurants and mostly white professionals. Many residents and visitors on both sides of the street speak of Western as the gateway into a different world, rather than a physical space a few hundred feet away (Personal interviews, 2013). As gentrification unfolds from Wicker Park onto Humboldt Park, *Paseo Boricua* is also the site of tense relationships surrounding impending development projects and cultures, as seen in the Tipsy Cake demonstrations or the neighborhood campaign *No se Vende*.

The most public organization opposed to contemporary gentrification on the West Side is the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC) and it is a force within Humboldt Park for its integrative programming and production of cultural festivals. Founded in 1973, the PRCC is a non-profit organization that was built on the following principles: "a philosophy of self-determination, a methodology of self-actualization and critical thought, and an ethics of self-reliance best expressed in the motto, "To live and to help live"" (Puerto Rican Cultural Center). The PRCC recognizes that impending gentrification is part of a history of colonization and forced displacement for the Puerto Rican, Latino and black communities. The Puerto Rican activists at the Tipsy Cake demonstration provided responses to Levine's remarks that not only indicate resistance to racist beliefs about the people who reside in Humboldt Park, but they also reference an opposition to the continued colonization of space by affluent groups of outsiders, both in Chicago and in Puerto Rico.

Resistance to this process in Humboldt Park varies and can be expressed through direct responses like Juanita's call to reflect on the bakery's actions or more subtle and everyday experiences, such as community murals (Fig. 5) or the presence of a Puerto

Rican food truck in the local park. Power not only produces a prevailing hegemonic and spatial order of relationships, but also "everyday acts of resistance contest the dominant mapping of space" (Rinaldo 2002, Lefebvre 1996).

Figure 5. A mural, which reads "We resist displacement and uprooting" on *Paseo Boricua*, the economic and cultural capital of Puerto Rican culture in the Midwest, (Personal photograph 2013).

Even daily decisions on what to eat and what not to eat in a gentrifying neighborhood work to preserve and advance cultural identities and membership among communities of color, as well as white communities. For example, no white interviewees mentioned eating at Puerto Rican restaurants on *Paseo Boricua*, but they did reference their love for a farm-to-table restaurant and a vegetarian-focused diner that were just around the corner. Food is therefore never *just* about the body's need to eat, but rather participation in foodways are "manifestations and symbols of cultural histories and proclivities" (Agyeman and Alkon 2010, Douglass 1996, Winson 1993).

Henri Lefebvre theorized that because space always involves social relationships, it is also a contested space of struggle among different groups of people (Rinaldo 2002;

Lefebvre 1996). Just as urban renewal was a violent process, the gradual process of displacement block-by-block through gentrification ignites cultural conflicts as new and old residents begin to interact within a given space. *Contact theory* suggests that interaction between certain groups can work to reduce conflict, increase inclusion and help acknowledge privileges, given the right conditions (Dixon 2008). However, in the context of this research, the theory may have its limitations. Unless public spaces such as farmers markets or gardens are intercultural and inclusive of the existing community, there is high potential for tension in gentrifying neighborhoods. This exclusion is evident within urban commercial or commodity-driven spaces, such as the Logan Square Farmer's Market I spoke of earlier.

Juanita's public statements point out that everyday discourse surrounding food and food spaces cannot be taken for granted, particularly within gentrifying neighborhoods and resistance to this process is an ongoing fight. In Humboldt Park, Puerto Rican community organizations, residents and activists are working to address issues of food security, economic development, anti-colonialism, self-determination and the environment through rooftop and community gardens, local business, food trucks and a youth-run farmers market. Large disruptions to this local work through gentrification may be detrimental to reducing long-term healthy disparities. As this research will explore, perhaps too, food identity and health advocates are one method to form community resilience and resistance to a history of colonialism, oppression and gentrification for the Puerto Rican community.

Given the lived experiences of the voices that will be heard throughout my thesis, it is my intention to push the alternative food movement and community to consider if

urban spaces, such as community gardens, farmers markets and alternative restaurants create inclusive spaces that alleviate some of these conflicts, or whether they create exclusive spaces that contribute to gentrification. And further, as Mares and Pena point out in their study of South Central Farms in Los Angeles and Puget Sound Urban Farmers, public spaces such as community gardens or farmers markets have enormous opportunity to link life experiences of immigrants or marginalized communities to a deep sense of place through food, or in a sense writing their cultural story into the landscape (2011). If narrow interests manage the discourse surrounding the neighborhood and food, the effect of the process is bound to be largely negative rather than inclusive or intercultural. Therefore, food and sustainable practices – in its powerful position to represent cultural capital and economic power – may also create contested spaces during urban redevelopment and gentrification.

Methodology

My research builds on scholarly analyses regarding the alternative food movement and identity, while considering how such identities interpret and shape urban spaces. During the summer of 2013, I spent three months living on the border of the Humboldt Park and Logan Square neighborhoods engaging in an ethnographic study that analyzed the role food plays within the gentrification process, and how the daily acts of alternative food production and consumption create contested spaces on Chicago's West Side. For the purposes of this study public, alternative food spaces were confined to community gardens, farmers markets, non-profit organizations, restaurants and grocery stores.

Since gentrification is a complex and malign issue society faces, I chose ethnography as a research methodology to illuminate everyday experiences and relationships. Ethnography allows the researcher to observe and experience events, interactions and conversations in a way that surveys or controlled research environments cannot. It also allows the researcher to hone in on locally relevant ways of operating, while illuminating larger social themes or trends (Murchison 2010). Several researchers have written about the Chicago's West Side as a whole, or identified particular neighborhoods such as Wicker Park and Humboldt Park as areas of interest in both in both gentrification and Latino/a studies literature (Rinaldo 2002, Perez 2004, Ramos-Zayas 2001, Bentacur 2011). However, my research questions are different than others since I use the lens of food and daily interactions that revolve around food to describe both the process of gentrification and how it is resisted.

I developed a deeper understanding of the daily, lived experiences of those involved in or affected by the alternative food and sustainability movement by drawing on analysis from a case study of alternative food spaces in two Chicago neighborhoods, Humboldt Park and Logan Square. The sites chosen are not a random sample, but provide valuable variations on the topic considering their close proximity and similar trajectory in the last century. However, there are differences as Humboldt Park maintains an active, public resistance movement against gentrification, while Logan Square has an energetic alternative food community and less visible resistance movement.

Additionally, the majority of literature on gentrification narrowly focuses on the structuralist and detrimental effect gentrification has on marginalized populations (Sandoval 2010). Several authors have noted that sustainability may actually help

communities envision different forms of development through a focus on social justice, alternative economic development and alliances of resistance (Agyeman et al. 2002, Curran 2012, Raco 2005). Without discounting or minimizing the severity of gentrification, this research considers how these daily practices of alternative food such as community gardens and farmers markets can provide spaces to resist the negative effects of the process such as physical and cultural displacement and amplify community resiliency. Alternative food, in a sense, can be considered as a double edge sword. It is a cultural weapon of the gentrification process, but also a tool for creating self-reflective dialogue and bottom-up community development.

It must be noted that there is still ongoing debate among gentrification scholars whether to fault consumer demand – in the form of middle-class desires for upscale restaurants and condominiums – or the supply of these amenities through a capitalist, profit driven system. Put simply, do we blame the gentrifiers' cultural desires or the real estate developers' pocketbooks? While this debate will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two, it is problematic that gentrification at a ground level is examined less often than the larger political-economic factors themselves (Benatcur 2011). Geographer Laura Pulido notes "Although all the United States is informed by a national racial narrative, class structures and racial divisions of labor take shape and racial hierarchies are experienced at the regional and local levels" (Pulido 2006: 4). Without a thorough examination on public discourse, everyday interactions, conflict and emotions, it is detrimental to understanding how these processes persist and often become normalized within many urban environments.

Research Questions

My aim is to take a 'people-centered' empirical approach to demonstrate how changes in neighborhood composition are not only driven by the larger capitalist political economy, but also constructed through everyday experiences of producing, shopping and consuming food. Research questions include:

- How might food and space serve as a powerful lens into the racial and class-based experiences in gentrifying neighborhoods?
- What role does food play in the gentrification process? Can food spaces cause or work to circumvent some of the problems associated with gentrification such as physical and cultural displacement?
- What insights can be gained from these diverse daily experiences that provide constructive feedback for a more *just* and inclusive sustainability movement?

The following chapters in the thesis focus on the history of gentrification in the neighborhoods and the role food plays in that process. *Chapter two* looks at gentrification as a field of study and its relationship to food, commercial spaces and identity. *Chapter three* focuses on the relationship between community-driven development, food, health and resistance among Puerto Rican communities in Humboldt Park. *Chapter four* utilizes in-depth interviews and participant observation to describe how community gardens have become contested spaces within the two communities. *Chapter five* provides an analysis of the current situation and thoughts gained through ethnographic research for the future.

Sample

The primary data instruments included 18 in-depth qualitative interviews that lasted from 30 minutes to 1 hour (Appendix A - B) and participant observations at three locations: 1) commercial spaces such as farmers markets, grocery stores and restaurants

2) community gardens and 3) non-profit organizations in order to examine behavior and conversations at these sites and gain an understanding of the context in which those interactions lie. I sought out people for interviews who were members of the alternative food movement and/or residents within the two neighborhoods. I contacted people through direct emails and snowball sampling, which means I recruited participants through other participants. The interviews were semi-structured and I would often lead off with questions such as, "Tell me the story of your community garden" to understand the lived experiences of each individual participant. However, if interviewees were hesitant to elaborate with in-depth stories I would rely on the interview script (Appendix A) to initiate conversation. I spent Saturdays and Sundays wandering the Logan Square and Humboldt Park farmers markets, casually talking to sellers and market goers while jotting down notes. I was allowed to recruit members through the Logan Square Farmer's Market's monthly newsletter that reaches over 2,000 people. However, I was not permitted to conduct the interviews inside the market and met participants outside the boundaries. I dined at local restaurants, both in the restaurants marked as "alternative spaces" and those that symbolized Puerto Rican or Mexican cuisine in order to understand the changing nature of the culinary scene in each neighborhood. Alternative spaces are defined by their recent arrival to the neighborhood and a focus on local or sustainable foods in their menu. I collected menus from restaurants throughout the two neighborhoods, either in person or online. Menu analysis has been shown to be a sociological tool that reveals the re-production of social stratification and class in restaurants (Wright & Ransom 2005). I shopped at several different grocery stores, taking

inventory and notes on the products made available by grocers and corner bodegas for similar reasons.

I participated most often as a gardener in a Humboldt Park community garden with approximately 15 active members. I purchased a raised garden bed and actively partook in member emails; monthly meetings, casual garden conversations and I eventually conducted formal interviews in the space. I also volunteered at other community gardens to understand the dynamics of each garden and to gain access to interviewees. I often found myself harvesting, weeding, preparing compost or co-leading community give-a-ways before asking for an interview. I chose this method because I wanted to develop rapport and demonstrate that I was committed to the community space and the people who work within it.

Participants ranged in years of residency (>1 – 40 years), age (35-70 years) and racial or ethnic background (Appendix B). It was critical to have a variety of backgrounds to allow for variations in perspectives on the neighborhoods' changes. Participants had to live or work within the neighborhoods since many of the questions directly related to the lived experiences of the space. All participants were provided an approved informed consent sheet and were over 18 years old since the study aimed to demonstrate the adult population's perspective on alternative food and space.

I also collected secondary data through a literature review, mixed media analysis and GIS mapping. I frequently collected fliers from grocery stores and restaurants, as well as newspapers that were representative of the communities being researched. The Chicago Reader is distributed widely throughout the city and provides dine-out guides and other neighborhood level news stories. The Reader is highly influential in Chicago's

cultural media and food scene. I also collected smaller publications such as *La Voz del Paseo Boricua*, a Puerto Rican newspaper that "Advocates for the Preservation of Our 'Pedacito de Patria'" and regularly examined the Humboldt Park Portal and The Logan Squarist for neighborhood-level news. The use of photography was also critical to provide readers a better understanding of place

As I collected all my data, I searched for emerging patterns among both primary and secondary datasets (such as alternative food, environmentalism, grocery stores, farmers markets, race, class, colonialism, displacement) and coded them for organizing themes (such as identity construction, privilege, spatial conflict, self-determination, resistance). Thus, data formed the foundation of my theories and conclusions, and the major themes I constructed. This follows the style of Grounded Theory set forth by Glaser and Strauss (1967) which contests that practices in simultaneous data collection and analysis, sampling for theory construction and conducting a full literature review *after* analysis is critical for the process of developing theory (Charmaz 2006).

Study Limitations

My position as a researcher and identity as a young, white woman held both positives and negatives. I was already familiar with neighborhood politics as a former resident and spent considerable time researching before my arrival. My time away from Chicago while in graduate school allowed me to be separated from the place, but I still had connections within the community. It is clear that my identity allowed me easier access to certain interviews, such as market attendees at the Logan Square Farmer's Market or white, middle-class community gardeners. My age, race and class background

also made it more difficult to gain trust and acceptance of my presence and questions. My identity as a 'gentrifier' and 'researcher' was evident through a few interactions and in the end why I have 13 white participants and 5 people of color. If given more time in the field, I believe the relationships would have occurred organically and therefore would be more statistically balanced. However, I did have a wide range of years of residency, which provides the historical memory of the neighborhood I was seeking out within the study.

Community gardens were the spaces I entered with the most ease and least skepticism, making them highly fruitful experiences. Restaurants and food markets, as places of business, were resistant when asked to provide a space to recruit interviewees and therefore, I resorted to collecting physical data and doing observations about these spaces. Additionally, although I spent time practicing Spanish and was able to get by in small conversations, it is clear to do a longer study such as a PhD dissertation would require advanced language capacity. One leader in the Puerto Rican community and one food truck operator did decline to do a recorded interview. However, on the whole, interviewees were warm and welcome to my presence and questions. Finally, since gentrification is a process that not only expands over space, but also over time, more time in the field would reveal the larger picture of block-by-block changes to the urban landscape. My three months were only a snapshot of larger shifts that are occurring.

Researcher's Background

Scholars often criticize urban gentrification as a war against the poor, a hipster and yuppie movement that can marginalize and displace working-class people and people

of color. The fear, and rightly so, is the removal of diversity as the suburban residents and cookie-cutter lifestyles shift towards the urban core. Those who are poor and people of color are pushed to suburban areas with fewer resources; while the affluent, largely white populations are able to benefit from and adapt to the changing urban landscape.

However, the vast majority of the academics writing about this topic and its negative socio-political and economic effects are most often living within or have contributed to the process of gentrification themselves (Schlichtman & Patch, 2013). This disembodiment is due to a long history of separating "personal" narratives and "scholarly" research within academia. This thesis works to remove, in part, the separation of these two categories and to answer Schlichtman and Patch's call for the vulnerability of these contradictions as a scholar of urban and environmental issues.

I moved to Chicago in the summer of 2009 after I graduated from DePauw University, a small, relatively homogenous liberal arts college campus in rural Indiana. Feeling fresh-faced, politically active and wiser than the teenager who grew up in a small Midwestern town, I desired to live in a community with more racial and class diversity than my lower middle-class, white upbringing. The neighborhood I desired needed to be affordable considering I was dedicated to working for social and environmental justice. I chose Logan Square primarily for economic and practical reasons. It had a train nearby and I spent less than $450.00 per month in rent. I loved this time of my life because I had access to a mix of the local farmers market, corner bodegas, hip cocktail bars and plenty of green space on the nearby boulevards.

However, in the three years of living in the neighborhood, I became quickly aware of my own identity as a young, white woman and the heightened popularity of the

space and the influx of "hipsters" who desired similar amenities. Logan Square seemed unique in the sense that food and the farmers markets were the primary reasons new people visited the neighborhood. Prior to these popular culinary attractions few young white people would "cross the tracks" of Western Avenue, the street that divided the popular Wicker Park from Logan Square and Humboldt Park. Conversations among my white and progressive friends revolved around their frustration with the 'newcomers' to the neighborhood as we all witnessed trendy commercial spaces colonize the neighborhood and long-time businesses shutdown.

I often felt torn as someone who was actively involved in the food movement, but also opposed to the colonization of space through gentrification and urban development projects. I attended anti-racist training through a local urban agriculture site, Growing Power, and began to open up about my own identity within the larger sustainable food movement. To me, much of the urban food system work seemed to walk the line between superficial, consumerist interactions and the potential for meaningful, just and sustainable change. I also found that much of the academic work on gentrification – an exceptionally popular topic in urban studies – has been backed into a corner of pitting working class, community groups versus more affluent, white gentrifiers.

Scholars and non-profit organizations have advocated that local food systems and interactions in public spaces such as community gardens can break down cultural barriers (Glover 2002, Dixon 2005). Gardens seemed to be the most obvious space in an urban neighborhood to build alliances around social justice, race and class – but I began asking, was this really happening? I decided on this study to examine both the problem and my

contribution to it and whether the alternative food movements could inspire sincere dialogue on food justice, community and privilege in gentrifying neighborhoods.

CHAPTER II

EATING OUT OR MOVING OUT?

Gentrification in Context

As someone who is writing about the process of gentrification, I will not be the first or the last to explore issues of race, class and power within urban spaces. However, to understand how food and environmental politics manifest within gentrifying neighborhoods, its important to situate them within a historical and scholarly context of gentrification studies. Urban scholar Ruth Glass coined gentrification as a term associated with Greenwich Village countercultures in the 1960s, which she argued represented something different than smaller, disconnected cases of urban redevelopment (Smith 1998). Rather, gentrification is not a random event but a systematic process that holds power because it is a symptom of global economic change in capitalist societies. Gentrification is most commonly measured through ground rent (Smith 1979) and property taxes, however the cultural shift begins much earlier than the economic shifts.

Throughout the early to mid-19th century, Chicago's optimal location and transportation outlets made it an economic hub for agricultural and livestock processing, as well as manufacturing (Cronon 1991). Urban political and economic restructuring throughout the late 1960's and 1970's was a result of international trade policy shifts and a loss of local manufacturing jobs from urban spaces, which, in turn led to the increase of transnational professional service positions, or "FIRE" employment (Finance, Insurance, Real Estate) in urban job markets (Smith 1998). Scholars agree that globalization has contributed to the shift away from local food processing and industrial manufacturing

towards a transnational business sector in Rust Belt urban economies like that of Chicago (Anselme and Weiszt 1985).

These macro-level economic shifts also created a political shift in cities as they now attempt to compete on a global market and become attractive business and tourist destinations (Smith 1998). The increase in "FIRE" employment and service sector labor has also created a "bipolar growth pattern" that has stratified the workforce (Doussard et al. 2009: 187). More and more, that is, the city appears to be organized on a division between the affluent, largely white business class and service sector labor, many of whom are low-income people of color. This juxtaposition is evident within many restaurants between the identities of the laborers and diners (Jayaraman 2013). People of color are overrepresented within low-wage jobs in the American food system. According to a Restaurant Opportunities Center United 2010 report, workers of color were concentrated in low-wage food service and retail jobs, while whites held better paying managerial positions in the same food system fields of production, processing, distribution and consumption.

As of 2013, income inequality in the United States is at one of the highest points in history. The top 10% shares over half of America's total income, the highest since American income studies originated in 1917 (Saez 2013). Much of that disparity is visually and statistically evident in urban areas like Chicago. Zukin notes,

> Neither corporate expansion nor gentrification has altered a general trend of urban economic decline, decreasing median household income, and income inequality. Instead, gentrification makes inequality more visible by fostering a new juxtaposition of landscape and vernacular, creating "islands of renewal in seas of decay (1991: 37).

Clearly, gentrification and displacement are symptoms of much larger socio-political and economic problems.

Many scholars still debate how global economic shifts have effected gentrification. Neil Smith blames *structure* through capital accumulation in the urban housing market. The physical and cultural process of gentrification represents cycles of investment and disinvestment in urban centers; a result of neoliberal state policies and the 'rent-gap' thesis which is the process gentrifiers use to assess the current and potential value of housing (Smith 1979). Whereas David Ley considers the *agency* of cultural capital and middle-class consumer desires to determine the process of gentrification. He, along with other scholars, argue without an interest in cultural diversity (Ley 1996, Butler & Robson 2001, Rose 2004, Berrey 2005) and a taste for historic aesthetics and properties (Zukin 1987, Beauregard 1990, Smith 2002) gentrifiers would not consider living in certain neighborhoods and participating in gentrification processes (Brown-Saracino 2010: 65).

More and more, scholars are agreeing on a hybrid approach of structure *and* agency since "economic factors alone [can] not fully account for or explain" why gentrification persists (Brown-Saracino 2010: 264). While maintaining Smith's critical argument of the role political and economic shifts play in gentrification, so too, does this paper argue for a hybrid of factors. New residents are both products of the political economy but are also attracted to the neighborhood for its popular Slow Food culture. Thus, being on the "front lines" of trendy, consumable spaces is never an apolitical act.

Urban Frontier Ideology

Many newer residents I interviewed spoke about the appeal to live in Logan Square and Humboldt Park as both a personal desire and conflict. While there was a concern for their safety, or an understanding of the stereotypes of each neighborhood due to higher crime rates, gang violence and drug use, their desire for green space, cheap housing stock and trendy restaurants or bars outweighed the negatives of danger. Andrea, a white, middle-class 25-year-old resident of Logan Square told the story of her decision to move to the neighborhood two years ago:

> Logan square is the first place I have lived in Chicago. When I was deciding to move here, I moved in with my younger sister who is doing her undergrad here. She knew that Logan square was a cool, hip neighborhood that is not too expensive, yet um, had a lot of artists and more like our demographic. So we decided to move here and found a really nice apartment. I just trusted my sister's judgment and came here.

And Nelly, a 32-year-old white and middle-class resident of Humboldt Park spoke of her own conflict surrounding the space and safety:

> I would have never considered Humboldt Park because it has a dangerous connotation and we drove through and I did not really like it. A year before we bought, so in 2007, and then our relator found this place and we drove through it again and it was amazing. Because of the green space, the trees, the fact we could see downtown, there were families in the park. It felt like a completely different neighborhood, it was affordable and we liked the space.

New residents also spoke of adoration for "urban grit" which implies a high level of diversity among people and space. The grit marks a space as authentic and distinct from white, suburban and cookie-cutter lifestyles (Personal interviews 2013, Brown-Saracino 2010). Living on the urban "frontier" has become a style of living perpetuated by a culture that increasingly values alternative, environmentally friendly lifestyles in urban areas. These lifestyles are attempting to oppose homogenous, white and middle-class

upbringings of the suburban "American Dream" by living in diverse and energetic urban areas. However, this desired lifestyle is also a result of the environmental movement, alternative food movement and larger economic restructurings that have made the American Dream less possible for twenty something's in 2013. Living small and urbanizing has become the antithesis to antiquated "McMansion" dreams in the suburbs.

Gabriella, a Puerto Rican woman in her late 20's who has lived in Humboldt Park all her life spoke about her observations of the gentrifiers, their privilege and motivations behind desires for healthy, sustainable lifestyles in Humboldt Park.

> And now there is a lot of talk into re-gentrification. A lot of the people around here was like well Europeans were here before you all came so we were gentrified. Well no, actually you weren't, you had the privilege to be able to go to the suburbs. And in fact, if you want to take it even further, your families are the ones who caused this problem to begin with. You know if you really think about it. And now I feel like the hipsters are overcompensating for, well, how their families and all these white people that moved to the suburbs. They're overcompensating so now its like they want to be the healthiest people, they want to have all these community gardens; they want to ride their bikes. Which is great, I am not against that. I love bike riding. I used to actually ride my bike to work and home everywhere before I had my kid, and rollerblade. I am not against that type of lifestyle. I just feel when they come here, a part of it is that overcompensation, a part of it is rebelling against their parents. You know, so they come here and they want to create all of this and it's their space because they moved in and want to exclude everyone else. And that is what I have a problem with.

Many of her experiences are informed not only by her lifelong residency in Humboldt Park, but her interactions with other white members in the neighborhood and community garden. Her perspective suggests that sustainability and the lifestyle associated with it are correlated with white privilege and misunderstood histories. The reason young, white environmentalists do what they do is informed by a revolt from society and its challenges. Gabriella's opposing views are driven by her knowledge of "white flight" to

the suburbs and the fact that white residents have *always had a choice* in where to live, whereas her family and community have not always had a choice. This time, however, the gentrifiers mask these histories and their privileged agency through environmentalism. However good their intentions might be, their actions may also have consequences.

Zukin notes that the same men and women who choose to take a financial risk by purchasing alternative food like fair trade coffee or local cheeses may also be interested taking risks in where they choose to live, such as restoring brownstones in socially and economically marginalized areas (2008: 725). The author also argues that alternative consumption practices lead to the creation of entrepreneurial spaces that "offer urban consumers a safe and comfortable space to perform difference from mainstream norms" (2008: 724). These spaces often garner media attention, a base of loyal consumers and tourists. They also reflect the increasing use of environmental discourse by real estate developers and city planners to gain power (Quastel 2009). For example, although the highly popular Logan Square Farmers Market is sponsored by the neighborhood's chamber of commerce – the recent development of Chicago's first "night farmers market" in Logan Square was sponsored by the city of Chicago and advertised on their website and through local media ("Night Markets"). The city's environmental benevolence is worked into a new urban lifestyle of "eco-gentrification" that may also come at the price of displacement.

Thomas, a white, middle-class resident of Logan Square (Fig. 6) recently moved from Lakeview, which has a higher level of affluence and less racial diversity. He mentioned:

> I moved here in 2011 because I had gotten all I needed out of living in Lakeview…It was driven by consumption, you know, you go to drinking

> spaces or shops to consume things around people who want to consume similar experiences. My social network became more deeply rooted in this neighborhood and so eventually I agreed to live with my friend in this neighborhood. I love that it is not as dense as Lakeview, its still very much an urban experience.

Many new residents also spoke of being on a front line of an "up and coming neighborhood" and expressed a steady unease about it becoming less gritty and more mainstream.

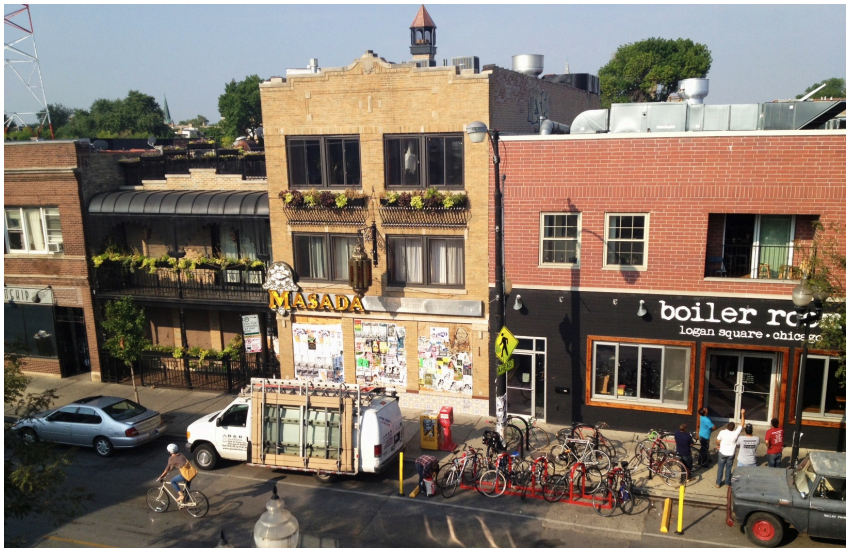

Figure 6. One of Logan Square's new corridors of restaurants and bars (Personal photograph, 2013).

Neil Smith notes that the impetus behind gentrification and the normalization of those cultural meanings are constructed through the Western frontier myth. For example, discourse on "urban homesteading" and growing your own food in the city is part of popular culture and demonstrated through thousands of books, do-it-yourself projects, as well as other sources of media. A quick search of Amazon reveals dozens of books for sale that tout "city homesteading" and "self-sufficiency on any square footage."

Smith notes that at first glance these aspects of popular culture may seem playful or innocent. However, the discourse surrounding urban grit and homesteading in "up and

coming neighborhoods" replicates historical images of courageous, adventurous spirits and the rugged individualism of settlers on the American frontier of the West (Smith 113). A glamorization of hard work and high levels of personal and financial risk support this ideology, or what has been called the "frontier and salvation mentality" (Brown-Saracino 2010, Spain 1993). Many media sources credited new Logan Square and Humboldt Park businesses and the corresponding gentrifiers with breathing life into the neighborhood by infusing it with new cultural attractions. Often this discourse takes place in restaurant reviews or other food-related media. Similarly on the Western frontier, settlers justified their use of space as more rational, desirable and efficient than Native uses of land, which in turn justified displacement.

And while European settlers forcefully removed Natives from their traditional grounds, the more subtle, yet still violent experience of clearing neighborhoods of existing populations block-by-block is occurring through the process of gentrification (Personal interviews 2013, Zukin 1991: 37). Stephanie, a white, middle-class 27-year-old woman who lives in Humboldt Park noted her understanding of this process and how dangerous the colonization of space can be when it goes unnoticed or unchecked.

> I talk about this with my partner, and the term 'up and coming neighborhood' and how that is such an unfortunate term because there is already so much here. To imply that there just coming up now is just because more white people are moving in. It's so true and unfortunate that we cannot, I don't even want to say integrate, I don't necessarily think that's true. I think it's really great the way it is. It can just stop on California Avenue; I think it's the perfect distance away from me.

Here, Stephanie demonstrates her concern that the new gentrifiers will clear the neighborhood of existing residents and its culture, something Japonica Brown-Saracino calls "social preservation." Brown-Saracino deems *social preservationists* to be different

than typical gentrifiers who seek high culture, the comfort of fellow "pioneers" and to tame the "frontier." In contrast, the social preservationist has a concern for the people who may be displaced by gentrification and a desire for 'authentic' communities that are colorful, original and recognize 'old-timers' culture (2010: 261). In other words, the existing lifestyle is something to be preserved, rather than diluted. In the case of Logan Square and Humboldt Park, many newer residents spoke of their desire to live among the diversity, especially since they grew up among largely white rural or suburban communities. And Seth mentioned:

> It's interesting to think of, a reason to live in a city is because it's not homogenous. I grew up in Northwest Iowa and there was one black family and one Indian family and everything else was white people of similar backgrounds. There weren't Jewish people; it was not quite that case with Catholics and Protestants, but maybe 40 years ago.

Several new residents spoke of the local park, Humboldt Park, as a space they wanted to see stay authentic. They enjoyed the music, food and celebrations much of the Puerto Rican community participated in within the space. Again, Andrea from Logan Square remarked:

> When I first moved here I was really interested and excited about being in a neighborhood that has a Hispanic community, not that I know very much about it, but hearing more Spanish is really cool and having the additional cultures being together was really interesting. But it also what bothered me was that it is getting trendy and upscale and pushing those people out.

Social preservationists, while still gentrifiers in the sense they are highly educated with cultural, social and economic capital, are attempting to evoke the value of a place, while their identity as gentrifiers may contradict that very mission. Moving to a space of social diversity made a statement to others about one's own sense of cultural capital, lack of conformity and liberal tolerance, while contradicting their own culture's racist past of

"white flight" (Zukin 1991). Some interviewees spoke more directly about space and food in terms of social preservation. Giaco, a middle-class and 5-year resident of Humboldt Park, talked about a new diner in Humboldt Park, called Grandma J's:

> It's essentially a breakfast place. They have now expanded their hours to do some limited dinner service. It was opened up by a lady who worked at bars and clubs and didn't have a place to crash for brunch she liked. Its not quite the same as Flying Saucer, it definitely caters to people who are willing to pay $10 for a breakfast sandwich, the sort of no nitrates kind of people…Look, I like wholesome food as well. But keeping in mind the neighborhood and environment you are in, there is something not right about that."

Giaco finds it unethical or inappropriate to open a restaurant that charges high prices in a neighborhood that he evaluates as not being able to afford or access such products. Although he does not mentioned its contribution to gentrification, it is clear that he views the business as out of place amidst the existing economic state and culture of the community.

Cooking Up Race, Class and Identity

Food has long been recognized as a form conspicuous consumption for the affluent (Velben 1899), however, more recently it signifies both economic and cultural capital for middle-class citizens as well (Wright & Ransom 2005). Food, therefore, is one of the most obvious vehicles for gentrification (Table 1). While motivations behind social preservation can vary from person to person, the danger of course, is when the assumed authenticity of a culture or group of people, becomes not just something to admire but also something to consume.

Table 1. Major Stakeholders in Gentrification, Humboldt Park and Logan Square

	Protect the Existing Community	***Alternative Development (Social and Ecological Preservationists)***	***Affluent Development (Gentrifiers)***
Institutions	Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation, West Humboldt Park Family and Community Development Council, Aldermen	NeighborSpace, Logan Square Chamber of Commerce, Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, Chicago Rarities Orchard Project, Aldermen	City of Chicago, real estate development corporations, Aldermen
Main Themes *Neighborhood needs:*	Community building, sovereign policy, reduction in POC displacement, affordable housing, cultural presence, safety improvements	Upscale "working class" culture, plans for open space, stronger retail base, eco-conscious entrepreneurs, safety improvements, diversity	Safety improvements, clean public spaces, modernization
Discourse on Space	East Humboldt Park as authentic Puerto Rican *barrio* and inclusive space, Logan Square as a historically Puerto Rican, Mexican and European community	Hip, alternative, eco-conscious, young, the new Wicker Park, post-industrial chic, diversity seeking, close to CBD	Something to be tamed or made safer, modernizing the old, close to CBD
Good Stakeholders in Gentrification Process	Activists, concerned residents, local cultural leaders	Restaurant developers, chamber of commerce, small businesses, concerned residents	Gentrifiers, developers, real estate agents
Bad Stakeholders in Gentrification Process	Gentrifiers, hipsters, gangs, developers, white entitlement	Gangs, petty thievery, mainstream gentrifiers	Gangs, petty thievery
Food environment	HP Farmers Market, Food trucks, small vendors, mid-sized grocery stores, bodegas, backyard gardens, community gardens, health and nutrition campaigns, needs access to healthier and affordable foods	LS Farmers Market, alternative food restaurants, foodie community, community gardens, mid-sized grocery stores, needs larger grocery store – but can make do without	Alternative food community, farmers market, foodie community, needs large-scale grocery store

Parson's Chicken and Fish opened in spring 2013 in Logan Square and provides an example of how this occurs in the neighborhood. The restaurant and outdoor eatery was widely publicized by restaurant reviews as 'elevated shack food.' The eatery has been compared to Shark's Fish and Chicken and Harold's Chicken Shack, an infamous Chicago eatery started by Harold Pierce who was an African-American businessman that wanted to bring more fast food restaurants into black communities in the 1950s since many white business owners refused to open them in black neighborhoods. These two restaurants have been associated with the South Side and black food culture for decades. And the Chicago Reader remarked when writing about Parson's that Harold's is, "a fast-food empire that's grown steadily for 63 years, mostly out of sight and mind of the great majority of white Chicago" and that fried chicken is now experiencing an "urban renaissance" on the white north side (Sula 2013).

A typical meal at Harold's includes fried chicken, french fries, two pieces of white bread and coleslaw. Parson's describes itself as coastal, comfort, soul and street food serves main entrees like fried chicken and fish; while also maintaining their 'elevated' theme through sustainable or local food products, raw oysters, and ornate salads (Fig. 7). A *Chicago Reader* restaurant review of Parson's Chicken and Fish remarked:

> …Parson's Chicken & Fish, a perpetually mobbed Logan Square facsimile of a fast-food chicken and fish shack brought to you by the folks behind Longman and Eagle. You won't exchange money for bird through bulletproof glass as you would at a great many Harold's, but it is fairly likely, depending on the time of day, that you will suffer other indignities, such as sharing an uncomfortable wooden booth with a motley assortment of tightly packed beardos and painted ladies, an extreme manifestation of the increasingly ubiquitous communal table (Sula 2013).

The urban frontier lifestyle, in its desire to be alternative from more affluent and mainstream consumerism downtown, often romanticizes poverty or literally pokes fun at working class culture, racial or ethnic identity within the neighborhoods in order to demonstrate difference and to market its own identity as something alternative to the mainstream. However, the price and cultural differences between Harold's and Parson's are even more ironic in a gentrifying neighborhood.

On a Sunday morning, I munched on hush puppies and observed my surroundings at Parson's. Bartenders served up *Micheladas* and Negroni slushies, while customers met friends for brunch. The outdoor seating featured picnic tables, a wall of ivy and Ping-Pong for those who were waiting on a table. The décor resisted the standardization and homogeneity of chain restaurants like Harold's or fast food joints. From my observations, it was clear that the clientele at Parson's was largely white and part of the newcomers or gentrifying group.

As fast-food joints, Harold's and Shark's have been central in the critique in food desert dialogue surrounding accessible and nutritious food in Chicago's lowest-income neighborhoods. White bodies, while not positioned at the center of the obesity epidemic critique, hold the power to consume fried, soul food unopposed and in some cases like at Parson's they are praised for having good culinary taste. Meanwhile, within the same neighborhood black and Latino bodies are shamed and schooled in making healthier dietary choices or maintaining "ideal" body weight. Despite scholars and activists calls for body size diversity, there has been a continuous disenfranchisement of bodies of color, fat bodies and poor bodies. The fat stigma runs deep, particularly in "food deserts" where public health officials point fingers at foods like fried chicken or Puerto Rican

fried food. Food justice, on the other hand, should be "about making sure all bodies have access and autonomy over their bodies" (Duong 2013). A restaurant like Parson's however reinforces the romanticization of the "other" and poverty through food and maintains white privilege in both the body and the neighborhood space.

Figure 7. (Clockwise from top left) A basket of fritters at Parson's Chicken and Fish, the interior of Parson's, a basket of fried chicken and fries at Harold's Chicken and the exterior of Harold's (Griffith 2013, Kindelsperger 2010).

As part of the block-by-block experiences of gentrification, Parson's is just one block's example of how the process unfolds. As someone who lived less than a block away from the restaurant prior to its entrance into the neighborhood in spring 2013 and while researching in the summer of 2013, there are observable signs of its effects on daily experiences of local residents. Once a corner with small, Latino-owned businesses and affordable housing, is now marked as a space of young, fashionably dressed diners standing outside the restaurant smoking cigarettes and flagging down taxicabs. A vintage store and a new cocktail lounge opened down the street in the past year. Two of my white friends were called gentrifiers in a back alley behind Parson's while unloading Trader

Joe's paper grocery bags from a car and I, a hipster while riding my bike. The symbol in consumption of food like Parson's or Trader Joe's and alternative transportation is demarcated in opposition to the existing class and residents in the neighborhood.

Seth, a 27-year-old, white and lower middle-class resident of Logan Square spoke about how more price restrictive restaurants work to create an atmosphere of culinary creativity and adventurous offerings, while also maintaining the "working class feel" of the neighborhood in which it resides:

> At Longman & Eagle or Parson's, you can get a $2 beer. It's almost like a political statement that they put it on their menu. And there are some places you cannot get that. Most places I go, you can. If I am feeling like I have money, I am going to get the $7 really fancy limited edition, delicious little 12-ounce thing of high potency beer because it tastes amazing and I love food and I love beer. But if I am feeling like I feel lately, I am going to get a PBR because that is what I can afford and I feel like I can afford.

Seth points out the financial vulnerability of many young, working people who reside in these neighborhoods, while upholding a desire for luxury which Schor (1998) calls the rise of ''competitive consumption." That is, when living standards are elevated, the objectives of consumption switch from material sustenance to social signaling through luxury or abundance. The success of many farmers markets and alternative restaurants attest to the desire to consume and create a "sustainable" or "foodie" identity distinction, whether that is out of marking one's ethics or just desiring food and drink that is more pleasurable.

Grocery Stores, Commodities and Change

The vast majority of stores in Humboldt Park and Logan Square traditionally sold to the Latino community and served up foods that met the desires of a wide variety of Latin cuisines. Since the neighborhoods do not have a large grocery store chain, foods such as *yuca, recao, epazote, chayote, achiote and chiles* are all common fare found at smaller, family owned stores. Bulk foods such as rice and dried beans fill the dry goods shelves. However, many Latino owned or operated grocery stores in the neighborhoods have altered themselves to meet the influx of new residents and specific clientele's food desires. At Foodsmart in Logan Square, fresh and organic salad green mixes, microbrews, a variety of cheeses, kombucha and vegetarian protein products were placed at the front of the store, while the section of products such as Goya and other Latino branded foods were placed near the back. A large majority of the clientele I observed while shopping were young or middle-aged and white, however people of color did shop there. While subtle, the daily interactions with food and others at a grocery store are symbolic of claiming space in a gentrifying neighborhood. Giaco, a Brazilian-Italian resident of Humboldt Park observed what was happening at another Humboldt Park grocery store called Cermak Produce:

> The Cermak was a little Mexican grocery and now they have feta cheese and olives, an olive bar, they have definitely gone through a cosmetic facelift but a product facelift that caters to the influx of new people. That's probably one of the biggest changes.

On the days I observed Cermak, the majority of the clientele were primarily Puerto Rican and Mexican. Cermak Produce (Fig. 8) also maintains an interior with décor of old San Juan, Puerto Rico and many of these alternative foods such as local items, specialty cheeses, organic baby greens, and craft beers are integrated into the aisles, rather than up

front as a selling point like at Foodsmart. These observations do not mean that a variety of people do not want to purchase these foods. Rather, without gentrification, these food products would be less stocked in these stores.

Figure 8. The produce aisles at Cermak Produce where old San Juan décor appears in the background (Personal photograph, 2013).

Interviewees of all backgrounds expressed the desire for a large, one-stop chain grocery store that offers fresh and reasonably priced produce. This is something some long-time residents identify as a reason that they continue to live in a food desert. Gabriella, a Puerto Rican resident of Humboldt Park and staff member at the local high school mentioned her experiences as a single parent living in a food desert without a vehicle:

> Before I had my son I had the flexibility because I was single and no kids to go to the market every week. I don't have a vehicle but I would take the North Avenue bus and go to Stanley's, which is like really cheap organic foods, vegetables and stuff. And I would go to Trader Joe's or Whole Foods, right. So one I am traveling miles to get over there because there is no place over here that sells organic foods because I would much rather

> have organic foods before anything...Here, we are of course in a food desert and I really saw the effects of that after I had a kid. Because now I have a baby so on top of carrying my baby even though he was in a sling it was easy for me to carry bags but as he got older he was too heavy to carry. So now do I take a stroller on a bus? Its so much more complicated and I noticed that my health started disintegrating. Because you know, instead of having my fruits and vegetables – I used to juice – it changed and living in a food desert made it worse.

Other participants mentioned that while they desired a larger grocery store, it would be "game over" for gentrification in a place like Logan Square. Andrea, a white, middle-class and 2-year resident of Logan Square observed that she really desired:

> …Just having something like a Jewel or Dominick's – a place that I only have to take one bus to get there. That is my one big complaint and its also something that I see as holding Logan Square from blowing up. Because people need that. I understand a lot of people who move here have cars, but I think it makes a big difference if you can walk to a grocery store or not and its hard to get everything you want from the small stores. Its kind of an anchor of neighborhoods sometimes.

While the USDA classifies many areas of Logan Square and Humboldt Park as food deserts, these two women illuminate both the need for fresh and healthy produce and the impending changes that it might bring to the community. Further, it demonstrates that the national and local policies to bring more grocery stores to food deserts must be given more critical thought in their approach. A Whole Foods in Humboldt Park, for example, may have a different effect on gentrification than a mid-sized organic grocery store owned by an existing Latino/a or African American community member. In Boston, the impending Whole Foods move into Jamaica Plain set off street protests and boycotts led by the cleverly named *Whose Foods, Whose Community* campaign to resist the assumed gentrification and to support local businesses for low to moderate income residents ("Who We Are" 2013). Affordability, access and anti-gentrification were their campaign's primary goals. In a sense, food access planning must make delineation

between *material inequality* (ex: access to healthy foods) and *process inequality* (ex: a say in who brings those healthy foods into the community) must be factored into the process of increasing commercial food spaces (Allen 2009).

For gentrifying neighborhoods, the commodification of housing and neoliberal markets is closely tied to the commodification of food in alternative restaurants, grocery stores and farmers markets. As well intentioned as commercial spaces may be, they are still highly constrained by a market structure and may in some cases reproduce inequality at a local level. They may be able to provide more access to healthy, fresh and sustainably produced food, but they are not in themselves the answer to larger problems of gentrification and injustice.

However, there is hope that the local level has capacity to rearrange and organize the meet equity needs. Patricia Allen notes that new economic forms can be "imagined, piloted and evaluated" at the local level (2010). One recent example of this is in Chester, Pennsylvania. Fare & Square grocery store opened as the nation's first non-profit grocery store that will provide "convenient, reliable access to "good food right around the corner" with a focus on food staples like fresh produce, deli, meats, dairy, seafood, and frozen foods. Fare & Square will help stretch customers' dollars by accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits coupled with everyday low pricing and a percentage off of future purchases for eligible customers" (Fare and Square 2013). The store opened within months of writing this thesis and it is unclear how successful the program will be. However, the goals of Fare and Square are quite different than say, a national chain that seeks to maximize profit. Therefore, Fare and Square may be more

sustainable for communities who face a history of disinvestment due to the store's people over profit philosophy.

CHAPTER III

STRUGGLE, RESISTANCE AND FOOD IN THE *BARRIO*

To Live and to Help Live

Walking east on *Paseo Boricua* one early July morning, I stopped in front of a community center that had two black and white posters (Fig. 9) hanging in a glass window. Created by the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC), one sign advocated the release of Oscar López Rivera, a Puerto Rican political prisoner. The other was a sign for the Humboldt Park Farmer's Market, promoting the market as a response to food deserts in the community.

The juxtaposition between the two posters, one advocating for freedom of a political prisoner and the other for nutritious foods demonstrated that food alone could not summarize the Puerto Rican fight for self-determination in Chicago's Humboldt Park. However, anti-gentrification and food rights are large components of the PRCC's mission (Personal interviews 2013, Rinaldo 2002).

Figure 9. Signs made by the PRCC outside a community center that feature the farmers market and a Puerto Rican political prisoner (Personal photograph, 2013).

I also observed t-shirts, banners, floats and posters bearing López Rivera's face at the Puerto Rican Festival earlier in the summer. He is the last remaining Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoner and said to be one of the longest held political prisoners in the Western hemisphere. Oscar was the former head of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) in Chicago, a Puerto Rican separatist group that has now claimed responsibility for bombings of military, government and financial sites in Chicago and New York. In the 1960's and 1970's, Puerto Ricans were struggling and resisting U.S. racism and colonialism, as well as fighting for independence like many other groups, such as the Black Panthers. Two riots in Humboldt Park, the 1966 Division Street Riots and the 1969 riot are fresh within the memory of many community members.

According to his legal council, Oscar was tried for seditious conspiracy, while taking the position that under international law, U.S. colonial control of Puerto Rico was a crime against humanity (Susler 2012). He continues to request to be tried under international law, instead of US courts. At the time of this writing, he was being held for his 32nd year in a federal penitentiary in Indiana and many in the Chicago Puerto Rican community, the PRCC and beyond are asking President Barack Obama to pardon him.

As mentioned earlier, the PRCC is a force within Humboldt Park and *Paseo Boricua*. Founded in 1973, the PRCC is a non-profit organization that was built on the following principles: "a philosophy of self-determination, a methodology of self-actualization and critical thought, and an ethics of self-reliance best expressed in the motto, "To live and to help live"" (Puerto Rican Cultural Center 2013). The organization not only supports the freedom of political prisoners, but initiated and/or currently operates Pedro Albizu Campos High School, a daycare, a youth center called Batay

Urbano, the farmers market and VIDA/SIDA, an AIDS outreach, prevention and transition housing for queer youth. They also work closely with the Puerto Rican Museum and economic development projects on *Paseo Boricua*. The PRCC is different from other Chicago neighborhood non-profits, in the sense that they are a direct service agency that initiates cultural programming while maintaining the identity as a "left leaning" organization (Rinaldo 2002, Personal interviews 2013). The work of the PRCC and many other local organizations is built upon creating a "prosperous, inclusive community in which children are well educated and cared for, adults can find good jobs or start their own businesses, and all enjoy safe streets, dependable public transportation, affordable health care, attractive open space and excellent city services" (Bickerdike 2005).

Food Security and Colonialism

Struggle associated with food security and health was quite evident through conversations with local residents and community organizations in Humboldt Park. As mentioned earlier, Humboldt Park has a 31% poverty rate, is classified as a food desert in several areas, has the 2nd highest rate of childhood obesity in Chicago and maintains an adult diabetes rate three times the national average, at 48% and 21% respectively (Margellos-Anast et al. 2008, *Diabetes in Humboldt Park* 2006). Since the 1970's, the community has witnessed an estimated 11,000 jobs leave the surrounding area and a corresponding reduction in retail shops and grocery stores (*Humboldt Park: Staking Our Claim* 2005). Food deserts, in this sense, are a result of larger political-economic restructurings and corporate disinvestment in communities. This is a trend seen

throughout Chicago and many major metropolitan cities. However, Julian spoke about the special relationship between Humboldt Park's food insecurity and Puerto Rico's colonial history:

> Food security is a threat that runs to the heart of colonialism. Since 1898, Puerto Rico turned from a country that grew what it ate, to a country that exported what it ate and imports what it eats. Resulting in some of the worst social indecencies, not only of food, but diabetes, childhood obesity, blood pressure, mental illness, drug addiction, suicide. This means Chicago, becomes much more important – remember this is only me – other people may think different. Chicago is actually an example for Puerto Rico. So the townships that we have made relationships with, they come to Fiesta - and they get really into recycling or inner tourism, developing their own tourist for Puerto Ricans from the other side of the island. Food security in that sense is much more of an issue that is transnational – given the fact you have GMOs – how do we link and develop the education for our community around this stuff – which is part of the garden. Grow you own does not mean saying no GMO yet, but we are starting to talk about it.

Julian illuminates how the loss of food security, increasing health inequality and contemporary food deserts are not just about access to nutritious foods in Humboldt Park, but rather part of a trajectory of oppression and consequence of colonization that is compounded upon by gentrification and loss of affordable housing. Further, the local community projects that enable healthier and more robust communities in Humboldt Park are not just local advocacy projects, but are considered transnational and an example for those on the island of Puerto Rico. This relationship is, in part due to the history of Puerto Rico and high levels of migration. Approximately one-third of the island's population emigrated from Puerto Rico to the United States between 1955 and 1970 when there was high demand for manufacturing labor (Perez 2004: 10), but there has been circular migration since the 1960's.

Prior to US colonial rule, coffee was Puerto Rico's primary export during Spanish colonization, dominating the economies of the mountainous interiors (Perez 2004). During the 1800's, *criollo* and immigrant farmers also grew coffee, cotton, rice and small amounts of sugarcane for domestic, local uses. The Spanish built a Puerto Rican coffee industry by offering credit to Spanish *cafetaleros*, or coffee producers and creating tariffs to protect their coffee on a global market. When the US came to power in 1898, they did not implement the same protective tariffs and, coupled with a disastrous hurricane in 1899, sent the Puerto Rican agricultural economy towards sugarcane. Within twenty-five years, it completely altered the state of agriculture on the island (Perez 2004).

With little to no credit for non-sugar production, farmers were forced to reduce the size of their fields or give up farming all together. Land concentration, the introduction of irrigation and the centralization of sugar processing led to sixty-two percent of agricultural land used for sugar and two-thirds of Puerto Rico's exports consisting of sugar. Consequently, this caused migration to the coasts to seek work in the sugar industry. By the mid 1930's over 80 percent of all basic foods were being imported into Puerto Rico at an inflation rate 15 percent that of New York City prices (Perez 2004). Although Roosevelt administration was urged to enact the Chardon Plan; an agrarian reform program that diversified agriculture, reestablished subsistence farms, created an industrialization program and supported local development programs, it was never implemented. In 1947, Operation Bootstrap, passed by the Puerto Rican legislature put emphasis on attracting foreign investment, export-oriented industrialization, and a created the Bureau of Employment and Migration that led a campaign focused on promoting migration to the United States.

While migration to New York existed in a climate of tense racial and ethnic relations, Chicago was advertised as a city with success in jobs, building your own home and opening up small businesses was possible. Chicago Puerto Ricans were praised over New York Puerto Ricans for their "ability to adapt—or integrate, according to officials at Chicago's Hull House – to their new environment" (Perez 2004: 48), which was the result of post World War II assimilation and nation building ideology. Today, many Puerto Ricans participate in circular migration and despite being deeply involved in the local realities of Humboldt Park; many also participate transnationally by remaining intertwined in Puerto Rican politics, events and people even if they have never actually visited the island. As Julian's comments highlight, projects around *Paseo Boricua* for food and sustainability are not just for the locale. They are an example for Puerto Rico and self-determination as people. Therefore, the effects of gentrification are not only a loss to the people of Humboldt Park and food security, but also to Puerto Ricans as a whole.

One of the ways the PRCC has sought to counter food insecurity and build a strong community to resist gentrification has been through the Greater Humboldt Park Urban Agriculture Initiative (GHPUAI) (Fig. 10). Projects around food security are largely volunteer run. The Humboldt Park Urban Agriculture Initiative seeks to

> "Develop community self-sufficiency in the production of key aspects of the community's nutritional reserve, where community residents, especially youth, actively engaged in the planning and development of the necessary systems of production, distribution and consumption of nutritious, culturally defined and community-specific produce with the purposeful intent of being self-reliant and food secure in eradicating the prevalence of unnaturally caused illnesses in our community" (*The Greening of a Food Desert*).

Julian explains more about initiatives that have been enacted thus far:

> The garden is only a part of departure there are at least four or five other touch points we talked about -- The edible garden, the greenhouse, the community planters, the community gardens, as well as our farmers market. We wanted to start the "basic basket" which is basically a thing of food and you sign people up for an eight dollar basic with seasonal vegetables. For twelve dollars it was enough for two. For eight dollars you could have a cruelty free chicken. There were different levels people could buy in.

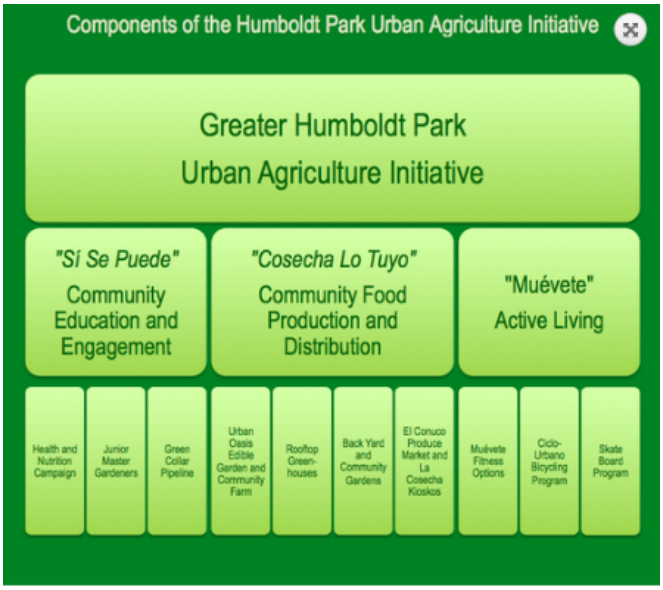

Figure 10. The Greater Humboldt Park Urban Agriculture Initiative (*The Greening of a Food Desert*)

Julian points to the GHPUAI's attempt to make alternative food accessible *and* inclusive by offering nutritious and culturally appropriate foods grown, processed and sold by the community for the community. For city planners and the mayor's office, national chains such as Walgreen's and Wal-Mart have been *the* solution to obesity, food insecurity and disproportionate access in food deserts. What is interesting to note, is that no part of GHPUAI includes inviting large grocery store chains to the neighborhood. Due to distrust of letting others create or colonize their space, the GHPUAI represents a do-it-yourself stance for the community. Although not a phrase I heard used by the PRCC, *food sovereignty* is clearly a goal for Puerto Rican community activists. Further, it was

acknowledged by interviewees that impending gentrification is a threat to the potential of that sovereignty and right to nutritious foodways.

One of the largest projects the PRCC and high school have taken on is fundraising and building an educational greenhouse (Fig. 11) at Pedro Albizu Campos High School to help instructors integrate science, technology and urban agriculture. Youth are heavily involved in the food projects occurring in Humboldt Park. They grow food in the greenhouse and at several neighborhood gardens and run the Humboldt Park Farmer's Market, which is currently limited to one stand. They sell products both known and unknown to Puerto Rican cuisine. *Recao*, also known as Mexican coriander, is an essential ingredient for *sofrito* and is sold alongside Swiss chard and kale, which are less common in Puerto Rican foodways.

Figure 11. The Greenhouse at Pedro Albizu Campos High School (*The Greening of a Food Desert,* Personal photograph 2013).

The goal of the high school, urban agriculture programs and Batay Urbano, the art program, is to produce leaders for the next generation who can activate change and continue to see the community as a place to invest in. While talking at a coffee shop on *Paseo Boricua*, Julian mentioned that he disliked the song, "Moving on Up" from the 1970's show *The Jefferson's* because it sent the message to people of color that "the

ghettos, the barrios were bereft of anything of value" and you should get out, to move up in life. Further, the cultural shifts of gentrification brought upon by new restaurants, bars, vintage stores and furniture shops risk signaling to young Puerto Ricans that their youth culture is of lesser value than that of white youth culture. Pedro Albizu Campos High School and its food-focused work for youth are strengthening Puerto Rican youth culture in Humboldt Park, and helping the PRCC advance the mission of self-determination and self-actualization in their community.

Overall, the PRCC's work in food, agriculture, health and justice are part of a larger strategy of de-colonization and anti-gentrification in Humboldt Park. The strength of the Chicago Puerto Rican community and their relations to the island of Puerto Rico are deeply embedded in the cultural activities of *Paseo Boricua*. Gentrification and displacement risks reducing the existing bonds over cultural practices and Puerto Rican identity that give the PRCC and other neighborhood organizations the political and economic strength to fight health and food injustices. Therefore, the process of gentrification, displacement and food injustice cannot be unraveled from one another.

CHAPTER IV

CONTESTED SPACES: COMMUNITY GARDENS

Why Garden in the City?

The act of transitioning vacant or abandoned lots into functional garden spaces has garnered much attention from scholars, planners, urban residents and the media in the past few years. Community gardens have been praised for their capacity to restore urban streetscapes, reduce food expenses and food deserts, improve public health, reflect new senses of pride in the neighborhood, connect people to the environment, relieve stress, be a catalyst for community improvement and safety, as well as bring together a new social network of neighbors. It has even been argued that they offer "third places" outside of work and home where people gather, network and identify as residents of a neighborhood (Glover 2004: 143, Linn 1999, Moncrief & Langsenkamp 1976, Schrieber 1998). City governments and local organizations, because of the reported benefits of gardening together, increasingly support the development of community gardens.

The contemporary trajectory for gardens is similar to that of early parks, a history which Dorceta Taylor outlines in her book, *The Environment and the People in American Cities, 1600s-1900s: Disorder, Inequality and Social Change* (2009). Landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted, Calvert Vaux and Andrew Jackson Downing believed that parks would bring rural recreation to urban residents who otherwise had no access to the country (263). Taylor notes that the origins of parks in American cities not only displayed a city's culture, but also advocated social control. Many believed they would provide moral uplift, tranquilizing recreation, socialize the masses into middle-class values and tastes, improve public health, provide open space amidst congestion, function

as a commons, reduce unwanted commercial development and increase property values (228).

However, park development was rife with inequality despite its pastoral and ideological origins. In order to build parks, spaces like Central Park displaced existing black residents and working class people who either owned or resided without titles on the land because they were deemed 'squatters.' A common history among many urban parks in the US, the spaces became coded for whites as blacks and other minorities were harassed if they tried to enter the park (Taylor 273). Despite the original goals of architects like Olmsted, parks did not necessarily reduce poverty or social inequality in the cities (Taylor 228); rather parks often became symbols of racial and class-based conflict. Not until the reform park movement occurred through in the Progressive Era were these spaces opened to immigrants, people of color and working class uses (Taylor 239, 298). In a sense, these groups argued for democratized use of open space.

While today's gardens are organized through different structures – garden members, non-profits and community land trusts, rather than city officials organize community gardens – there are still similarities between the trajectory of parks and garden advocacy. Taylor argues that similar to wilderness enthusiasts and wildlife advocates; early urban park advocates were influenced by European philosophies surrounding art, beauty and nature (235). Particularly, Olmsted and the Romantics desired a wild, untamed place and had disdain for tamed or manicured landscapes (Taylor 236). Advocates believed urban poor lives would be uplifted and improved if they could experience pastoral and picturesque settings.

Similarly, I argue that contemporary community gardens follow the same rhetoric as park advocates did in the 19th and early 20th century regarding what the space should look and feel like, who should take ownership and what social goals should be met. Urban agriculture and community gardens most often take place in neighborhoods with lower property values, empty lots or recently deindustrialized spaces rather than in the central business district (CBD). Given this unique position, farming the city, while idealized by many must also be examined for their goals of social control and uplifting the lives of the poor.

It was evident throughout my research that community gardens, just like early urban parks, were not a neutral space as its advocates suggest. Rather, they were often a point of conflict in the gentrifying neighborhoods of Logan Square and Humboldt Park. During my three-month membership in a community garden in Humboldt Park, I interviewed and observed members from my own garden and five other gardens throughout the two neighborhoods. All gardens had some sense of conflict between the space that was created, the people who resided within the space and the relationship to the changing community. Although, some garden tensions were higher than others.

Since the sustainable food movement and urban planners alongside food and environmental justice activists have all influenced contemporary urban gardening's popularity, its unfortunate that this space was a microcosm for racial or ethnic tension in the neighborhood, rather than a space of resistance against gentrification. Therefore, I will outline the three areas I found to be the most problematic a) the development of social capital and neighborhood identity b) the frontier ideology and private property c)

race and white privilege and in *chapter five*, I will discuss where there is room for improvement for community garden work, particularly in gentrifying neighborhoods.

Social Capital and Neighborhood Development

Many of the gardeners I spoke with were invested in making the garden into a beautification project in the neighborhood and mentioned that the neighbors had a positive perception of the space as welcoming and aesthetically pleasing (Fig. 12). In this sense, they were invoking similar campaigns of beautification and democracy of the park reform movement – hoping that the gardens would inspire a better neighborhood for all people to enjoy. Others spoke about the health benefits of growing their own food and having control over their food supply, as well as eating healthier. They also believed that working in a community garden would increase their food output in relation to what they could do in the backyards or porches, therefore using social relationships and capital to achieve their goals of a healthier diet or more sustainable food systems (Glover 2004).

Figure 12. A community garden juxtaposed against new and old housing developments in Humboldt Park (Personal photograph, 2013).

Others spoke of the value of meeting your neighbors and developing relationships that are beneficial in other aspects of life. Nelly remarked that the garden has been helpful to build social capital within the neighborhood since she moved five years ago:

> I would say that it's important to get to know your neighbors. For the first two years, granted we were new, but we did not speak to a lot of people but after the garden we know a lot of them now.

Mary, a 32-year old, white and middle-class woman who started her own community garden in Logan Square during her ten year residency spoke of the value in doing labor together and its capacity to talk about issues such as gentrification:

> My views on starting it were that I wanted a place where I could talk to neighbors. We could all identify what was happening in the neighborhood and what that means. I could walk down the street and stay hi to people. Um, maybe we could talk about harder issues. And because we are doing physical labor together that bonding can create some networks.

Robert Putnam has written extensively about social capital in America and the continuous loss of it as more and more people live individualized, less participatory lives in the community (2000). While Putnam does not directly reference community gardening, other authors (Glover 2004, Firth et al. 2011) have noted that gardens are a forum to build connections and reciprocity of social capital among groups of people, which in turn creates a social network and gives people power to effect change within that community. One interviewee, Catherine, a 29-year old white, middle-class woman involved in a community garden in Humboldt Park noted the positive role gardening may play in creating inclusive space within a gentrifying neighborhood:

> There is the language barrier – you have all these English and Spanish people and these people who lives wouldn't intermingle and they are all living in the same area. I feel like garden is trying to get them to intermingle because they live in the same area.

Most gardens' admission policy occurred through word of mouth. In her garden, about 20% of the gardeners were Hispanic or people of color while the other 80% were white and middle-to-upper class. This method proved to build social capital and networks among newer white residents, as well as normalize the garden as a white space rather than a space that was open to everyone. While some white garden members recognized racial imbalance as a problem, many others simply stated they were there to grow healthy food and did not mention how these spaces may create tension between the community's largely Latino population and the garden's overall whiteness.

It was evident that building social capital and networks in community gardens was available to those who had resources in and access to the community. Some members of the garden attempted to create more diversity, but ultimately failed at creating a real sense of balance and inclusivity. One white garden leader spoke of her attempt to build a bridge to the Spanish speaking community in Humboldt Park:

> We ran into problems because it's a Hispanic population and we don't speak Spanish. We had all our fliers interpreted and we were working with some of the higher community members or parts of Puerto Rican Cultural Committee. We ended up running into problems because they wanted it to be all Hispanic, they did not want many white people in it or they were upset because they thought we were going one way or another. But we just pushed the word as much as we could, word of mouth.

However, Gabriella noted that it was not just about access to the garden community. In one situation she felt it was intentional on the part of the white gardeners to exclude those who were people of color, particularly those who only spoke Spanish:

> The new application process began and they didn't inform any of the gardeners and then there were applications left at all these hipster business. [BH: Like on California Avenue?] Yes…So I came back here and made like 50 copies of them. And prior to that I was already organizing people and I got so many applicants…Racism definitely plays a role in this. And its not only me, across the board the people I know that

> I have organized do not feel comfortable there, they don't feel welcome there. But it doesn't matter they are still going to go there and garden.

Whether intentional or not, there is still a level of unconscious racism at play which can be just as harmful as overt racism. Therefore, to build diverse communities and social capital within the garden, not only is multi-lingual communication important, but reaching out to non-white businesses and building a sense of place-based comfort and community is necessary. Julian, a Humboldt Park resident in his 50's who identified as Mexican spoke about community gardening through another perspective:

> I think individuals who have grown up with us from young people to old people tend to see these things through a different prism…Its also true that this group [the white gentrifiers] does not understand the idea of outreach. How are you a good neighbor in a very profound sense? Good neighbors are not just small chats in the garden. Because I think there is a profound lack of understanding on the part of these white people.

For Julian, it is clear that his understanding of community and social networks, and how to create those are quite different than his fellow gardeners. A sense of reciprocity of trust and shared values did not exist between himself, as a Latino older male, and many of the white gardeners. He noted, "…the ability to have discussions, just because of my identity, it does not last long. It becomes threatening right away or if not threatening, conflictive." He expressed that he felt uncomfortable and unwelcome in the same space as white people, and how that was a contradiction considering Humboldt Park was a neighborhood he held with such high esteem. He had deep history with it as a Puerto Rican nationalist in the 1960s onto his work with Pedro Albizu Campos High School and Puerto Rican Cultural Center.

For Julian, the garden was not necessarily a space of social capital building, especially compared to the social capital allotted in his work as a community activist.

However, he did seek to reduce the conflict and build more trust among white gardeners and gardeners of color, commenting, "Because I do want to talk to these people since I am a novice at gardening. On the other hand, there is no way to separate stuff because people are not like that" He has desire to build social capital and knowledge from other gardeners, but that is difficult because learning cannot be separated from his identity. This, therefore contradicts the idea that gardens build social capital – when the real question should be for whom?

Mary from Logan Square, expressed hope that community gardens could contribute a positive light within a highly conflictive space of a gentrifying neighborhood:

> I feel that gentrification cannot be stopped by community gardens but maybe it can be slowed and if the people, be it gentrifiers or those being gentrified, don't move all the time. Give people a reason to stay. Especially the gentrifiers. If they have a reason to stay there are a lot less turnovers, which gives an opportunity to raise the rent.

Here, she reveals that gardens may be a reason for longevity among gentrifiers and her hope that they will help avoid "super-gentrification" of the neighborhood, which is the process of creating higher ground rent twice over. While this statement is not necessarily a solution, it does recognize the special role that gardens play in gentrifying neighborhoods. This perspective on space is very different, than say the farmers market or a restaurant's contribution to gentrification, where relationships are centered more on commodities rather than the community.

The Frontier and Private Property

Most gardens I encountered were either owned by a private institution, such as a hospital, private owners or by community land trusts. In no case, however, did the gardeners themselves own the property. However, ideology surrounding private property rights manifested quite often through garden politics and everyday interactions. In the case of my own community garden, several members expressed outrage that apples had been stolen from a communal orchard before they were ripe. The blame was placed on neighborhood children who had asked for apples a few days prior, but ran away when they were told they were not ready to pick. Some mentioned how infuriating it was and asked for signage (Fig. 13) or a neighborhood patrol to reduce rates of theft to the community plots and their "property," or raised bed. While other members chalked it up to the consequence of being in an urban space and felt that if the food was stolen, it was probably needed. In other gardens, interviewees spoke about other garden members "shaming" the thieves into not taking from the garden again.

Almost all the gardeners I spoke with mentioned theft and vandalism to be an issue within their garden, but the response to that theft was met with mixed reviews amongst the garden members. Some gardens, particularly those that had been in the neighborhood for about thirty years, were not previously locked up. Others chose to lock up their space in order to avoid further theft and vandalism. Only one garden in Logan Square was intentional about landscaping their space in a way that designated it an open public space with no fencing or locks. They did have occasional theft, but since their mission was different from other gardens – all food went to the local food pantry – they chose to place signage in English and Spanish so visitors were aware of their

organizational structure. As Mary, the garden coordinator mentioned, "We are not growing iPods!"

Figure 13. A private property sign hangs outside a community garden in Logan Square (Personal photograph, 2013).

Some garden members expressed that the theft and vandalism was due to poor community relations. One garden in Humboldt Park had several members who chose to fly an American flag in the front of the garden, a space that faced the park and a main driving route in the neighborhood. Tim, a white garden member and new resident of Humboldt Park, mentioned this was a "…way of being in a community and saying we own a thing within you, but we are not the same thing." This of course, is unnervingly similar to Puerto Rico's ambivalent political status as "belonging to – but not part of – the United States" (Fernandez 2012: 27). Stephanie, another white garden member mentioned:

> I am also always aware when it's a little off balance. I could imagine that it's not the most welcoming thing. I mean we have an American flag flying, that says something to the community that is unfortunate. I think its part of some of the more longstanding garden members who feel a sense

> of entitlement on that's how it's going to be known. I don't feel like a lot of people talk to those outside of the garden, but if I am here working I do say hello or make eye contact with them. I have talked to multiple people and I have given away food. I don't feel like it completely cuts ties [the flag] but there needs to be effort.

And Tim added:

> The garden is here and its great, but I don't know if it is that well connected. I feel like there are unsaid things about this garden and how it displays itself which also directly makes a statement that says what its about and what makes it different from this neighborhood. So like, being a Puerto Rican neighborhood and having an American flag draped over the street makes an interesting statement.

These gardeners recognized the harm in branding a space with the American national identity, which symbolizes colonization and oppression to many in the Puerto Rican community. Further, the display of Puerto Rican flags (Fig. 14) holds immense meaning for day-to-day cultural and neighborhood solidarity in Humboldt Park.

Figure 14. A Puerto Rican flag taped to the post of a raised bed in a Humboldt Park community garden (Personal photograph, 2013).

While the annual parade and fiesta are the most visually stunning Puerto Rican flag events, everyday public spaces are decorated in the flag; cars, businesses, homes, garden

plots, murals and t-shirts, which all symbolize resistance and solidarity. Therefore, the American flag interrupts that unity and potentially marks the garden as a non-friendly space for Puerto Ricans.

Some gardeners spoke about misunderstandings regarding community garden rules and private property, from both people working within the garden and community members outside the garden. Gabriella mentioned a situation where theft had occurred at a garden called *El Coqui*, which has been in the Humboldt Park community for over thirty years. The *coqui* is small, tiny tree frog and the official mascot of Puerto Rico:

> When the high school used to oversee it, we would always have stuff stolen, you know. I don't know we never made such a big deal about it. Now, there are all these people coming into our garden. First of all, that garden has been there for decades, people, you don't know. You came in and created your own organization without considering who have been used to gardening in this place…Well it was a mom and a teenage daughter and some other kids, I am sure that lady has been used to going into the garden and not that its right or wrong, ethical or not, but she has been used to going in there and getting her peppers or whatever it is. But we used to have people who used to take, well not everything, and its just like hey, we are in a community and there is a necessity for it. No one is going to go and steal vegetables if they don't need it. Not to say that it is right, but you don't know if that was a former gardener there and they have been excluded from this process.

Here, Gabriella expresses her frustration with the transition of community garden spaces from one organizational structure of sharing and semi-openness to a new one based on strict, private property values. Further, she demonstrates that her understanding of "community" within a community garden is much different than the lock and key mentality. For Gabriella, it is not just about the community within the garden, rather it's about the garden being set within a larger community of Puerto Ricans. This demonstrates that without understanding of context, history and memory, conflict within the neighborhood between newcomers and existing residents will be heightened.

Growing Food, Constructing Race

One weekday evening in Humboldt Park, I was scheduled to interview a garden leader in small corner lot. I parked my bike across the street from the garden gates and began to lock it up when a man in his late 60's stopped me to ask if I ran the garden. He helped lay the original foundation and plant peach trees in the garden over thirty years ago. Clearly, he was familiar with the corner and had his own rich history in the neighborhood. I told him that I was there to talk to the organizers and I knew little about who ran it now outside of my online communications with them. I was taken aback a bit by his question, as there were other residents walking by at the time of his question. In a city that is consistently moving, people coming and going, it felt strange that the man assumed I was part of the garden. However, as a researcher, it also signaled the outsider perception of the garden in the neighborhood. As a young, white woman who rides a bike – I represented the contemporary leader in an urban garden.

Often, when asked about the history of the garden, there was less reflection by coordinators and members on the current spatial and racial junction in which the garden lies. In one garden named after the rainforest in Puerto Rico called *El Yunque,* I was not able to grasp the full history of the garden, but it was clear that it had been around for about thirty years. The garden recently went through a leadership transition since the former leaders left the neighborhood. Beth a white, middle-class woman in her mid-20's who ran the garden mentioned:

> Its *El Yunque* gardens and it definitely has Puerto Rican roots and there are a lot of Puerto Rican families around and its much more intermingled with young people probably because of the affordable apartments. I am not sure how much people work together with that or if they like it.

She also spoke about how they currently had few to no Latino members within the garden. Although they speak to people who walk by the space, advertising or door-to-door organizing was not a goal of *El Yunque*.

Nonetheless, Beth was excited by the discourse of growing your own food, getting your hands in the soil and teaching others about where their food comes from:

> I am vegan so any free produce I can produce myself is beneficial and I think that it's healthy for the neighborhood to see food being produced. There are like 10 squashes over there. We had some kids come at the beginning of the summer and they had never seen a worm before or bugs. They didn't understand that this is where food comes from. It's a really cool benefit because people that are removed from in the city and its there in front of them now.

As several scholars have previously written (Guthman 2008, Alkon 2008, Slocum 2010), the idea of bringing good food to others and educating them on what is healthful is wrapped in a "whitened cultural histories" (Guthman 2011). In other words, the modern, philanthropic white savior mentality is wrapped in histories of assimilation to American culture, colonialism and religious missionary work. Food and bringing it to others is a powerful vehicle for this type of work.

Guthman (2010) sees the unconscious or unmarked racial category of whiteness manifest in two ways. First, it is upheld through *colorblindness* or a largely white cultural confidence in nonracist attitudes within the movement. Many white garden members mentioned that the space was open to anyone who wanted to join, but had less reflection on their admissions processes and whether they were inclusive or not. Potentially, some of the struggle garden leaders like Beth have with creating more diverse and inclusive space for people of color and longtime residents is because the space has now been marked as white and young, despite its Puerto Rican and Latino origins. Second,

whiteness manifests in its *universalism*, or the idea that one culture or aesthetic ideal should be the goal for all people. For example, it was clear that in some gardens individual raised beds were being constructed over longstanding communal gardens and gathering spaces. These were being reduced to meet the needs of growing interest in admissions to the garden, however, by design clearly indicate communal spaces' importance to members at one time in the gardens' histories.

Some white gardeners did recognize and were open about their positionality. Mary had recently attended an anti-racist training at Growing Power Chicago and had been unpacking her whiteness and personal role in gentrification for several years. When speaking about her garden, she mentioned:

> We didn't plan this in a way that was for the community. We didn't go to them; we didn't plan it together or with the food bank. I think we have tons of problems and how we are and who we are. But they are interesting to talk about; I don't think they are the worst things. There is a lot of patting on the back, its so is great, but there are problems. But its got some problems, its white, not completely, but it is in a privilege way not necessarily in a race way.

Here she acknowledges her own history of privilege and universalism when implementing and designing the garden. Mary noted that since the garden was not inclusive in its design, it was not fully successful at achieving its original goals of being a "community" garden and a space to talk about difficult issues in the neighborhood.

Proponents of community gardens have advocated that social capital building occurs because gardeners are able to form connections, trust and reciprocity among fellow gardeners. Gardens are a leisure space to discuss food, local politics, current events and family. This is a neighborhood characteristic that has the capacity to build stronger and more resilient communities. In an urban area, *contact theory* suggests that

interactions among different racial groups in informal settings can work to reduce prejudices. Shinew, Glover, and Parry (2004: 338) note: "Contact theory posits that…interracial interactions that occur in leisure settings have the potential to be more genuine and sincere compared with the more obligatory interactions that take place in formal settings." However, while contact may serve to make shifts in personal prejudice, in the cases of the gardens it has shown to have little impact on neighborhood and structural inequality (Dixon et. al 2005).

Within gentrifying neighborhoods and community gardens I observed, there were high levels of tension surrounding who is able to socially thrive. These are largely based on current admissions policies and day-to-day interactions. Deeply held notions of private property and theft permeate garden politics and work to exclude the diverse individuals from the space. In some instances, nationalism intersected with private property rights to form deeply symbolic claims over spatial ownership.

While some exclusive behaviors were intentional, some behaviors were unintentionally unwelcoming, but still lacked inclusion. Of the three major themes I observed, social capital and neighborhood development, private property and constructing whiteness, the capacity to unpack one's racial privilege and whitened cultural histories appear to be the first step in reducing community gardens as a contested spaces in the community. Many of the Puerto Rican and Latino gardeners I spoke with were open to white allies, and in one case, as a researcher I was the only white person who had begun to inquire about racial relations within the garden space. Given their multicultural setting, urban gardens must seek out trainings on racial privilege and histories of neighborhoods just as much as they seek out trainings on proper harvesting or

tree care. Second, the largest barriers to inclusivity was that of language and technology. Many potential gardeners were excluded from the space simply because they could not speak English or did not have computers, and therefore could not communicate with other gardeners over email or online blogging. These small, but influential steps could alter the space to be seen as inclusive, rather than exclusive and white.

CHAPTER V

JUST AND SUSTAINBLE FOOD IN COMMUNITIES

Food, Urban Spaces and the Future

Despite a sense of inevitability of gentrification from a political-economic view, it is not a *naturally occurring* process. It has been informed by a history of marginalization and displacement of specific groups. It is reproduced on a daily basis through the lived experiences of those within the neighborhood and the discourse about the neighborhood. Alternative food stands at an important juncture within this process. If the food movement is collectively opposed to the capital and corporate production of food, so too should they opposed to the capitalist orderings of power within urban spaces that continue to violently remove and displace communities. The commodification of housing and neoliberal urban markets is closely tied to the commodification of food in alternative restaurants, grocery stores and farmers markets. Community gardens, however, lie within a different space and hold an opportunity to approach alternative food with a non-commoditized outlook.

In Logan Square and Humboldt Park, gentrification and resistance to it are increasingly symbolized through farmers markets, local food restaurants, co-op grocery stores and community gardens. Meanwhile, the experiences of some Puerto Ricans in Humboldt Park demonstrate it is also being used a tool for resistance to oppression and marginalization. Therefore, food is a double-edged sword. It is a powerful, yet mundane tool because of its everyday qualities, which intersect with its ability to uphold social class and cultural distinctions. Alternative food systems also have the potential to be an

engine of just sustainabilities since underlying the mission of alternative food is an emphasis on the connection between the relationship of humans and nature (Agyeman and Evans 2004). Hope remains that alternative food and neighborhood change can occur in a way that does not create increased poverty, homelessness, racism and conflict but rather values community, grassroots development.

Food justice, while predominantly about creating a system that does not exploit oppressed groups through the production, harvest, processing or consumption of foods, is also an issue of land control in the built environment, be it affordable housing or community gardens. Gentrification is just one lens to interpret how land has been used and misused in the United States to benefit some and oppress others. Displacement risks disrupting existing networks of people and their foodways. It also disrupts food justice-related work, such as community gardens or farmers markets. Therefore affordable housing and food justice are tightly linked together.

The challenges Chicago's Puerto Rican community faces are not exceptions, but are increasingly the rules of urban food justice work. In Oakland, the organization Phat Beets serves ups two clinic-based farmers markets, a youth school farm stand and a community nutrition hub which all aim to support local businesses, small farmers and farmers of color. Phat Beets has an explicit position statement on their website about gentrification in North Oakland, which they state threatens their work as a food justice organization:

> "If working class people of color are displaced from North Oakland – which inevitably happens through gentrification – then Phat Beets farmers markets and CSAs become inaccessible to the community as a whole, which contradicts our mission and is therefore something we cannot support as an organization" (Phat Beets 2013).

They go on to say that gentrification is a structural process and they challenge the ideas that North Oakland is a neighborhood being "discovered" as existing populations are displaced. They also note this discourse bears a striking resemblance to colonialism. The *Whose Foods, Whose Community* in Boston, Massachusetts held protests outside the planned site of Whole Foods in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood. Organizations and communities from Boston, Detroit and New York City all have experienced similar challenges.

Suggestions for Creating Inclusive and Intercultural Neighborhood Spaces

This research showed there is room at the local level to disrupt, reduce or all together stop the process of displacement. Many participants noted that gentrification could not be stopped by community gardens alone. However, one person did note that gardens hold a special place in a gentrifying neighborhood because they can potentially slow down the process by creating more investment within the space. This slow down of movement can be coupled with measures taken to reduce gentrification such as more affordable housing, participatory democracy, cultural affirmation, coalition building and anti-racist food justice trainings to reflect on the normalization of white culture and its claim to space in gentrifying neighborhoods.

Gabriella noted there is power in recognizing where a community has come from and participating as an ally in that space rather than creating a whole new community of your own:

> Don't get me wrong; I don't think this community can survive just off of being Puerto Rican. It's just not possible. It needs to be mixed income. I am not saying it has to be exclusively Puerto Rican. However this is a Puerto Rican community and we have struggled for years, more than forty

> years – there were two riots on the street…We have built what we have from ashes. We dealt with slumlords, unbearable living conditions here. We built this. Humboldt Park has gotten better because we have gotten better. You know, not because people are coming in. It's better because we worked at making it better. So when you come into a community, what we have seen is that people make their own communities within our community and want to exclude themselves from everything. You know, and so it could be a restaurant right down the street and it could be all white people, but then they won't, well some of them do patronize the businesses on here [*Paseo Boricua*] but not the large amount they patronize the white owned businesses in the neighborhood. I am not saying it has to be exclusively PR, but integrate yourself into the community that already exists here. What you do is you cast them aside, you are not used to their lifestyle and they consider their lifestyle to be better than that of the people who live here.

To Gabriella, the memory of the space's history is critical and celebrating what Puerto Ricans have done in Humboldt Park is a crucial step towards more sustainable and inclusive communities. The alternative food movement in gentrifying neighborhoods could do much more to celebrate the history and current context of overcoming struggle in the neighborhood. One example, would be encouraging neighborhood walking or biking tours that highlight food, the community gardens and other sites' important history from the perspective of long-time residents. The opportunities for residents, community groups and policymakers to work together are rife with possibilities – the first step is taking time to listen and assess what the community needs and then acting upon it.

Tools for building multi-cultural and inclusive spaces in community gardens are few and far between nationwide. Most non-profits advocating for gardening do not currently offer courses in this topic and stick to best practices in gardening, composting or other physical related processes. Non-profit organizations or the local government must offer these tools to ensure gardeners are creating a space that is welcome to the *whole* community.

Farmers markets also have a special role to play considering their power within the neighborhood to affect development. Farmers markets that celebrate culturally appropriate foods and diverse farmers would be one step towards more inclusive space. Newcomers to the neighborhood, particularly those interested in food and community, often reside in the sites for the reproduction of racism and gentrification, but they can also be strategic voices of resistance. According to Frankenberg (1993), white people need to be able to work on "unnaturalising' ourselves…by reexamining our own personal histories and geographies, and praxis. 'Unnaturalizing' ourselves means engagement in practical political work…[because]…[u]nlearning racism…is not the same as ending it" (82). This means not only examining the social and economic location of others, (i.e. community members who need access to healthier foods in food deserts), but also the social and economic location of oneself and why access is not a problem. In other words, unpacking racial and economic privilege, understanding that gentrification is not a natural process and working to de-gentrify our minds.

Further, those involved in the food movement in gentrifying neighborhoods must participate actively in community work and build multi-racial and ethnic alliances to advocate for a variety of experiences and representations (Kobayashi and Peake 2000). Not only are alliances critical, but also the design of a space or organizational goals is key to making change. The concept of an inclusive and intercultural space must be centrally designed into alternative food practices such as community gardens and farmers markets rather than exist as an afterthought or tack on to the existing project.

While the memory of urban renewal is still fresh in many minds in Humbodlt Park and Logan Square, eminent domain is not necessarily the state of displacement

today. The process of displacement is gradual, yet still violent and detrimental. Dominant ideologies that maintain power and create displacement are reinforced on a daily basis and often, through food, culture and social groups. Food, as Ona's quote states at the beginning of this thesis, is "a highly political, intimate and prolific topic," which is also a characteristic that can be utilized by oppressed groups to build solidarity and resistance through diverse campaigns. Therefore, food can also be seen as the lowest common denominator among people who seek institutional and social change.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to this interview. I have scheduled about 30 minutes to 1 hour for the interview. Does that work for you? I want to honor our time constraints. I might encourage you to elaborate on your answers to my questions, but there may be other times I redirect you to cover all we need to today.

Part One: First, I am going to ask you questions about the neighborhood.

1. How long have you lived in Logan Square or Humboldt Park?
2. Do you rent or own your home?
3. Where did you move from before coming to the neighborhood?
4. What did you know about the neighborhood before moving here?
5. What motivated you to move to the neighborhood?
6. Can you describe the neighborhood to me?
7. How does Logan Square or Humboldt Park compare to other neighborhoods in Chicago?
8. Has the neighborhood changed since you moved here? How so?
9. What do you feel has contributed to the change?
10. What would you like to see change about the neighborhood in the future?

Part Two: Now I am going to ask you questions about the neighborhood and food.

1. Do you consider yourself part of the alternative or sustainable food movement?
2. Can you describe the neighborhood's food environment to me?
3. Why motivates you to try to "eat right?"
4. What kind of knowledge do you need to "eat right?" Where do you get your information about eating right?
5. How many times do you eat out each week? In the neighborhood?
6. What are some of your favorite neighborhood restaurants?
7. Where do you typically shop for your food?
8. How did you choose these locations as your favorite places to eat?
9. Are there any restaurants, markets or stores you would not buy from? Why or why not?
10. Do you grow your own food? Where do you grow your own food? Why do you grow your own food?
11. Tell me the story of your community garden

Part Three: Finally, I am going to ask you questions about yourself.

1. What is your occupation?
2. What is your age?
3. What race(s) or ethnic group(s) do you identify with?

4. What economic class do you identify with?
5. I will be using fake names when I write up this data. I can make one up – or is there one that specially suits you?

Conclusion: Thank you for taking time out of your day to interview with me. Please let me know if you have any thoughts or final questions. Just a reminder, all your answers will remain confidential. Your copy of the informed consent has my name and email address if you think of any later questions. If I have any additional questions after this interview, is it OK to contact you again? If so, please write your name and email/phone number at the bottom of your consent form.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW DATA SET

Research # and Name	Neighborhood Resident	Years of Residency	Occupation	Highest Level of Education	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Economic Class
#15, Sarah	Logan Square	13 years	Higher Education	n/a	50	White	Middle
#54, Stephanie	Humboldt Park	4 years	Graduate Student	Master's	27	Caucasian	Middle-class, I have been on the lower end of that but I know I have higher earning potential
#55, Tim	Humboldt Park	2 years	Student and Programmer	Master's	28	Caucasian	Middle-class
#24, Seth	Logan Square	3 years	Sales/Marketing/PR for a Farm	Bachelor's, English	29	White	Lower middle class
#501, Nelly	Humboldt Park	5 years	Forensic Scientist	Master's	32	White	Middle
#502, Giaco	Humboldt Park	5 years	Parent, part-time environmental consultant	Master's	n/a	Brazilian/Italian	Middle
#609, Andrea	Logan Square	2 years	Customer Support Representative	Bachelor's	25	White	Lower middle class, but I have support of my parents if I need it and they are upper middle class
#14, Mary	Logan Square	10 years	Television lighting, garden coordinator	Bachelor's	32	White	n/a
#29, Joan	Logan Square	40 years	Writing teacher	Master's	74	White	Upper middle
#361, Catherine	Humboldt Park	n/a	Registered dietician, garden coordinator	n/a	29	White	Middle
#50, Nick	Humboldt Park	9 years	IT Product Manager	n/a	44	Black/White/Chinese	Upper middle class
#122, Thomas	Logan Square	2 years	Communications for non-profit	Bachelor's	29	White	Middle class
#732, Beth	Humboldt Park / Wicker	4 years, 8 years in west side	Communications for non-profit	n/a	29	White	n/a

#35 Julian	Humboldt Park	Whole life	IT, Community Activist	n/a	52	Mexican/Latino	n/a
#30, Gabriella	Humboldt Park	Whole life	College student, high school employee	n/a	n/a	Puerto Rican / Latino	n/a
#38, Michelle	Humboldt Park	2 years	Retired	n/a	n/a	White	Middle-class
#63, Karen	Humboldt Park	1.5 years	Professional chef	n/a	n/a	Black	n/a
#5, Megan	Humboldt Park	n/a	Non-profit development, garden coordinator	n/a	n/a	White	Middle-class

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