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Gardens and Green Spaces: placemaking and Black entrepreneurialism in Cleveland, Ohio

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Abstract

This paper presents a case study of Gardens and Green Spaces (GGS), a resident-driven, grant-funded project in Cleveland, Ohio working toward community change. Through both placemaking and entrepreneurial strategies, the main grant objectives are to effect change at the intersection of food (and agriculture), arts, and culture in Kinsman, a 96% Black Neighborhood on Cleveland's east side. While community development (CD) projects are often designed by outside 'experts' who inform the scope and focus of grant-funded projects, this project is rooted in the hypothesis that a resident-driven approach to CD will lead to increased community buy-in and participation, resulting in more lasting and substantive community change. GGS works across sectors, integrating arts, culture, and food to promote placemaking and community-based entrepreneurial engagement as a path towards greater health, equity, and economic resilience. This paper argues that community-based and resident-driven development—although not without its own challenges—can result in more holistic community transformation across sectors, with the potential for greater resident participation, sustainability, and equity. The case study presented in this paper, including in-depth interviews and neighborhood surveys, is an examination of the pilot phase of GGS, and argues that both placemaking and entrepreneurialism represent a negotiation between market driven community development and a solely philanthropic model. It provides insight into more equitable and sustainable change that has the potential to shift the traditional paradigm of expert driven, or "outside-in" community development.

Keywords Community development · Cleveland · Urban food production · Creative placemaking · Urban agriculture · Urban planning · Land · Food · Arts · Culture · Philanthropy

Abbreviations

CD Community development
GGS Gardens and Green Spaces

Introduction

This paper presents two of the strategies—placemaking and entrepreneurialism—of the Gardens and Green Spaces (GGS) project in the Garden Valley neighborhood in Cleveland, that strives for community change at the intersection of arts, culture, food, and agriculture. This project holds as an underlying premise that transformations in an inequitable urban food system always occur within a larger dialectic of urban metabolism (Heynen et al. 2006; Smith 2008). According to this perspective (Heynen et al. 2006), urban metabolism or transformation occurs as a result of both human labor and the work of non-human natures (including the built environment), which is an important recognition of the complexity of urban agriculture, community food systems, and community development more broadly, and supports the contention that equitable food system transformation must extend beyond interventions solely around growing food.

Erika Allen, co-founder of the Urban Growers Collective in Chicago writes about a community food system that "deals with everything; all the components that are needed to establish, maintain, and perpetually sustain a civilization" (Allen 2010). This concept of "everything" includes the struggle for sovereignty around community land and water rights, but also extends as far as community participation in conversations and planning around transportation, energy, housing, economic development and beyond. Questions of labor, gender, race, health care, age, education, and social services (among others) exist alongside land rights,

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ecological sustainability, food access, nutrition, and sovereignty as important components of a community development intervention whose ultimate goal is to effectively and sustainably reduce hunger. Through this lens, urban food production is one piece—albeit an important one—in producing more equitable community infrastructures, healing historical traumas from economic, political, and spatial marginalization, and in establishing community resilience. While urban agriculture has received significant attention over the past several years as a strategy for economic resilience and access to increased nutrition (Grewal and Grewal 2012; Kaufman and Bailkey 2000; Sommers and Smit 1994), especially in low-income neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color (Tornaghi 2017), it cannot be the only point of intervention in sustainable and equitable approaches to community development. Sustainable and equitable community change might start with food as a powerful entry point, but must strive to encompass most (if not all) aspects of the lives of community members, engaging them not as recipients of a nutritional or health intervention, but rather as multifaceted and complex human beings.

Throughout interviews and conversations with Black urban growers in Cleveland, the importance of a holistic approach to community development was repeatedly articulated. Epistemically, participants understand food and growing as a part of the larger dialectic of transformation (Heynen et al. 2006), with important, mutually constitutive foci including other facets of their lives: education, transportation, art, literature, poetry, exercise, safety and violence reduction, and spirituality or religion. The Garden Valley neighborhood faces challenges across many different aspects of life, and as one research participant explained, community development and change must address all of these if it is to catalyze sustainable improvements in any area.

The theory of change that emerged from GGS emphasized creative placemaking and entrepreneurialism as catalytic to community transformation. The project planning team understands placemaking as a celebration and expression of culture unique to a community that strengthens, empowers, and 'activates' spaces within that community. Placemaking, as an approach to community change, relies upon already-existing assets, values, and knowledge to foster health, safety, prosperity, and well-being (Montgomery 2016) that might be overlooked through a traditional economic or market-based lens. Following Reese (2018), the project's attention to the geographies of Black food and land through a lens of what is, rather than what isn't, allows for "(b)lack ways of being, knowing, and doing" to become the drivers behind community change (p. 408). While placemaking is not an entirely new approach to achieving community change, community development projects rarely place the emphasis on holistic community transformation. Placemaking is often either at the periphery of CD practices in Cleveland, or implemented in such a way that it does not meaningfully engage with community knowledge about problems impacting (or potential solutions within) the community, or effectively acknowledge the particular histories of place.

As part of a strategy for community change, entrepreneurship can easily be critiqued as reinforcing neoliberal strategies of governance, especially those condoning the retreat of social services and state investment in particular neighborhoods (Derickson 2014; Brenner and Theodore 2002). Community residents consistently spoke about entrepreneurialism not as an individualist approach to economic gain or a replacement for state investment, however, but as economic engagement for community benefit. In other words, entrepreneurial engagement in Black communities has the potential to be an important complement to strategies of placemaking. An intentionally community-based approach to entrepreneurialism can be seen as a powerful tool for equity and sustainability in community development, especially in disinvested communities of color where traditional economic interactions have historically been oppressive and exploitative.

Literature review: community development, placemaking, and entrepreneurialism

Engaging with poor and/or historically marginalized people as full, complex, and multi-faceted human beings with needs, interests, or struggles beyond food, jobs, or shelter—that is, engaging holistically—is often not possible in community development grant projects with singular goals, such as combatting obesity or improving literacy. The ideal of holistic engagement rarely manifests in the methods deployed to address challenges facing underserved neighborhoods (see, for example, Cavanaugh et al. 2014; Cummins et al. 2014). Community development, social welfare, and government assistance programs often approach poor communities of color from a 'needs only' perspective, with a focus on survival necessities (O'Brien et al. 2004; Shannon 2014). To wit, many so-called diet-related health problems are discursively delimited to impoverished neighborhoods, especially neighborhoods of color (Shannon 2014), with an emphasis on the ways in which neighborhood environmental factors may contribute to negative social, economic, and health outcomes (Stokols 1995). These neighborhoods and communities become geographically bounded areas for intervention around focal points including food, housing, healthcare, or employment (Morales 2009). This single-issue model of intervention often uses market-oriented rather than community-based tools, disregarding cultural aspects of a neighborhood and the holistic or cross-sectional nature of community needs. The arts—and culture or creative

expression more broadly—are implicitly understood to be secondarily important or even excessive and unnecessary, despite evidence that participation in the arts leads to more engaged residents and more resilient communities (Kay 2000; Purcell 2009).

Food is an excellent entry point—a universal human need—to much more complex facets of the human experience, including creativity, spirituality, and community empowerment. Growing food allows humans to articulate together with non-human nature in a way that can produce more equitable, healthy, sustainable, and just urban natures (Heynen et al. 2012). Food production is also an effective introduction to histories and geographies that have contributed to particular urban environments, and has underserved marginalized populations, not allowing them a voice in political, economic, social, and spatial processes (Heynen et al. 2006.)

Urban agriculture produced through Black labor, as an approach to a more equitable and resilient community food system (Porter 2018), challenges dominant conceptions about what 'Black' space looks like (Ekers and Loftus 2012; Harvey 2003), while also contesting power dynamics around uneven development and land use practices. Black Americans have suffered disproportionate land loss (Mitchell 2005; Pennick 1990), theft, and the fracturing of communities through policies of redevelopment and urban renewal (Michney 2011; Pritchett 2003). Within the urban context, food production often exists as a contingent form of land use, often emerging as a temporary solution to economic downturn or increases in demand for inexpensive food (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). According to city planners, it does not always represent the "highest and best use" of land (Lawson 2004; Németh and Langhorst 2014), and while long-term urban agricultural projects tend to do best in neighborhoods with little to no development pressure, investment in these neighborhoods is likely to be very low. What are often assumed to be either 'natural' or unintentional patterns in urban development across space and time emerge as the products of powerful socio-spatial forces; growers—and, in the context of GGS, artists and culture-bearers—labor to transform and (re)produce the spaces around them, and in so doing, shine a light on these historical–geographical inequities (Harvey 2003; Safransky 2017; Smith 2008).

For the purposes of this article, it is important to distinguish between space and place. Within many disciplines, space is theorized as a location without social connection (Tuan 1977), while Lefebvre (1996), Swyngedouw (1996), and others theorize that space as *inherently* social, pushing back against the "blank slate" theory of urban planning, development, and change (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Lefebvre 1996; Scott 2010). Theories of placemaking define place as socially produced areas—"temporary permanences" (Harvey 1996)—built to respond to the needs of residents. For the purposes of this paper, 'place' is used to refer to locations targeted by placemaking endeavors. However, in keeping with the literature (Ekers and Loftus 2012; Heynen et al. 2006), I use space to refer more generally to localities, and contend that no space—or place—is devoid of social relations or removed from political decision-making processes. Lastly, Lefebvre's writing on "the production of space" is useful in explaining processes of community and creative placemaking. This work focuses on the inherently social nature of space, its production through both human labor and nonhuman transformation, and, importantly, the relationship between (urban) space, the state, and economic relations (Lefebvre 1991, 1996, 2009).

Placemaking and entrepreneurialism

Creative placemaking projects often encourage entrepreneurialism as a way to fill an economic vacuum in otherwise economically and spatially marginalized neighborhoods. Ideologies of entrepreneurialism and market-based growth are deeply ingrained in urban development practices, even in communities who have not been served by this model. Entrepreneurial ideologies often encourage residents to become self-sustaining and to produce their own means of subsistence. Especially in low-income neighborhoods, entrepreneurs rarely receive the tax subsidies or abatements that larger-scale businesses do in cities looking to revitalize (Wilson 2007). Smaller-scale entrepreneurs also do not benefit from economies of scale and yet, are expected to become self-sustaining within a relatively short timeframe.

Black entrepreneurship, however, was and is necessary in the face of a state and economy that have neglected, oppressed, and excluded Black communities from economic, political, and social success and power. Within the Black community, entrepreneurial endeavors are often linked to the historical struggles and traumas experienced by Black Americans. Enterprises that address the violent and oppressive history of Black Americans, while simultaneously celebrating Black culture, positions Black history and culture to heal trauma and promote community solidarity. Learning about and reframing historical traumas is a key part of many placemaking projects within Black communities (Sbicca 2012), and is essential to building stronger communities and stimulating community economies.

In marginalized communities, entrepreneurs emerged out of a need to build amenities such as medical offices, restaurants, and lodgings, contributing to a uniquely Black class consciousness amongst Black entrepreneurs. Black Wall Street and the Harlem Renaissance represent successful, albeit time-bound, examples of Black entrepreneurship that supported the creation of local economies while maintaining control over intellectual property and, at the same time,

building community power. Arts and culture were central to these entrepreneurial endeavors, as was placemaking and a rootedness in place. Artists generated income and became upwardly mobile without relying on government support. These examples represent ideologies of entrepreneurship based not in individual economic achievement but rather in community empowerment, bolstering Black economies, and in resisting dependence on a racially oppressive state that, over time, has disinvested from, segregated, fractured, and disproportionately incarcerated Black communities (Brahinsky 2013; Massey and Fischer 2000). Black entrepreneurialism simultaneously reinforces the importance of market-based capitalist growth while also building alternative community economies—often communities of care (Sundin 2011)—and Black resilience in the face of continued neglect by traditional investment streams. Much like placemaking, Black entrepreneurialism in practice does not guarantee a reversal of hegemonic neoliberal tendencies across urban space nor does it promise greater equity in investment or community development. I present these arguments as a way to dismantle the idea that any hegemonic practice or ideology exists without counterhegemonic opposition.

Placemaking and philanthropic capital

Differential investment in and approaches to placemaking, philanthropy, and CD across space often correlate to race and class (Ley 2003; Montgomery 2016). Whereas downtown areas and more affluent neighborhoods see considerable increases in investment in and demands on housing, poorer neighborhoods struggle to recover not only from economic decline and the foreclosure crisis of 2007–2008, but from decades of redlining, disinvestment, and institutionalized discrimination. As a part of community and urban development strategies, creative placemaking attempts to disrupt these racialized patterns, expanding beyond interventions that target a particular problem or behavior to instead 'activate' spaces, and bolster community culture and economies in a more holistic sense. This happens by bringing together networks of people to socially appropriate space (Lefebvre 1996, 2009), changing its social and spatial dynamics, and infusing community significance to that space. Placemaking is one way to produce space that has the potential to better reflect the needs, desires, and cultural histories of community members (Bain and Landau 2017).

Philanthropic dollars allow for creative and collaborative placemaking to increase the artistic and cultural draw of a neighborhood or community, and engage community residents in the creation and enactment of their vision for space. Municipal or state investment in cultural infrastructure tends to focus on more affluent neighborhoods, and is larger in scale. Kinsman (and Garden Valley, which is part of Kinsman) have historically received little economic investment from the state, and most investment in the arts or in cultural infrastructure stems from grants and philanthropic dollars rather than local or state-level subsidies. Philanthropic support of placemaking also has the potential to contest or partially displace a neoliberalized privileging of economic growth to the detriment of social relations. This supports a more expansive and holistic paradigm of neighborhood change, and a production of space that allows for alternative visions of the urban to be enacted from a grassroots perspective (Angelo 2017; Lefebvre 1991).

While placemaking can be seen as resistance against homogenized (and thus commodifiable) urban space (Lefebvre 1991, 1996), it is far from a panacea. Placemaking is not able to fully contest a market-dominant and globalized approach to urban development (Jessop 2000; Sassen 2000; While et al. 2004). Nor does it truly shift patterns of economic investment at either the local or the global scale. Indeed, support by community foundations and other grantors have done little to reverse decades of economic and political marginalization. Further, placemaking, like entrepreneurialism, can contribute to the market fundamentalist paradigm of development, as residents and grantees risk perpetual reliance upon local market growth and the continued solicitation of grant funding as a way to both prolong investment in place and attempt to equalize uneven allocations of capital across space. Placemaking thus risks reinforcing neoliberal tenets of capitalist development at the community scale rather than an actual shift in the power dynamics of urban planning or urban imaginaries. Economic sustainability and equity must be built into the structure of any project: resident participation, plans for economic viability in the long-term, and continual evaluation on progress towards these goals.

Historical geographical background

Cleveland follows many other North American cities, with both austerity politics and investment reifying patterns of marginalization and uneven development, often ushering in or hastening the gentrification of poor neighborhoods of color as spaces of commodification, and reifying market ideologies of development across urban space (Ley 2003; Porter 1995). The Cleveland Museum of Art is located in University Circle, the wealthiest neighborhood in Cleveland; three professional sports arenas sit in a revitalized downtown business district, an area of heavy investment and affluence; rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods such as Collinwood and the Detroit Shoreway have seen significant investment in the arts and business that coincides with rising real estate and rental costs. While gentrification is not the foregone conclusion to investment in place, the literature suggests a strong correlation between investment in creative institutions, and

affluence in urban space (Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris 2007). Furthermore, development in one neighborhood can have very real impacts on neighboring communities that do not receive the same levels of investment (Lindemann 2019). Case Western Reserve University in University Circle owns dozens of properties in neighboring low-income communities of color where real estate costs are lower, in effect decreasing available housing stock for those community residents while simultaneously providing amenities for incoming wealthier occupants (Richmond 2017).

Gardens and Green Spaces takes place in the Garden Valley neighborhood on Cleveland's east side, sometimes called the Forgotten Triangle. Garden Valley is located in the larger Kinsman neighborhood of Cleveland's Ward 5. It is also just east of the Central neighborhood, where the majority of Black migrants to Cleveland settled during the Great Migration, and where the segregated Black-only public housing, Outhwaite Homes, was built in the 1930s. This community has some of the highest poverty indicators in Cleveland, including female-headed households, high rates of incarceration, unemployment (almost 30%), and low educational attainment, as well as poor health indicators. Approximately 96% of residents are African-American, and as of 2013 had a median household income of about $14,000. About 84% of the housing is rental, and 35% of Cuyahoga County's public housing (over 4000 units) is concentrated in and around the neighborhood. Garden Valley is one of the original sites of federally funded urban renewal, with several hundred apartment units built in the 1960s (Michney 2011). Designed to attract middle-income Black residents, housing projects in Garden Valley instead became an example of how racial segregation and the concentration of poverty were simultaneously reinforced through the enactment of urban renewal policies (Jenkins 2001; Michney 2011). While parts of Cleveland now boast an economic renaissance and population growth, population loss continues in Kinsman, especially in the wake of the foreclosure crisis, which catalyzed an 84 percent decrease in housing values in the Kinsman neighborhood (WRLC 2015).

Statistical indicators, while only part of this community's story, are significant to the ways in which development projects have approached this community, with each indicator representing a unique target for community development investment or inquiry. At the city scale, investment in large-scale development tends to eclipse funding for alternative approaches such as urban agriculture. Kinsman and Garden Valley have incredibly high concentrations of vacant land in Cleveland (WRLC 2015), representing an opportunity to reimagine both space in the abstract and more concrete urban and community development initiatives (Fig. 1).

Beginning in the mid-2000s a group of three childhood friends and former residents began cleaning up about two acres of vacant land, in part through extensive soil remediation. They founded the Rid-All Green Partnership Farm, one of the core partners in GGS. Rid-All (now spanning more than seven acres) has become an example of a successful and profitable urban farming venture with a focus on social justice and neighborhood engagement. While Rid-All represents hope for the positive impact of alternative land use projects, the surrounding community has not recovered from decades of misuse, neglect, and the resulting socio-spatial challenges. On the one hand, Kinsman sits at the forefront of alternative land use innovation in Cleveland, with the support of the local Community Development Corporation (CDC), the Ohio State University Extension, and zoning ordinances established through the City Planning Commission that allow food production and market stands in residentially zoned areas. Many agriculture projects in this community span several acres of land. Community gardens, an incubator farm, an aquaculture business, a 3-acre greenhouse production site, as well as other smaller projects are all situated in Kinsman. A 28-acre "Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone" is intended for the transformation of fallow land into sites of food production. Residents interested in farming have the opportunity to rent a plot on the incubator farm to hone their skills while accessing a support system of extension agents and farmers. Several community gardens on previously vacant land also serve as sites for community gatherings and horticultural education. The area's focus on local food has increased fresh food production, providing some residents with hyperlocal and healthy eating options in an area that is intensely impacted by "food apartheid" (Holt-Giménez and Wang 2012).

Notwithstanding, traditional development investment and the associated transformations do not always touch down to impact residents' quality of life. The Opportunity Corridor, a multi-million-dollar transportation project, will connect a nearby highway interchange with the affluent University Circle area (OHDOT). Funding comes from both local and state sources, and, at a community level, has contributed to some street-front improvement on Kinsman Avenue (intersecting Garden Valley). These improvements have brought a few businesses (most of which were founded by the local CDC) into the neighborhood but without significant economic opportunity. Residents do not often frequent these businesses due to barriers both perceived (a feeling of not belonging) and tangible (prohibitive cost); rather, they mostly serve commuters who work in the community development or construction sectors. The Opportunity Corridor is often described as a new iteration of urban renewal, with eminent domain claiming land for current or future development, (re)producing Kinsman as a community to pass through rather than one in which to spend time or money (see Michney 2011).

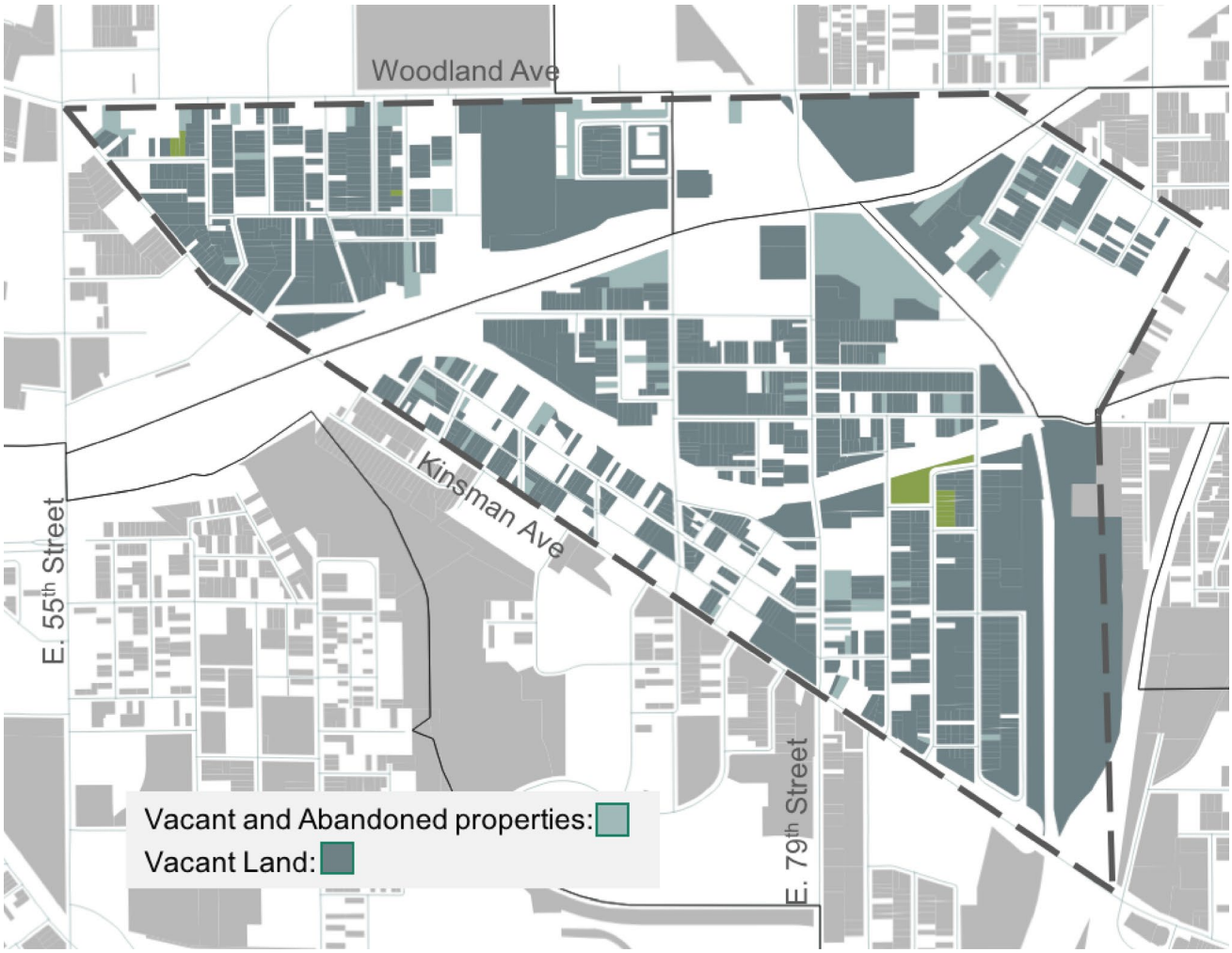

Fig. 1 Vacant properties and land in the forgotten triangle. Prepared by author using 2010 Census data and 2015 property survey data from the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, housed at NEOCANDO

The gardens and green spaces pilot program

The lived experiences of planning team members lends a familiarity with the history of the Garden Valley neighborhood and the struggles facing residents in their everyday lives. It is with this deep awareness that GGS began with food—growing, cooking, sharing, and eating food—and expanded from this platform to incorporate music, arts, and other cultural engagements within the community. Recognizing both the centrality of the many challenges facing the neighborhood and its residents, and the necessity to build community resilience (and community economies) from within, GGS was constituted as a partnership between four Black-run and owned organizations and businesses. Core partners in the pilot program included the Rid All Green Partnership Farm, the Garden Valley Neighborhood House (a settlement house and food pantry that also offers training programs, senior programs, tutoring, and other afterschool programs for youth), Environmental Health Watch (an environmental non-profit focused primarily on food, agriculture, and healthy homes), and Fresh By Nature Records (a Black/female owned and operated record label and music production company). The first two are located in and have been operating in Garden Valley for over 10 years, while EHW has partnered with the Rid-All Farm for several years in Garden Valley. Community events, largely conceptualized and planned by residents, used strategies of placemaking to bring community members from across Garden Valley together to share food, participate in public art projects, music performances and open mics, and to participate in several youth-oriented activities (including puppet shows, shoe-garden demonstrations, and games). In an area of Cleveland where violence and fear are significant barriers to residents' feelings of safety (there are places where residents don't feel comfortable crossing the street) placemaking activates spaces in a positive way, slowly shifting the narrative

of Garden Valley, both from the outside gaze as well as in the eyes of residents.

The planning team consisted of both Garden Valley residents and outsiders working in the community, as well as founding members of the four core partner institutions. Partners worked to engage residents through a set of interrelated programs linked by the theme of "History, Health, and Healing": community events that bring residents together to push back against the isolation prevalent in many areas of food inequity. These included music, arts, and food curriculum with a focus on production and entrepreneurialism and a program designed to jumpstart and support a youth-run café with community gardeners, urban farmers, and other community businesses among its list of suppliers. Over the course of almost a year of work on the GGS pilot program, which was an initial allocation of funds in preparation for a larger 2-year grant, three community block-party events were held in Garden Valley celebrating agriculture and the culinary arts, hip-hop and music production, and community-based visual arts projects.

Methods, data collection, and project evaluation

My role in the pilot project was in project evaluation (both for internal reflection and external assessments), to leverage current funding for additional grants, and to ensure the alignment of project activities with the objectives of the grantors. I had worked with core partners and in Garden Valley for a few years prior to this grant; however, as a non-Black person with academic institutional ties not residing in Garden Valley, my standpoint was that of an outsider. My approach to this project was to rely upon the lived experiences and histories of residents for direction in evaluation, valuing the knowledge they hold about the neighborhood and its history. As a part of the evaluation and data collection process, in addition to dozens of hours of participant observation, I conducted interviews with core partners (n = 10) and facilitated in-depth discussions with the implementation team during planning meetings (n = 15). Interview and meeting questions focused on residents' visions for their neighborhood; what kind of spaces they would like to foster and live in; how community resources could be leveraged to support Black economic growth; and the role of music, food, the arts, and culture (more broadly) in residents' vision for a healthy neighborhood. This approach created a more iterative and reflective process for both evaluation and grant implementation. While the long-term sustainability of community transformation through GGS will be unmeasurable for several years to come, the purpose of this paper is to provide insight into the organizing strategies adopted within this particular community and to examine how grant money can be leveraged to catalyze structural, sustainable, and equitable change within communities.

Over the course of the pilot, the project team (including this author) conducted two separate community surveys (n = 79), convened an intergenerational planning team of Garden Valley residents and core partners, and engaged in a process of systems-based evaluation that led to the award of two additional years of funding. Planning team meetings were facilitated as a platform for decision making as well as for data collection, allowing residents and groups members to draw upon their own epistemologies of community transformation, and to establish a vision for development within Garden Valley, rather than relying on a priori standards. The pilot events, workshops, and youth-oriented curricular program (which now serves as the backbone for continued grant activities) were conceived of collaboratively. These meetings also represented an opportunity for group reflection and the establishment of an evaluation framework. Community survey instruments were developed collaboratively; they were used to evaluate events held in August and September of 2016, to solicit participation from residents interested in future projects, workshops, or activities, as well as to outline an ongoing agenda for GGS. Survey data within Garden Valley through GGS was supplemented with two other surveys from a city-led transportation project in the same neighborhood. This provided data triangulation about community needs and desires, it more than doubled our sample size, and confirmed anecdotal evidence about other challenges faced by residents in Garden Valley such as (fear of) violence and the need for more programs and opportunities for neighborhood youth. A summer curricular program, geared towards youth, was planned as a result of these surveys, and implemented during the second phase of the grant.

Both the survey instruments and planning team meetings relied on predominantly qualitative evaluation metrics to highlight the unique challenges facing a community, through deep engagement with residents to determine which neighborhood challenges are prioritized by community residents. Our hypothesis was that knowledge rooted in everyday experiences would allow us more effective and sustainable strategies to address the systemic, structural, and cross-sectional problems within Garden Valley. As Wolf et al. (2017) highlight, single-issue approaches, such as attempts to mitigate obesity through behavioral change, risk overlooking the lived experience of residents (who might *also* be struggling with low literacy or an abusive home environment). We recognized the impossibility of addressing all of the struggles in Garden Valley through creative placemaking and entrepreneurship alone. However, focusing on residents' perceptions and desires for their own neighborhood allowed for more meaningful connections between food, arts, culture, and agriculture, while also exploring various approaches to equitable community change among neighborhood residents and CD practitioners.

The collaboration between core partner institutions, residents, and people working in Garden Valley led to a majority Black planning team, with two non-Black members, including this author, out of a total of thirteen. Leadership on the project was entirely Black, reflecting the racial makeup of the community. While the project is ongoing in its second phase, it is important not only to share lessons learned during this time, but also to contribute a perspective on a different approach to CD—both its strengths and weaknesses—and how that different approach might impact community spaces.

Placemaking and entrepreneurship at the intersection of art, culture, and food

With the historical geography of Garden Valley in mind, and the collective experience of having worked in this community for several decades, the point of entry for grant activities could not be a demand for behavioral change or any prescriptive advice about what the community *should* or *could* do to transform itself. As one planning team member articulated, it could take several years to build enough trust in the neighborhood to gain the buy-in of community members, before sustainable or transformative could even begin to take place. It is from this context that the *History*, *Health*, *and Healing* approach to placemaking emerged and became essential to GGS. Within community development, most interventions are not designed to recognize the relationship between present-day inequities (including in food access) and histories and geographies of oppression (Kepkiewicz et al. 2015; Usher 2015). With this in mind, planning team members conceived of three block-party style events in Garden Valley celebrating urban agriculture, hip-hop culture, and Black culinary arts, not necessarily to highlight histories of oppression, but rather to begin healing from its impacts. These events were intentionally planned to be part of the iterative process of grant planning, and helped us to develop the successful proposal for two additional years of funding supporting youth engagement around the aforementioned themes. At pilot events, we interviewed participants, distributed surveys, and gathered more informal feedback about how Black residents in this neighborhood envisioned community transformation.

"Soul Food Saturdays" is an example of a monthly event at Rid-All that reflects the *History, Health, and Healing* focus of GGS, as well as a growing trend of vegan soul food in Cleveland. Residents experienced cuisine that retains historically and culturally important Black traditions while featuring a diversity of healthful ingredients. These events support the holistic ideology undergirding GGS, in that they expand beyond just food or agriculture, bringing community members together to talk about the challenges they are facing and discuss how they would like to see their community transform. One of the owners of Rid-All articulates this point:

> …if we could approach this work from a food angle, we could reach a wide variety of people, everybody. […] The activity that's generated from us being here is what we call placemaking. So it's more than just a farm; it's extended out to the broader community where families can come out and have picnics at the park, (where) women come out and walk their dogs or play with their children at the park. […] So that becomes a residual value of a project that you can't really monetize, you can't put a dollar value on it, but the value is there because of what it does for the human experience. So there's a lot of ways of looking at how we do our work and how it plays out every day. Especially in the community. Not to mention the pride that people have in this area. This was the Forgotten Triangle: something that was basically a dumping ground (transformed into) a thriving beacon of innovation.

This trend of more "healthy" soul food in Cleveland represents the meeting point of placemaking, Black entrepreneurialism and the ideology behind *History, Health, and Healing*. Soul food originated as a culinary survival mechanism during times of slavery: a way to prepare food with inexpensive ingredients (usually high in fat and salt). Through a *History, Health, and Healing* lens, soul food—often criticized for being unhealthy—can be celebrated as an important historical tool for the survival of Black people in this country. Vegan soul food businesses within Cleveland's Black community celebrate this tradition, while modifying it to the present-day context. A practice of appreciating the present moment without anticipating or worrying about the future is inherent in southern traditions of food. *History, Health, and Healing* emphasizes and celebrates this unique history of Black Clevelanders—who are predominantly descended from enslaved ancestors, and have memories of or close relatives who were bonded through sharecropping or tenant farming—and the many ways in which community and food come together to promote health and healing. Recounting Black histories and geographies as a celebration of health and wellness instead of focusing on health disparities or less healthy food choices is a powerful form of placemaking within a community.

Engaging in holistically-minded food system work in historically marginalized and oppressed communities of color such as Garden Valley requires an historically rooted knowledge of the expansive role of food, farming, and land within the Black community: how these have been and continue to be sources of both liberation and oppression (Vernon 2015; Yakini 2015). Food is an incredibly important convener within the Garden Valley community as well as in other

communities of color in Cleveland. We learned first-hand during the pilot grant that music and art play a similar role as powerful conveners of community, with a seemingly natural bridge to placemaking and community-based enterprise.

One of the founders of Fresh By Nature articulates her sentiments about music in a way that mirror how the founders of Rid-All articulate food and growing:

> …an entire economy surrounding hip-hop can grow out of communities like Garden Valley. Dance, graffiti, slam poetry, parties, albums, slams, etc., (are all a part of it). It's not so much about the music, per se, but about people working together: as long as people are working together they can elevate. Hip-hop is just the common thread.

GGS was conceived out of the belief that, while food security is essential to the well-being of any community, it will be an ineffective point of intervention if it stops with food (either self-provisioning, food assistance, or both). Partners and participants articulate a universal need for food that is mirrored by historical-cultural connections to food and land that provide important opportunities for both community building and cultural healing. And, arts and music permeate all of that: "There's no disconnect." Especially in the context of historically and spatially marginalized spaces, food system work needs to embrace a rooted understanding of the multi-faceted cultural histories embedded within communities of color.

Black growers in Cleveland not only articulate an understanding of the complexity of community needs, but also target a broad set of placemaking-related objectives in their agricultural work. Efforts are rarely focused singularly on food or the choices that neighborhood residents make around food consumption, but rather demonstrate a rootedness in place and a desire to produce space differently. In explaining the capacity of the land to promote healing, one resident touched upon some of the broader objectives of the Gardens and Green Spaces project:

> I began to look at ways to help the neighborhood heal. Because that had to be a horrific realization: you saw people going into that house and never coming back out.[1] You've lived in this neighborhood for years, maybe even decades. You observed this, even if you just moved in and moved across the street. You were a complicit part in it all. It trickled to the whole… area and beyond – so how could we bring healing to a place that's broken? The scab is laying there bare. You understand?
>
> I was blessed to be able to make a little bit of a dent in that area because (the CDC president) was kind enough to give me a parcel of land.

The ultimate goal with placemaking and among Black entrepreneurs is to help their community heal from present and historical traumas: to thrive rather than just survive. This perspective recognizes that diet-related disease, other health indicators, educational attainment, employment, and most economic, social, political, and cultural issues are both interrelated and have roots that extend beyond the social context of a particular community and the individual choices of residents. Residents participate in small enterprise as a way to create beautiful spaces, to produce urban space differently (Ekers and Loftus 2012; Torreggiani et al. 2012), to reclaim and reshape their own agricultural histories in non-oppressive ways, and, often, to disembed the production of space from the capitalist economy, re-embedding these processes in social relations (Heynen et al. 2006). GGS strives to shift the dominant negative perception of Garden Valley, which means addressing the entire socio-natural context: the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the community, in addition to the environmental, spatial, or health concerns generally targeted by CD initiatives.

Rooted in an historical consciousness of the trauma of marginalization experienced by the Black community, Black-led enterprises are central to the visions and theories of change held by many Garden Valley residents for the future of their community, and contributed heavily to the vision residents expressed for GGS. The resident-driven neighborhood engagement philosophy recognizes that supporting the particularities of a neighborhood's histories and geographies is central to successful transformation, including in entrepreneurialism and creative placemaking. Black entrepreneurship is embedded in the ideologies and practices of several of the core partner institutions of GGS. The entrepreneurial aspects of the grant project emerge from the particular knowledge and experience of the core partners, and are designed as sustainability mechanisms to eventually render grant funding more peripheral to the project. Thus conceived, the project depends on market demand for products and services in addition to non-profit and philanthropic funding, the latter of which has replaced a significant proportion of state funding in low-income communities over the last several decades (Ghose and Pettygrove 2014; Mitchell 2001).

During the pilot year, the planning team and core partners were constantly reminded why a more holistic approach to community development is more difficult and less common than more singularly focused programs. The complexity of confronting historical trauma within a community is something that takes time, patience, and dedication, but is also necessary if sustainable transformation is going to occur.

[1] This quote to the 2009 discovery of the missing bodies of eleven Black women on the property of Anthony Sowell, whose death sentence is currently on hold.

Year after year, Garden Valley residents see grants programs come and go without any long-term commitment. Building trust takes time, and allowing the process to be iterative and responsive to the needs of community residents takes flexibility and a willingness to not always be as successful—in the eyes of the grantor—as we might otherwise be. This work challenges dominant paradigms of community development in Cleveland not only by avoiding a top-down, expert-driven approach often funded through the city and CDCs, but by demonstrating to funders what an iterative process of community change looks like, as identified in our evolving study, work, and evaluation. In this way, we work not only to shift the power dynamic in community development, but also for more equal power relations between grantor and grantee.

The ultimate vision of Gardens and Green Spaces was to promote a transformative production of space in Garden Valley, as led by the vision of neighborhood residents, especially youth. With the award of a two-year grant, we have continued to focus on "History, Health, and Healing", and community development that supports the visions of complex and multifaceted people. Our goal is to produce Black space differently in Garden Valley; to engage in creative placemaking that lifts up the artistic, cultural, and culinary histories of this place. Our goal is to change the way that these Black spaces are perceived and experienced, for neighborhood residents and for the broader Cleveland community.

Discussion

The literature on both placemaking and entrepreneurialism highlights tensions between enacting a particular vision for community through grass-roots and community-level activities, and enabling the retreat of an increasingly austere state, thereby reinforcing ideologies of neoliberalism, individualism, and personal responsibility. Similar tensions are also communicated by Black entrepreneurs, residents in Garden Valley, and Black urban growers more broadly. Participants express a desire to participate in the capitalist economy, but also to push back against it or establish something apart from it. Several participants have expressed a desire to create spaces that would not need to be so heavily policed, indeed indicating a desire for a retreat of (at least part of) the state apparatus (Purcell 2008). In conversations and interviews with growers and entrepreneurs, the desire to form or join cooperative economic structures is frequently articulated, as is a vision for a "Black economy" that exists separately from the dominant white economy. Rather than replicating all of the tenets of "white capitalism", as the case study shows, these Black subjects envision an economic structure built explicitly to support community growth, resilience, and empowerment. According to one participant in GGS, individual success and community-oriented economies can happen simultaneously. As one interviewee described, they "both feed off each other. While (entrepreneurship) might seem individualistic and boot strapping, it's also feeding the community" (Personal Interview 2017).

In a similar vein, creative placemaking, while sometimes described in the literature as a means of validating the withdrawal of the state or neighborhood divestment, becomes a potentially radical avenue for residents to produce (alternative) spaces. In other words, residents are working outside of the confines of a state or developmentalist perspective on what (the production of) space should look like or entail. This enables them to assert their own way of being and living in the world, allowing a vision for Black space to emerge. Whether the residents of Garden Valley are able to negotiate and navigate the tensions present here depends largely on the capacity to create an economically sustainable program that continues to bring in revenue, contribute to positive community transformation, and provide economic opportunities for residents. The two-year implementation grant is now in its second year and is focused largely on how to transition from being mostly grant-funded to becoming a self-sustaining project that can remain true to the vision, needs, and desires of Black residents in creating the places and spaces that will promote healing and support a community to thrive.

Conclusion

Heynen et al. (2006) argue that the struggle for liberation will be played out in urban societies, including Cleveland. This case study of the Gardens and Green Spaces project demonstrates how this struggle can be repositioned through creative placemaking and a community-oriented entrepreneurialism. From interviews, community meetings, and other interactions with residents, it is evident that this approach touches down in very real ways for many Black Clevelanders. Many facets of life that are seldom emphasized in low-income neighborhoods (such as arts, and culture—including food culture) are not only recognized, but celebrated as integral to the fabric of a community. Black food culture has played a key role in movements organizing for Black rights, including the Civil Rights Movement, within the Black Panther Party, and in organizing for Black voter registration; this lends resonance to the approach of GGS, through an historical connection to culture, food, and the production of Black space. Black family histories of slavery, sharecropping, tenant farming, and/or participation in the Great Migration have transported culinary traditions and alternative urban imaginaries into the city. During one of the community events, a participant commented, "See how we can make space from nothing into something? We

create what we want and need in our neighborhoods…we can create something beautiful in a place where there wasn't anything like that." These ideologies supporting GGS are rooted not only within the Garden Valley community, but in a collective Black consciousness and memory across the city.

The tacit goals of community development often rely upon economic development: establishing new businesses, bringing jobs to a particular area, or increasing foot traffic through a neighborhood to help businesses grow. While economic development is embedded within the GGS project, it does not emerge as an objective isolated from the goal of building resilient and supported communities. Rather, entrepreneurialism, economic growth, and creative placemaking are conceived of as a means to a more broadly imagined liberation. Resident-driven transformation is holistic, cross-sectional, and rooted in place, because the historically embedded inequities and oppressions facing the Black community are so deeply entrenched that economic empowerment alone cannot eliminate oppression or produce equitable and thriving Black spaces.

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