Agriculture and Human Values
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-019-10011-w

The tale of two community gardens: green aesthetics versus food justice in the big apple

Sofya Aptekar[1] · **Justin S. Myers**[2,1]

Accepted: 19 December 2019

Abstract
There has been a vibrant community gardening movement in New York City since the 1970s. The movement is predominantly located in working class communities of color and has fought for decades to turn vacant land into beneficial community spaces. However, many of these communities are struggling with gentrification, which has the potential to transform access to and use of community gardens in the city and the politics around them. Drawing on separate multi-year ethnographic projects, this article compares two community gardens in food insecure communities in Queens and Brooklyn: one that is undergoing gentrification and one that is not. We analyze how race and class transformations in each community shape the trajectories of urban agriculture spaces, specifically the ideologies, agricultural practices, and daily interactions among gardeners and as well as between gardeners and nongardeners. We find significant differences in how the two sets of community gardeners conceptualize the purpose of their gardens, particularly in constructing them as green spaces, agricultural production sites, and tools for achieving food justice. We argue that these differences can be best understood at the intersection of the personal histories of individuals, the organizational settings in which the gardens are embedded, and each neighborhood's history of urban renewal and gentrification. Our findings show why some community gardens in food insecure communities adopt a food justice vision, while others do not, and how gentrification can amplify racial and class tensions within community gardens and between gardeners and nongardeners.

Keywords Community gardens · Gentrification · Food justice · Race · New York City

Abbreviations

ENYF!	East New York Farms
HPD	Housing and Preservation Department
UCC	United Community Centers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

Sofya Aptekar and Justin S. Myers have contributed equally to the paper.

✉ Sofya Aptekar
sofya.aptekar@umb.edu

Justin S. Myers
justinmyers@csufresno.edu

[1] Department of Sociology, UMass Boston, 100 Morrissey Blvd, Boston, MA 02125, USA

[2] Department of Sociology, California State University, Fresno, 5340 N. Campus Drive M/S SS97, Fresno, CA 93740-8019, USA

Introduction

Community gardening has moved from the margins to the mainstream. Once a temporary practice during times of recession, community gardening today is promoted by nonprofits and city halls as a way to address food insecurity, increase environmental awareness, improve health outcomes, bridge race and class differences, educate youth, rehabilitate prisoners, build social and political capital, and beautify vacant lots (L'Annunziata 2010; Eizenberg 2016; Ghose and Pettygrove 2014; Harris et al. 2014; McIlvaine-Newsad and Porter 2013; Pudup 2008; Twiss et al. 2003). At the same time, community gardens in major cities often exist due to the sweat equity efforts of residents in marginalized communities to convert vacant land into productive agricultural spaces, resisting disinvestment and displacement (Eizenberg 2016; Reynolds and Cohen 2016; Von Hassell 2002). While these communities have fought long and hard for their right to the city, the ability to realize this claim is threatened by the gentrification and urban development policies of local governments. Consequently, the race and

Published online: 02 January 2020

class tensions between long-term residents, gentrifiers, the real estate industry, and city governments are increasingly reflected in struggles over, between, and within community gardens (Cadji and Alkon 2015; Marche 2015; Martinez 2010; Massey 2017; McClintock 2018).

This is the case in New York City, where there has been a vibrant community gardening movement since the 1970s, particularly in marginalized communities that are now undergoing gentrification or are framed as the next "hot spots" to live (Eizenberg 2016; Martinez 2009; 2010; Reynolds and Cohen 2016; Von Hassell 2002). While residents, community-based organizations, philanthropic foundations, schools, and City agencies have invested in community gardening in working class communities, conflict exists at multiple levels over the uses and role of community gardens in the city (Eizenberg 2016; Schmelzkopf 2002; Smith and Kurtz 2003; Staeheli et al. 2002). Recent scholarship has underscored that there are strong race and class inequities within the urban agriculture movement in New York City and beyond. In community gardens, these inequities are built into their very creation, as well as into access to resources, decisions about appearance and function, and patterns of access to gardening for long-term residents and recent arrivals (Cohen and Reynolds 2015; Hoover 2013; Passidomo 2014; Ramírez 2015; Reynolds 2014; Reynolds and Cohen 2016). Moreover, community gardens can play a role in exacerbating inequalities beyond their boundaries by making the area more attractive to developers and gentrifiers, and thereby facilitating the displacement of long-term residents (Braswell 2018; Cadji and Alkon 2015; Ghose and Pettygrove 2014; Martinez 2010; Voicu and Been 2008; Wolch et al. 2014). At the same time, scholars have pointed out the potential of gardens as a "third space" beyond that of the state and the market, one that can reinvigorate the commons and cultivate citizenship and multiculturalism (Eizenberg 2016; Firth et al. 2011; Ghose and Pettygrove 2014; McIvor and Hale 2015; Minkoff-Zern 2012; Pudup 2008; Saldivar-tanaka and Krasny 2004; Shinew et al. 2004).

By comparing two community gardens in food insecure communities in New York City—one in a gentrifying neighborhood and the other in a non-gentrifying neighborhood—we investigate how race and class transformations are shaping interactions within community gardens and between gardeners and nongardeners, and the ways in which gardeners conceptualize the purposes of gardens. We also analyze how neighborhood change and gentrification, or the threat of gentrification, are reflected in the gardens as micro-sites of racial and class reproduction. Of particular interest is whether gardeners in food insecure communities conceptualize community gardens as pathways to address inequitable food access. We approach these questions by analyzing the visions, narratives, and histories of each garden. This includes examining ideas about legitimate access to the land, appropriate use of garden space, and the mission of the garden, as well as exploring how individual, organizational, and neighborhood factors play a role in shaping the prevailing understandings of each community garden.

We find significant differences in how gardeners understand their purpose in the two gardens, differences that are influenced by the histories of land use and economic development policies in each neighborhood, the involvement of community-based organizations, and the extent of gentrifying processes in each community. Such meso- and macro-level factors affected the attitudes of the gardeners, the organizational structures of each garden, and the connections to the local communities. As a result, one set of gardeners emphasized food justice, while the other privileged an aesthetic form of agriculture over addressing inequitable access to food.

Community gardens, neighborhood change, and food justice

Urban agriculture has a long and multifaceted history in the United States. While in earlier eras, it was principally a top-down philanthropic or governmental initiative, urban agriculture since the 1970s has been characterized by grassroots efforts connected to community organizing and struggles for social and environmental justice (Beilin and Hunter 2011; Eizenberg 2016; Lawson 2005; Reynolds and Cohen 2016; Von Hassell 2002). A formative moment in this history is planned shrinkage in the 1970s, when working class communities of color throughout New York City were targeted for disinvestment and displacement through the withdrawal of municipal services and supports as well as the bulldozing of many acres of buildings (Greenberg 2008; Tabb 1982; Wallace and Wallace 2001). This municipal policy emerged from the 1975 New York fiscal crisis, instigated by Wall Street, and reflected the ascendancy of racial neoliberalism as the explicit economic growth strategy of City Hall to rebuild the Big Apple into a city for the elite (Greenberg 2008; Smith 1996). In the face of this form of racialized state violence, residents engaged in guerilla gardening and sweat equity projects to reclaim unoccupied land and convert it into community gardens and green spaces. The result is that community gardens in the city are concentrated in racially segregated neighborhoods that are predominantly of color, working class, with a preponderance of renter-occupied housing, and limited access to public parks (Eizenberg 2016; Reynolds and Cohen 2016).

When capital investment began to return to New York in the 1990s and 2000s, developers and their partners in city government set their sights on the land that gardens occupied. The presumption that gardeners could be easily pushed aside for more market-rate housing, office buildings, or cultural amenities for affluent consumers turned out to be inaccurate. While community gardens were initially squatted, over time many obtained a degree of legitimacy and right of tenure to the land from the City through short-term leases of one to five years. This right of tenure was a threat to the neoliberal City Hall of Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who sought to drastically curtail the fledging legitimacy of community gardens and their non-market uses of land by selling off City-owned plots on which many of the gardens sat. Giuliani then claimed that there was a scarcity of land and the city could build either affordable housing or community gardens, but not both—a blatant attempt to undermine public support of the gardens.[1] By this time, the community gardeners were an increasingly interconnected and organized movement that resisted Giuliani's efforts to pit the affordable housing movement against the community gardening movement. Gardeners had become savvy in lobbying politicians and mobilizing political support. This energy and leverage, along with donations from a few wealthy individuals, pushed the city to sign a settlement in 2002 to preserve over 400 gardens (Beilin and Hunter 2011; Eizenberg 2016; Martinez 2009). Nevertheless, many gardens were lost and turned into residential buildings. Today, the GreenThumb program of the NYC Parks Department manages 550 gardens; the New York Restoration Project and borough-wide community land trusts manage another 120 (Brooklyn Queens Land Trust 2019; GreenThumb 2019; New York Restoration Project 2019; Urban Garden Connections 2015).

This history is but one example of the role of community gardens in local empowerment and resistance against displacement and marginalization (Anguelovski 2013; Bradley and Galt 2014; Mares and Peña 2011; Sbicca 2016; White 2011). On New York's Lower East Side, community gardens served as a prefigurative space where city dwellers developed a collective alternative political consciousness, recasting their relationship to the city from victims to empowered actors (Eizenberg 2016). Research in other cities has come to similar conclusions, characterizing gardens as spaces central to the production of citizenship and reengagement with the democratic process (Ghose and Pettygrove 2014; Pudup 2008). Beyond countering alienation and marginalization from political institutions, scholars have documented how urban agriculture projects are conduits for resisting environmental racism, cultivating ethno-racial empowerment and recognition, and developing community-based economic development projects (Anguelovski 2013; Bradley and Galt 2014; Mares and Peña 2011; Minkoff-Zern 2012; Saldivar-tanaka and Krasny 2004; Sbicca and Myers 2017; Sbicca 2016; White 2011). In fact, New York City community gardens have been sites of community mobilization on issues of green space, urban planning, and affordable housing (Eizenberg 2016; Martinez 2010).

At the same time, the battle with Giuliani left a landscape of community gardens that was whiter and more affluent, particularly on the Lower East Side (Martinez 2010; Reynolds and Cohen 2016). The uneven survival of community gardens is in line with research that problematizes assertions of the inherent liberatory potential of community gardens and urban agriculture. In the context of racial neoliberalism, community gardens can end up reproducing oppressive ideologies and practices that emphasize personal responsibility, consumerism, and entrepreneurialism while eschewing the right to food, collective action, and systemic change (Alkon 2013; Ghose and Pettygrove 2014; McClintock 2014; Passidomo 2014). Scholars have exposed the limitations of urban gardens in subverting the powerful patterns of social injustice when political ideologies emphasizing food access and local food are not situated within critiques of neoliberalism and institutional racism. These limitations are exacerbated when organizations are run by affluent white outsiders rather than long-term residents of color, and when on-the-ground practices downplay community mobilization (Clendenning et al. 2016; Kato et al. 2013; Passidomo 2014).

These examples are indicative of two factors that have traditionally hampered the power-building potential of urban agriculture in marginalized communities. One, alternative food movements tend to devote little space to building an inclusive movement and fighting race and class inequities in favor of focusing on environmental sustainability, a green aesthetic, and healthy eating (Allen 2004, 2008; Myers and Sbicca 2015). Two, urban agriculture projects have a history dating back to the late 1800 s that privileges uniting "idle hands and idle lands" as an alternative to the welfare state, activities that use vacant land only fleetingly until a more profitable use comes along (Lawson 2005). This problem continues today, as urban agriculture projects tend to clash with rising land values, and the attendant speculation and development pressures, which confine such projects to temporary land uses and marginal spaces that are not yet desired by developers (Irazábal and Punja 2009; Sharzer 2012; Schmelzkopf 2002). Moreover, urban gardening, alongside parks, greenways, and grocery stores, is implicated in processes of "green gentrification" that make marginalized communities desirable for affluent and upwardly mobile individuals (Anguelovski 2015; Braswell 2018; Gould and Lewis 2017; McClintock 2014, 2018). In the past, urban gardening was often associated with immigrant and working class populations, but this has changed as more affluent urbanites and more recent white residents have become interested in urban agriculture for health and sustainability

[1] At the same time, the City invested little money or energy in the construction of affordable housing during the terms of Giuliani or Bloomberg, underscoring that the framing of gardens versus affordable housing was a divide and conquer strategy.

reasons (Beilin and Hunter 2011). The presence of the latter in gentrifying neighborhoods can change narratives about who the garden is for and how the garden operates. For instance, more affluent newcomers may want community gardens to serve as enrichment programs for their children and a visually pleasing environment, rather than a space for agricultural pursuits or community building (Aptekar 2015; Eizenberg 2016).

Methods and procedures

Data for this comparative study come from two ethnographic projects that investigated the politics shaping urban agriculture in New York City. We began our comparative analysis after puzzling over the very different outcomes in our two New York community gardens, particularly in the gardeners' understandings of the purpose of the garden space. We developed our analysis by further familiarizing each other with the respective research settings, exchanging analytical memos, and holding regular meetings to compare fieldnotes and interview transcripts. Due to difference in research approaches and resulting confidentiality considerations, the first garden, in Astoria, Queens, is not named, while the second garden, in East New York, Brooklyn, is identified as Hands and Hearts Garden.

Aptekar conducted an ethnographic study of the community garden in Astoria, Queens. Fieldwork lasted from 2011 to 2013, with follow up visits in 2014 and 2015. She gained entrée to the garden by volunteering, eventually becoming a member who shared a plot with another gardener. Aptekar spent time in the shared spaces of the community garden, attended meetings and events, and participated in discussions. She conducted semi-structured interviews with gardeners and those who were engaged with the garden in other ways, and collected many informal interviews during fieldwork. Aptekar is a white middle class immigrant woman then in her mid-30 s. Due to her race and class position, she was often seen to be similar to a group of mostly white, middle class gardeners, many of whom were newcomers to Astoria. She presented herself as a college researcher working on a project on public spaces in the neighborhood.

Myer's data on Hands and Hearts Garden emerged from ethnography and in-depth semi-structured interviews in East New York, Brooklyn. From May to November in 2011 and 2012, he spent three to five days a week at East New York Farms (ENYF!), and Hands and Hearts Garden, which ENYF! oversees, with follow up visits and interviews from 2013 through 2017. In 2011, he was principally a volunteer at Hands and Hearts, while in 2012, he was a garden member with an individual plot. During this time, Myers assisted ENYF! staff, youth, and community gardeners in food production, participated in monthly meetings for the organization as well as the garden, served as a facilitator for garden meetings, and attended monthly skill-based workshops and town hall meetings. While in these settings, he gathered fieldnotes and conducted interviews with gardeners and ENYF! staff. Myers is a cisgender white middle class male then in his mid-30 s. His racial position was different from the gardeners, all of whom were people of color and a mixture of working class and middle class. Myers informed gardeners that he was a college instructor working with ENYF! and writing about food justice.

Each author analyzed their respective data by reviewing fieldnotes and interviews in order to identify emerging themes and patterns. Utilizing an abductive approach, each author regularly returned to the gardens to draw connections between empirical observations, interview content, social theory, and their emerging hypotheses and understandings about the local contexts shaping urban agriculture (Tavory and Timmermans 2014).

Two New York gardens

Astoria, Queens and East New York, Brooklyn have many commonalities: large working class populations, large communities of color and high levels of ethno-racial diversity, ongoing legacies of institutional neglect and disinvestment, some of the largest public housing complexes in the city, and a dearth of grocery stores. Additionally, the two gardens were started around the same time and are part of the NYC Parks Department GreenThumb program. Nonetheless, there are two key differences between the two neighborhoods. First, East New York is home to an extensive urban agriculture movement while Astoria is not. Second, gentrification has been reshaping Astoria over the past 15 years while East New York was largely untouched by such processes at the time of research.

Astoria

The area around the Queens garden features a public housing development, small rundown apartment buildings, subdivided single family homes, small industrial spaces such as car repair and metal shops, and rehabilitation centers. There is a lack of access to supermarkets, stemming from spatial isolation from the larger neighborhood's commercial centers and subway lines. Unlike in East New York (see below), there was no large scale razing of housing, nor the development of many community gardens. Given the relatively few vacant lots, there was a sense of scarcity when it came to land, and nearly two hundred community gardeners crowded into an area that was shared by about 30 gardeners in East New York.

In the larger neighborhood of Astoria, 61% of the population are white, 16% are Asian, 10% are African American, 10% identify as some other race alone, and 3% checked off multiple racial categories. Latinos of all races comprise 29% of the neighborhood population, and foreign-born are 43% of the neighborhood residents (Aptekar's calculations, ACS 2009–2013).[2] The African American population is heavily concentrated in census tracts containing public housing whose residents are predominantly African American and Latino. Besides those living in the public housing development, residents of the area are older ethnic whites, often first and second generation Italians, long-term immigrants from South America (e.g. Ecuador, Guyana), and recent immigrants (e.g. Bangladesh, Central America). The median income for the census tracts around the community garden is low and a large proportion of residents are in poverty. At the same time, this area was undergoing gentrification. Several old industrial spaces had been renovated into luxury apartments or demolished for new luxury housing. Many of the new residents were not yet visible in the public spaces in the neighborhood, as they utilized spaces and services in other, more affluent neighborhoods. Community gardeners were a combination of those living in the immediate surrounding area and those who came from more middle class, white areas of the neighborhood.

The community garden was located on a half-acre plot that was once occupied by car repair shops and then became an abandoned lot and dumping site. In the late 1990s, a charitable organization acquired the plot. They took out a community garden license with GreenThumb until additional funds could be obtained to open the space as a park. By the mid-2000s, the space was a fenced-in closed lot, albeit with new topsoil, grass, and trees. At that point, a young Latino organizer, Daniel, who was looking for a local community garden, was connected by someone who had been involved in the Lower East Side garden struggles to an organizer at the charitable organization. After this organizer retired, she made Daniel the GreenThumb contact. Daniel and a small group of volunteers he had recruited took over the space, subdivided it into individual plots, and began a community garden. Daniel and his allies, including one with legal skills, then mounted an intense and successful campaign to pressure local government officials to let them have the community garden. Some other key individuals were residents of the larger neighborhood who were middle class, often artists, transplants to New York City, and white. Several African Americans and European immigrants were involved from the beginning as well.

After two years, the non-profit organization became interested in turning the space into a park again because new funding from the Parks Department had become available. Gardeners mobilized intensely in opposition to this plan, sending postcards to local politicians and speaking to the media to convince the power brokers involved that the community garden was a valuable use of space. The arguments included cost-saving (everything the gardeners did for the space at no cost to the City), safety (a traditional park means drug dealing), and public access for non-gardeners. The local city council member ended up supporting the community garden, despite some opposition from leadership in the public housing development. These gardeners were able to mobilize to confront a threat to their community garden even though they lacked a central mission that brought them together. As we show below, this lack of consensus over the garden's purpose and a diversity of meanings attached to the space enabled the most privileged gardeners to protect their vision for the space. The garden could mobilize collectively in times of crisis, yet it had a complicated and sometimes enabling relationship to gentrification.

At the time of research, there were over 200 garden members, most of whom were gardening on one of the small individual plots approximately 100 square feet in size. The class profile of the gardeners was quite diverse, from very poor individuals who lived in transitional housing to urban professionals who owned homes. Many members, experiencing overcrowded urban living, related to their plots as pieces of valuable private property and the garden as a space of leisure. They stored objects on their plots, socialized, or just relaxed in a space of their own. A few emphasized community building above all else. But the primary tension lay between those who wanted an orderly lush green space and those who emphasized food production. Those who wanted the garden to look green, lush, and orderly dominated the elected steering committee that ran the garden. They argued against the needs of agriculture-oriented gardeners to build support structures for plants, let plants go to seed, and use found and recycled materials on their plots. The green vision for the garden was shared by many of the middle class professionals (although not exclusively), was legitimated by the GreenThumb staff, and resonated with the need to keep neighbors happy by preventing eyesore conditions. Maximizing food production was in many cases a concern of immigrant and working class gardeners, and often took a back seat to creating a visually pleasing experience, although not without conflict and tension. As a result, food production was deemphasized and produce was not sold as it was at the East New York garden.

[2] Demographic statistics in Astoria should be used with caution: the city filed a challenge with the Census Bureau claiming an undercount specifically in that neighborhood (Roberts 2011).

East New York

Hands and Hearts Garden is located in the New Lots section of East New York and is adjacent to New Lots Avenue, a major thoroughfare for the community home to numerous immigrant-owned businesses and several bus lines and subway stops. The immediate vicinity of the garden is a mix of pre-war single-family brick row houses that survived urban renewal and attached single-family homes built in the 1980s upon vacant land by Eastern Brooklyn Congregations fundraising as affordable middle-class housing. The neighborhood and broader community are often referred to as a food desert in the popular press. However, while the area is indeed underserved by grocery stores and generally has low-quality produce at existing grocery stores, it is not a food desert by the USDA definition nor does ENYF! refer to the community as a food desert.

East New York is located in the easternmost section of North-Central Brooklyn. It is 52% Black, 37% Latino and 3% non-Hispanic white, with 35% of residents born outside of the United States, predominantly from the Caribbean but with growing numbers from West Africa, Mexico, Central America, India, and Bangladesh (Myers's calculations, ACS 2012–2016). The community is lower income and struggles with poverty, unemployment, crime, and food insecurity due to a history of redlining, urban renewal, planned shrinkage, educational and employment segregation, and mass incarceration, but also has a vibrant history of community activism, including community gardening.

Surrounded by sidewalks, roads, and buildings on all sides, Hands and Hearts Garden is a green island amidst a sea of concrete and brick, one that emerged from a long history of local resident mobilization for community spaces. Started in 2006 and opened in 2007, it sits on a half-acre of land that was a vacant lot for decades and owned by the NYC Housing and Preservation Department (HPD). Although previously a site of a multi-story apartment building, there were no plans by the HPD to turn the lot back into housing. After the demolition of the apartment building, the space had turned into a weed-covered lot that was hiding years of illegal dumping. After a while, HPD did develop tentative plans to turn the area into open space. The community organized and petitioned for a park but the Parks Department was disinterested, and a community garden developed instead.

The plans for a community garden came out of the meetings between residents, HPD, and the Parks Department. The garden is protected from development through GreenThumb, the same program that oversees the Astoria garden. Most importantly, the garden is attached to the food justice organization! (ENYF!), which provides assistance to the gardeners in the form of workshops, technical expertise, land, and labor to maximize food production for sale to East New Yorkers through ENYF!'s Wednesday and Saturday farmers markets. This is in contrast to the Astoria garden, which is not affiliated with any organization other than the City-run GreenThumb. Today, the garden has over 30 members and a waiting list of community residents who want access to land for food production. Members were people of color, predominantly Jamaican, but included people identifying as Puerto Rican, Nigerian, Barbadian, and African-American from the American South. Members spoke English almost exclusively, although people also spoke Spanish and Jamaican Patoi, but not at official garden meetings. The membership was a mixture of working-class renters working in service industries (principally construction and healthcare) and middle-class homeowners generally working in the public sector (education, city planning, health, and transportation). Several of these middle-class members had plots in multiple gardens as well as their backyards and were the biggest growers of food, which they sold at individually rented booths at the Saturday farmers market. Other gardeners at Hands and Hearts applauded this practice, whereas in Astoria, those with backyard gardens were thought greedy for holding on to their garden plots.

The garden's association with ENYF! is significant because membership obliges gardeners to grow food for the community, a requirement that shapes plot size and allocation, as well as who joins the garden. While a plot is defined as a section that is 10-foot-long by 4-foot-wide, most gardeners had multiple plots, with many members having plots between 160 and 400 square feet, and thus far larger than the plots in the Astoria garden. Such plots provided gardeners with a surplus to sell at the farmers markets, with the specific amount to be sold dictated by the number of plots one cultivated. While many people spent time in the Astoria garden on non-farming activities, such as socializing, and might not have even grown any food at all, Hand and Hearts gardeners focused on food production. Below, we disentangle individual, organizational, and neighborhood level factors accounting for the differences in the two gardens.

Results

Individual level factors

At the individual level, the agricultural backgrounds of gardeners influenced how they approached gardening and how the garden was to be put to use. Many of the gardeners at Hands and Hearts grew up in farming families or were only one generation removed from farming. These experiences continually call them to the garden and frame the garden as a space for agriculture where people should be producing food for themselves or for the community. Isiah, who emigrated from Nigeria, is representative of this desire for gardens to be spaces of food production:

> I love farming. But I do not have enough land. Here, I work for the city…but I would love to get some land upstate and farm. If I had a farm I could get a big table here at the [farmers] market, … Back home my grandfather was a typical farmer, tree fruits, coconuts, mangos, guavas, oranges. My father was a trader and I made shoes. I would like to make shoes and farm. I like to do hands-on work.

This is in contrast to gardeners in Astoria, many of whom, even when focused on food production, did not come from farming backgrounds. A few African Americans in the garden connected their gardening to the farming experience of their families in the South, but this framing of the garden was not common or dominant. In fact, many gardeners did not garden to produce food, but to enjoy the experience of interacting with plants and soil and be in a more "natural" setting. Some grew mostly or all flowers.

In contrast, many of the gardeners at Hands and Hearts joined specifically to produce food for themselves or to sell to the community. Charmaine, who is Jamaican, has a history that is similar to many other gardeners in East New York and provides insight into why immigrants want to work the land. Originally from Jamaica, she never bought food back home because her dad had a farm and grew food for the family and neighbors. Without access to land in East New York, Charmaine relied on store-bought food items, a practice that not only increased her consumption of heavily processed foods but also her food bill, neither of which she liked. As a low-paid home healthcare aide, Charmaine searched out a community garden so she could continue traditions from her life in Jamaica, reduce her food budget through self-provisioning, and bring in some side income through selling at the farmers market. Charmaine's experience is in marked contrast to that of gardeners in Astoria, who in any case would have been constrained by the small size of their plots and the lack of a market at which to sell.

Organizational level factors

Differences on the organizational level interacted with individual orientations to community gardening to help explain the diverging trajectories of the two gardens. In East New York, a set of narratives and ideologies shaped how gardeners made sense of their activity. David Vigil, the Youth Program Director, explained that: "There is a culture of agriculture in East New York and you've got a lot of different people working across a lot of different race, age, and class lines… What we all share in common is the value that we put on local food production." This culture of agriculture exists not just because gardeners grew up farming but also because of their negative experiences with the conventional food system. At one community gardening meeting, a lengthy and spirited discussion occurred between the gardeners and ENYF! staff on the negative effects of industrial agriculture on people and the planet. Martin, a gardener at Hands and Hearts and owner of a local plant nursery, stated that, "The chemicals sprayed on oranges and apples makes the inside bad but the outside look good. The food looks nice but doesn't taste good." Nigel, also a gardener at Hands and Hearts, emphasized Martin's point, "We don't want second-hand vegetables," referring to the industrialized vegetables found at local grocery stores, "the goal of the food system, by design, is to get you sick and have you buy pills." The collective experiences of gardeners with food from the conventional food system, and their own struggles with diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity, is another reason why they have sought out gardens as places for food production. This investment in local small-scale agriculture for cultural, ecological, and physiological purposes is reflected in the East New York gardeners' participation in the Brooklyn Farmer Field School, which was a participatory action research project to improve soil and crop health in order to increase food production.

A few gardeners in Astoria also participated in the Farmer Field School, such as James, a middle-class African American man who grew up in the area. James devoted a lot of time to building and maintaining the compost area in the garden. However, James did not connect the compost system and gardening to a systemic critique of the conventional food system. James said that the garden was important to him because of "meeting all the different people. As a matter of fact, that's actually been helping me in my transition." James was referring to his career transition; he used the garden to network with creatives and professionals. This experience is reflective of the lighter environmentalism that was present in the Astoria garden, which tended not to touch on systemic issues, and even stigmatized conventional environmentalist behaviors such as individual-level reuse. For instance, when some gardeners reused discarded materials, such as crib panels and plastic soda bottles, others criticized them for creating an eyesore. Although for many gardeners, staying away from commercial fertilizers and bug sprays was important, it was couched in terms of healthfulness of the particular produce they were growing, rather than a way to critique a systemic problem.

The different narratives shaping the engagement of gardeners in East New York and Astoria in their respective gardens are also a reflection of each garden's embeddedness in organizations. The food justice organization (ENYF!) plays a central role in supporting and strengthening the desires of gardeners to grow food in East New York. ENYF! emerged out of a community-based participatory planning project in the mid-1990s to combat the area's legacy of disinvestment (Daftary-Steel and Gervais 2014). ENYF! promotes urban agriculture to facilitate community-based economic development and builds community power while providing fresh food access in the following three ways: (1) it runs two farmers markets; (2) it pays youth interns to grow food and run the farmers markets while providing them with a social justice education, and; (3) it secures land for residents to grow food and offers resources to scale up their production. Also important is that ENYF! is housed within United Community Centers (UCC), an interracial class-conscious community center with a long history of social justice organizing and anti-racist activism. UCC's politics has shaped ENYF! in how it approaches food as a conduit for social change and how it tells the story of local urban agriculture as a response to redlining, planned shrinkage, and institutional racism (Daftary-Steel 2015; Daftary-Steel and Gervais 2014).

Given this history, ENYF! has been central to institutionalizing a farm vision at Hands and Hearts and strengthening a farm vision throughout East New York. Being founded as an asset-oriented community based project, one that is rooted in a community center focused on social justice, has continued to shape what happened in the garden years later. David Vigil, the Youth Program Director, underscores that ENYF! exists to empower what is already occurring in the community:

> Urban agriculture has been happening in East New York way before ENYF!. We really see our role as facilitating the work that is already happening and expanding it…making sure our communities still have access to land and resources to grow food themselves.

An emphasis on food justice complements the farm vision of Hands and Hearts community garden, where marginalized communities organize to address inequities in food access by securing access to land and growing affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food for residents. Sarita Daftary-Steel, Project Director of ENYF!, emphasized that the organization works very hard to ensure that the creation of a local food system in the community is grounded in social justice and empowerment of the marginalized:

> There are gardeners that are running their own gardens…and they decide what to put there and yes we give them assistance, but it is totally at their decision, and through that they are able to provide food for themselves and their neighbors and sell it or give it away and do whatever they want with it…[T]he fact that people from the community who are people of color are selling to other people of color and are producing things they know people want and are culturally appropriate, that is a big component, it is about people having ownership and decision making power.

To realize this goal of a just food system, ENYF! facilitates low-price seedling sales and seed and compost giveaways, provides individualized assistance to gardeners in creating a seasonal crop plan for their plots, and hosts numerous gardener-to-gardener skill-based workshops. The organization also ensures that gardeners at Hands and Heart are committed to the food justice vision by enforcing its requirement about selling produce at the farmers market. Several gardeners who did not meet their sales requirements lost their plots in the garden during the time Myers was present, a stance that was not contested but rather supported by fellow gardeners.

In Astoria, however, there was no social justice-oriented organization such as ENYF! that worked closely with the garden. The relationship with the city-run GreenThumb organization was not nearly as close. GreenThumb leaves the mission open to the individual garden, and they range from farming to a community gathering and performance space. Once or twice a year, gardeners may organize to go to a GreenThumb giveaway of gardening tools, but there was no programming of the type or extent provided by ENYF! to Hands and Hearts, nor was there an ideological component to the organizational structure that emphasized food justice. Gardeners themselves organized events for the garden, but these were either art-making workshops or social events like barbeques. Programming for local children aimed to teach how food grows or why they should eat healthy food instead of packaged food; the focus was not on actually feeding them or socializing them into the politics of food justice. As mentioned above, gardeners were able to mobilize successfully to protect the garden when the Parks Department threatened to turn it into a conventional park. With the external threat gone, there was little continued political action or community organizing in the manner occurring in the gardens connected to ENYF!.

Lack of a close relationship with a non-profit organization left the Astoria garden seemingly more open to be run as a grassroots democracy, without interference from a non-profit with outside funding. In practice, those with more resources dominated, including white professionals who primarily wanted the garden to be an attractive lush green space. Gardeners who cared about growing food did intervene with alternative visions for the garden. For instance, one fall, Tai, an older working-class Chinese immigrant, was intent on experimenting with winter gardening, which would involve building plastic-covered cold-frames. Helen, a white professional and garden leader, opposed winter gardening because the cold frames would look ugly. Tai mobilized another immigrant, a middle-class Japanese artist, as well as Aptekar, to support the cold frames. The artist's support, in particular, lent legitimacy to the claim that the cold frames would be attractive, and Helen yielded to the majority opinion. As micro greens flourished underneath the plastic, Tai asked Aptekar to take photographs as future ammunition for defending winter gardening. Nevertheless, the institutional context was such that the individual gardeners' farm vision for the garden remained weaker and had to be continually defended.

Path dependency stemming from the founding of the garden played a role as well. Rather than being driven by considerations of food justice, garden founders were informed by anarchist ideologies about appropriation and communal use of space. Daniel, the key founding member of the garden explained that he was interested in creating more community gardens where regular people would make decisions instead of absentee landlords:

I was ambitious and I thought the more gardens the better. The more sort of community land stays together. I'm basically anarchist and I didn't feel like…these people [leaders of local nonprofits] necessarily represented the community very well…and were sort of like absentee landlords of the space.

Conflicts over the appropriate use of garden space were present from the beginning, and Daniel explained that he and others felt that it was important to accommodate a diversity of uses and visions:

> That was a little tricky because Faina was like all about growing food, I believe, and then Michael came and wanted a place for artwork and performances. And they were clashing with each other over that. I think me and Helen saw a place for both. Certainly it's a large enough space for multiple things and you have multiple needs in the community that would have to be filled…that you want to appeal [to] multiple constituenc[ies], to people who want art or just social space and people who want to produce food or and horticulture.

Challenging commercial agriculture or feeding the community were not part of the founding ideology, nor prevalent at the time of research a few years later. At a small winter meeting, Karl, a white college-educated man in his early 30 s, suggested that the garden would be better run by a non-profit, perhaps as a farm. As a newer member, Karl criticized the interest of fellow gardeners in their own plots to the exclusion of any communal goals. A more established member, Helen, responded:

> It's a beautiful garden, not a failure. It's not about pounds of food or number of volunteers. What do we value? A safe green space… a diversity of people that reflects the city that I, for example, don't get at work. There is a problem with turning governance over to a non-profit. We have values to protect.

Helen, a white professional with a background in the arts was expressing a vision of the garden shared by many of the gentrifiers who valued safety, attractive greenery, and an experience of diversity above food production. In contrast to Helen, Karl felt that this community garden was wasting valuable land that could have had much higher yields of food. His vision did not gain traction and he eventually left to join urban farming projects elsewhere. Thus, on the organizational level, the fact that the Astoria garden was started as an effort of grassroots self-sufficiency and expressly aimed to accommodate a myriad of uses continued to influence what happened in it years later. This occurred even though there was no intent to make agricultural production difficult or downplay food justice, and there was certainly a distaste for gentrification among the garden's founders.

Neighborhood-level factors

The relationships between the gardens and their neighborhood-level context in East New York and Astoria intersect with individual and organizational factors to shape the differences in their agricultural practices and cultures. To fully understand how Hands and Hearts Garden and ENYF! work together to strengthen a food justice vision requires a deeper understanding of the role that planned shrinkage and systemic disinvestment have played in shaping the landscape of the area. From the 1970s through 1990s, East New York was one of the local communities that was most negatively affected by racial neoliberalism's austerity politics of planned shrinkage, with between 15 and 20% of East New York becoming vacant land through City-led bulldozing. This plentitude of vacant land, with no City Hall or real estate-led redevelopment plans, was a key factor facilitating a wave of guerilla gardening that went uncontested for many years, as people initially squatted the land and then organized to obtain secure tenure to the land through GreenThumb. The gardening was so extensive that the area is home to the most community gardens in any one neighborhood in New York, over 60.

If East New York had been slated for redevelopment, like Manhattan's Lower East Side, then the odds of success in securing community ownership over a significant portion of this vacant land would have been low. But developers or gentrifiers did not view the neighborhood as desirable, instead flocking to "hip" communities closer to Manhattan. Another factor was that East New York had long been framed as "the end of civilization" and "the killing fields", which constituted a significant symbolic barrier limiting public and private redevelopment initiatives (Thabit 2005).

The geographic and symbolic distance separating the neighborhood from the much wealthier areas of Manhattan and Western Brooklyn impeded the influx of affluent and upwardly mobile white people whose residential and commercial preferences would have competed with gardeners for access to land. These factors, in combination with the shared ethnoracial and working-class backgrounds of residents, a shared farm vision, and the emergence of ENYF!, meant that East New Yorkers developed a focus on food justice and institutionalized it culturally and structurally in the gardens. Unlike in Astoria, the farm vision embedded in a food justice paradigm could thrive without interference from more affluent white gardeners who often utilize cultural, economic, and political capital to enforce their green vision preferences (Reynolds and Cohen 2016; Reynolds 2014). Moreover, the great number of community gardens in East New York meant that one garden was not expected to meet the needs of all residents. Therefore, the marginalization of East New York from City Hall's and real-estate's gentrification-style redevelopment plans actually provided the community with the space and time to use participatory planning principles to build a community food system that privileges food justice and the right to the city.

In contrast, Astoria is located much closer to Manhattan and is undergoing gentrification. In this context, community gardens are more threatened. Yet, this particular garden in Astoria is relatively safe, as it sits on land that is owned by the Parks Department: it could be turned into a more traditional park, but not into condos. With the rise in popularity of urban agriculture, community gardens are an attractive commodity in gentrifying neighborhoods. As Daniel, the founder of the garden, put it: "You're bringing nice things but then the nice things bring in the bourgeoisie." The threat of being turned into a park is used by more affluent gardeners to argue for their green vision of the garden, at the expense of those who would want more focus on food production, presuming that a "well-maintained" garden is safe from redevelopment. Aside from looking orderly and lush, even if that means lower food production, a garden that features a visible presence of white people, especially women, makes the neighborhood feel safer for more affluent newcomers. The absence of a local history of planned shrinkage means that vacant land and gardens are relatively scarce, which impels gardeners to embrace a diversity of uses for one garden. In short, the neighborhood context of gentrification interacts with the lack of organizational support for food justice and a diversity of individual interests in growing food to push this community garden away from a farm vision.

Gentrification is not the whole story though. Although some residents of nearby public housing are active members and leaders of the garden, others are opposed to its existence. James, a gardener and a lifelong resident of said public housing, explained that the image of the public housing development was connected to the image of the garden: if the latter were an "eyesore", it would reflect on the housing and its residents. Others saw a fenced-off public space with a visible presence of white people, and argued that a public park would serve more local residents. Mrs. Jones, a local African American leader explained:

Then [the garden] took off where it wasn't that much the local community that was involved, it started to be people from all over the place… I had a vision that somewhere there would be a multiservice, multiethnic state of the arts community development that will service all people of all ages and all backgrounds… Because there is nothing here that would connect people. Because we are so industrial…It's important that people get to know each other…They fought against any park being there but…[w]hen you walk past, you don't see: garden. It's locked and fenced in…It's an eyesore…I don't see that it's been a plus to the neighborhood.

Given the community's lack of convenient and affordable access to produce, had the garden expressed a commitment to food justice or building community in and through food, particularly with the residents of the public housing development, Mrs. Jones and other locals who critiqued the garden might have embraced it. But despite opportunities to do so, this did not take place. For example, when an employee of City Harvest, which runs a free produce distribution program, came to a garden meeting and suggested collaboration with the community garden because gardeners were "advocates for healthy food systems", garden members appeared puzzled and did not engage. Not only did they not see the garden as providing food for the community or a systemic alternative to the conventional food system, the narratives of healthy eating did not resonate in their context. Unlike in Hands and Hearts, few gardeners in Astoria saw their community garden as playing a role in these larger issues around food justice. As a result, because the garden is not shaped by a farm vision or an ideology of food justice, the arguments in its defense could not draw on narratives of feeding the neighborhood or building community through food. Instead, the defense of the garden focused on its pleasant appearance vis-à-vis a hypothetical park, as well as on the supposed access it offered to non-members (Table 1).

Conclusions

This article compared two community gardens in New York City in order to analyze how neighborhood transformations shape the trajectories of urban agriculture spaces and their commitment to equitable access to food. Astoria and East New York have much in common, including lack of access to healthy food and large numbers of people of color. Yet, there are differences between the histories of the

Table 1 Comparison between astoria garden and hands and hearts

	Astoria	Hands and Hearts
Individual level	Gardening to enjoy nature, limited family histories of farming, gardening for social interaction and community	Family history of farming, ethnoracial identities rooted in food production, desire for culturally appropriate food, alternative to poor quality produce in grocery stores, addressing diet-related disease
Organizational level	Minimal non-profit role, diversity of goals and visions stemming from anarchist beginnings, democracy that results in dominance of non-agricultural vision	Overseen by an explicitly social justice oriented community-based organization that promoted a culture of agriculture, a systemic critique of institutional racism, and saw food production as a conduit to community mobilization
Neighborhood level	Waterfront industrial area with little vacant land or history of planned shrinkage, large public housing developments, now gentrifying through small, medium, and large-scale development	Working class community of color with history of redlining, urban renewal and planned shrinkage that produced a lot of vacant land that was converted into a large number of community gardens, lack of gentrification
City level	Institutionalization of protection for some community gardens through Parks Department and largely unchecked private development with assistance of local government	

two neighborhoods in land use and the implementation of planned shrinkage. Additionally, the pressure of gentrification affects Astoria much more than it does East New York. The community gardens we studied reflect these differences at the intersection of attitudes and orientations of individual gardeners, organizational structures and agricultural ideologies, and the relationship between the gardens and the surrounding neighborhoods.

For analytical purposes, we approached the three levels separately, although they are, as we show, interconnected. At the individual level, we found that gardeners at Hands and Hearts in East New York have agricultural experience and an orientation towards food production, which gardeners in Astoria are less likely to have. At the organizational level, the individual orientations of Hands and Heart gardeners were shaped by a "culture of agriculture" and a belief that community gardens were an alternative to the conventional food system and contributed to food justice. Such systemic critiques were rarely evident in Astoria, where the garden was founded by people oriented towards expropriation and sharing of space rather than food justice. Astoria gardeners had conflicting visions for the garden and gardening, and were only loosely connected to the larger gardening movement in the city. In contrast, Hands and Hearts was part of a vibrant local neighborhood organization with multiple institutionalized efforts to promote food justice and community empowerment. In other words, although in both Astoria and East New York there were gardeners who engaged in cultural preservation through growing food, this was not central to the reproduction of the Astoria garden while being systematically encouraged and supported in East New York.

The historical trajectories of the neighborhoods also help illuminate the differences between the two gardens. Planned shrinkage in East New York led to an abundance of lots that could be used for community gardening by an agriculturally inclined population and organizations that emerged from the grassroots to support these interests. At the same time, East New York was sheltered from the pressures of gentrification by its geographical and symbolic remoteness from Manhattan. Astoria's proximity to Manhattan, its industrial past, large public housing developments, and scarcity of vacant land created a different context. The community garden became an attractive commodity for both long-term residents and recent arrivals, and an arena where struggles over the cultural, economic, and political aspects of gentrification were played out. Its very attractiveness as a cultural amenity existed in tension with ideologies stressing food production and food justice. Although some gardeners were interested in growing food and even in food justice, the organizational and neighborhood contexts in Astoria marginalized those ideologies and practices.

Community gardens are often viewed as the epitome of small scale collective efforts that empower marginalized city residents to redress social injustices, particularly inequalities in access to healthy food and urban space. In this paper, we have tried to go beyond these assumptions by empirically investigating how two community gardens actually work. One should not assume that community gardens in urban working-class communities of color are engaged with food justice ideologies, or even privilege food production. Even when marginalized city residents do use community garden space to grow food, they do not necessarily frame that practice as addressing a social injustice, as in Astoria. While histories of the built environment and planning policies in each neighborhood shape the path taken by urban agriculture in each area, so do ideologies, organizational structures, and the specific histories of each gardens' founding. The sweat equity and self-determination in East New York, deepened through the creation of a community-based food justice organization, means that people of color were able to privilege growing food to feed other local people of color. The lack of such a cohesive mission in Astoria, coupled with the anarchist beginnings of the garden and a context of gentrification, was reflected in the struggles over the appearance of the garden rather than its productivity.

Overall, our findings point to the significance of neighborhood contexts in shaping the path of urban agriculture, even when citywide policies are held constant. Further comparative research on community gardens and urban agriculture will contribute to deeper theorization and emergence of typologies that help us better grasp the evolution of urban agriculture and its articulations with stratification, inequality, and neighborhood change. Longitudinal studies of community gardens and other urban agriculture initiatives will be particularly valuable in understanding what happens as the surrounding neighborhood gentrifies. If there is an influx of middle-class and upper-class white gardeners to East New York, will these new gardeners internalize Hands and Hearts' orientation towards food justice? How will its particular organizational history and the history of neighborhood land use policies continue to shape how people garden and why? And as gentrification intensifies in Astoria, will the contestation over uses of the garden resolve ever more conclusively in the favor of those who want an attractive and property-value-raising space above a space that feeds food-insecure residents and provides space to the marginalized? Or will the pressures of gentrification push the gardeners towards inter-racial and inter-class solidarity and political mobilization to resist displacement and the loss of access to their gardens? Given that community gardens can directly and indirectly participate in gentrification as much as be threatened by it, or even serve as a place for mobilization against gentrification, it is imperative to continually unpack what community gardens are actually *doing*: how are people constructing and negotiating their understanding of gardens and gardening, and what ideologies and narratives are called upon to justify various garden-related practices.

Acknowledgements We would like to thank our participants for their willingness to share their time, thoughts, and knowledge with us and for welcoming us into their gardens. We also want to thank the reviewers and editorial staff for their helpful comments. Aptekar's research was undertaken within the GlobaldiverCities Project (https://www.mmg.mpg.de/subsites/globaldivercities/about/) funded by the European Research Council Advanced Grant [269784], awarded to Prof. Steven Vertovec and based at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen, Germany (www.mmg.mpg.de).

References

Allen, P. 2004. *Together at the table: Sustainability and sustenance in the American agrifood system*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University.

Allen, P. 2008. Mining for justice in the food system: Perceptions, practices, and possibilities. *Agriculture and Human Values* 25: 157–161.

Alkon, A. H. 2013. Food justice, food sovereignty and the challenge of neoliberalism. Presented at Food Sovereignty: A Critical Dialogue, International Conference, Yale University, September 14–15, 2013, https://www.tni.org/files/download/38_alkon_2013.pdf accessed 20 August 2014.

Anguelovski, I. 2013. From environmental trauma to safe haven: Place attachment and place remaking in three marginalized neighborhoods of Barcelona, Boston, and Havana. *City & Community* 12 (3): 211–237.

Anguelovski, I. 2015. Healthy food stores, greenlining and food gentrification: Contesting new forms of privilege, displacement and locally unwanted land uses in racially mixed neighborhoods. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39 (6): 1209–1230.

Aptekar, S. 2015. Visions of public space: Reproducing and resisting social hierarchies in a diverse community garden. *Sociological Forum* 30 (1): 209–227.

Beilin, R., and A. Hunter. 2011. Co-constructing the sustainable city: How indicators help us 'grow' more than just food in community gardens. *Local Environment* 16 (6): 523–538.

Bradley, K., and R. Galt. 2014. Practicing food justice at dig deep farms & produce, East Bay Area, California: Self-determination as a guiding value and intersections with foodie logics. *Local Environment* 19 (2): 172–186.

Braswell, T.H. 2018. Fresh food, new faces: Community gardening as ecological gentrification in St. Louis, Missouri. *Agriculture & Human Values* 35 (4): 809–822.

Brooklyn Queens Land Trust. 2019. About us. Brooklyn Queens Land Trust. https://bqlt.org/about. Accessed 4 April 2019.

Cadji, J., and A.H. Alkon. 2015. "One day, the white people are going to want these houses again": Understanding gentrification through the North Oakland Farmers Market. In *Incomplete streets: Processes, practices, and possibilities*, ed. S. Zavestoski and J. Agyeman, 154–175. New York: Routledge.

Clendenning, J., W. Dressler, and C. Richards. 2016. Food justice or food sovereignty? Understanding the rise of urban food movements in the USA. *Agriculture and Human Values* 33 (1): 165–177.

Cohen, N., and K. Reynolds. 2015. Policy, resource, and technical assistance needs for a socially just and sustainable urban agriculture system: Lessons from New York City. *Journal of Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* 30 (1): 103–114.

Daftary-Steel, S. 2015. *Growing young leaders in East New York: Lessons from East New York Farms! youth internship program*. East New York: East New York Farms!.

Daftary-Steel, S., and S. Gervais. 2014. *East New York Farms! retrospective case study (1995–2011)*. East New York: Food Dignity Project.

Eizenberg, E. 2016. *From the ground up: Community gardens in New York City and the politics of spatial transformation*. New York: Routledge.

Firth, C., D. Maye, and D. Pearson. 2011. Developing 'community' in community gardens. *Local Environment* 16 (6): 555–568.

Ghose, R., and M. Pettygrove. 2014. Urban community gardens as spaces of citizenship. *Antipode* 46 (4): 1092–1112. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12077.

Gould, K.A., and T.L. Lewis. 2017. *Green gentrification: Urban sustainability and the struggle for environmental justice*. New York: Routledge.

Greenberg, M. 2008. *Branding New York: How a city in crisis was sold to the world*. New York: Routledge.

GreenThumb. 2019. About. *GreenThumb*. https://greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/about.html. Accessed 4 April 2019.

Harris, N., F.R. Minniss, and S. Somerset. 2014. Refugees connecting with a new country through community food gardening. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 11 (9): 9202–9216.

Hoover, B. 2013. White spaces in black and Latino places: Urban agriculture and food sovereignty. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 3 (4): 109–115.

Irazábal, C., and A. Punja. 2009. Cultivating just planning and legal institutions: A critical assessment of the South Central farm struggle in Los Angeles. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 31 (1): 1–23.

Kato, Y., C. Passidomo, and D. Harvey. 2013. Political gardening in a post-disaster city: Lessons from New Orleans. *Urban Studies* 51 (9): 1833–1849.

L'Annunziata, E. 2010. Following the plant: The political ecology of a Hmong community garden. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 33 (1/2): 97–134.

Lawson, L. 2005. *City bountiful: A century of community gardening in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Marche, G. 2015. What can urban gardening really do about gentrification? A case-study of three San Francisco community gardens. *European Journal of American Studies* 10(3): https://ejas.revues.org/11316.

Mares, T.M., and D.G. Peña. 2011. Environmental and food justice: Toward local, slow, and deep food systems. In *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability*, ed. A.H. Alkon and J. Agyeman, 197–220. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Martinez, M. 2009. Attack of the butterfly spirits: The impact of movement framing by community garden preservation activists. *Social Movement Studies* 8 (4): 323–339.

Martinez, M.J. 2010. *Power at the roots: Gentrification, community gardens, and the Puerto Ricans of the Lower East Side*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Massey, B. 2017. D.C.'s urban farms wrestle with gentrification and displacement. *CivilEats*. https://civileats.com/2017/02/27/d-c-s-urban-farms-wrestle-with-gentrification-and-displacement. Accessed 27 February 2017.

McClintock, N. 2014. Radical, reformist, and garden-variety neoliberal: Coming to terms with urban agriculture's contradictions. *Local Environment* 19 (2): 147–171.

McClintock, N. 2018. Cultivating (a) sustainability capital: Urban agriculture, eco-gentrification, and the uneven valorization of social reproduction. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 108 (2): 579–590.

McIlvaine-Newsad, H., and R. Porter. 2013. How does your garden grow? Environmental justice aspects of community gardens. *Journal of Ecological Anthropology* 16 (1): 69–75.

McIvor, D.W., and J. Hale. 2015. Urban agriculture and the prospects for deep democracy. *Agriculture and Human Values* 32 (4): 727–741.

Minkoff-Zern, L.-A. 2012. Pushing the boundaries of indigeneity and agricultural knowledge: Oaxacan immigrant gardening in California. *Agriculture and Human Values* 29 (3): 381–392.

Myers, J.S., and J. Sbicca. 2015. Bridging Good Food and Good Jobs: From Secession to Confrontation within Alternative Food Movement Politics. *Geoforum* 61: 17–26.

New York Restoration Project. 2019. About: Gardens. *New York Restoration Project*. https://www.nyrp.org/about/where-we-work/gardens/. Accessed 4 April 2019.

Passidomo, C. 2014. Whose right to (farm) the city? Race and food justice activism in post-Katrina New Orleans. *Agriculture and Human Values* 31 (3): 385–396.

Pudup, M.B. 2008. It takes a garden: Cultivating citizen-subjects in organized garden projects. *Geoforum* 39 (3): 1228–1240.

Ramírez, M.M. 2015. The elusive inclusive: Black food geographies and racialized food spaces. *Antipode* 47 (3): 748–769.

Reynolds, K. 2014. Disparity despite diversity: Social injustice in New York City's urban agriculture system. *Antipode.* 47 (1): 240–259.

Reynolds, K., and N. Cohen. 2016. *Beyond the kale: Urban agriculture and social justice activism in New York City*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Roberts, S. 2011. Filing challenge to Census, city says 50,000 weren't counted in 2 boroughs. *New York Times*, August 10. https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/11/nyregion/ny-says-census-undercounted-brooklyn-and-queens.html

Saldivar-tanaka, L., and M.E. Krasny. 2004. Culturing community development, neighborhood open space, and civic agriculture: The case of Latino community gardens in New York City. *Agriculture & Human Values* 21 (4): 399–412.

Sbicca, J. 2016. These bars can't hold us back: Plowing incarcerated geographies with restorative food justice. *Antipode* 48 (5): 1359–1379.

Sbicca, J., and J. Myers. 2017. Food justice racial projects: Fighting racial neoliberalism from the bay to the big apple. *Environmental Sociology* 3 (1): 30–41.

Sharzer, G. 2012. A critique of localist political economy and urban agriculture. *Historical Materialism* 20 (4): 75–114.

Schmelzkopf, K. 2002. Incommensurability, land use, and the right to space: Community gardens in New York City. *Urban Geography* 23 (4): 323–343.

Shinew, K.J., T.D. Glover, and D.C. Parry. 2004. Leisure spaces as potential sites for interracial interaction: Community gardens in urban areas. *Journal of Leisure Research* 36 (3): 336–355.

Smith, N. 1996. *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Smith, C., and H. Kurtz. 2003. Community gardens and politics of scale in New York City. *Geographical Review* 93 (2): 193–212.

Staeheli, L.A., D. Mitchell, and K. Gibson. 2002. Conflicting rights to the city in New York's community gardens. *GeoJournal* 58: 197–205.

Tabb, W. 1982. *The long default: New York City and the urban fiscal crisis*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Tavory, I., and S. Timmermans. 2014. *Abductive analysis: Theorizing qualitative research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Twiss, J., J. Dickinson, S. Duma, T. Kleinman, H. Paulsen, and L. Rilveria. 2003. Community gardens: Lessons learned from California Healthy Cities and Communities. *American Journal of Public Health* 93 (9): 1435–1438.

Urban Garden Connections. 2015. About Us. *Urban garden connections*. https://www.bronxlandtrust.org/about-us/. Accessed 4 April 2019.

Voicu, I., and V. Been. 2008. The effect of community gardens on neighboring property values. *Real Estate Economics* 36 (2): 241–283.

Von Hassell, M. 2002. *The struggle for Eden: Community gardens in New York City*. Westport: Bergin and Garvey.

Wallace, D., and R. Wallace. 2001. *A plague on your houses: How New York was burned down and national public health crumbled*. New York: Verso.

Wolch, J.R., J. Byrne, and J.P. Newell. 2014. Urban green space, public health, and environmental justice: The challenge of making cities 'just green enough. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 125 (Supplement C): 234–244.

White, M.M. 2011. D-Town Farm: African American resistance to food insecurity and the transformation of Detroit. *Environmental Practice* 13 (4): 406–417.

Sofya Aptekar is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Core Faculty in Critical Ethnic and Community Studies Program at University of Massachusetts Boston. Her research includes studies of public space, diversity, gentrification, and collective memory, and has appeared in journals such as City & Community, Ethnic and Racial Studies, Symbolic Interaction, and Social Problems.

Justin S. Myers is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Cal State University, Fresno and received his PhD in Sociology from The Graduate Center, The City University of New York. His research explores how marginalized communities are organizing against environmental and food inequities. He is currently writing a book on the food justice movement in Brooklyn.