Urban Argiculture as a driver of Environmental Gentrification in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

By: Nicholas Saracena
Joint European Master in Environmental Studies: Cities and Sustainability (JEMES-CiSu)

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Nick

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Introduction

In recent years, urban agriculture has seen exploding popularity worldwide. In neighborhoods like Bedford-Stuyvesant (Bed-Stuy), Brooklyn, the emergence of community gardens over the past 30 years has been in lock step with its gradual revitalization. Long-term residents take great pride in their community, and through community gardening, have made concerted efforts to

not only beautify their home, but to reclaim a sense of ownership over space that had fallen victim to the injustice of urban renewal and neglect. As the neighborhood has gotten back on it's feet however, Bed-Stuy's wider reputation has undergone a transformation from dilapidated ghetto, to diamond in the rough.

Efforts made by marginalized communities to improve the neighborhood have been shown to sometimes attract high-income outsiders and developers, prompting the ousting of the long-term population as property values rise and new development ensues. Urban agriculture has been praised for the numerous benefits it can offer communities including neighborhood beautification, access to fresh produce, reduced crime rates, and increased social interaction. Community gardens have many of the same positive attributes as parks and other environmental amenities that have recently been linked with environmental gentrification, yet have thus far not been included in research as a possible contributing factor to gentrification. Given the rapid pace of gentrification in Bed-Stuy and the growing popularity of community gardens, it must be asked if these gardens have become a victim of their own success and serve as a mechanism of environmental gentrification.

Gentrification can be defined as the process of renewal and rebuilding accompanying an influx of middle-class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displaces poorer residents. Traditionally, this is has been initiated by an influx of young artists and gay couples in search of affordable housing, which prompts new niche businesses to open to cater to the newcomers. As the conditions in the neighborhood improve, property values increase, and more affluent residents and real estate developers move in to continue the process, subsequently pricing low income, and often times long term, residents out of the area. This is not to say however, that there is only one driver of gentrification. The process is multifaceted, and it is becoming increasingly clear that activities that are initially deemed good for a neighborhood, may in fact have unintended ramifications.

Environmental gentrification can be thought of as an extension of regular gentrification that incorporates the consumerist element of the environmental movement that has become predominant (winnifred interview). It represents "the convergence of urban redevelopment, ecologically minded inititatives and environmental activism in an era of advanced capitalism. Operating under the seemingly a-political rubric of sustainability, environmental gentrification builds of the material and discursive successes of the urban encironmental justice movement and appropriates them to serce high-end redevelopment that displaces low income residents" (Checker, 2011). Historically distressed neigborhoods generally receive fewer environmental amenities servicies than wealthier white communities, giving the impression of degredation and abandonment. Over the past 30 years however, residents, community groups, and local organizations have sought to to revitalize their neighborhoods through

brownfield remediation and and greening in various forms, such as parks and community gardens to promote greater urban livability (Anguelvoski, 2013).

Like most major cities, agricultural practices have long been a part of New York's urban fabric. Gardens have traditionally followed the boom and bust cycle of the economy, popping up when times are tough, and disappearing in times of prosperity. During the Great Depression, the city's welfare department, with federal help, sponsored close to 5,000 "relief gardens" on vacant lots to help support the unemployed (Ferguson, 2005). This movement continued through World War II with the city declaring that all available land would be used for "victory gardens," to supplement food rations. After the war ended however, these gardens were largely abandoned due to newfound prosperity. In the decade since, New York has witnesses the start of hundreds of gardens in all five boroughs, and contrary to popular belief, these emerged without much in the way of government support. The financial crisis of the 1970's left many properties in disrepair, and by 1977, there were over 25,000 vacant lots in the city (Ferguson, 2005). Fed up with the deteriorating conditions, a group called the Green Guerillas began reclaiming dilapidated lots with gardens. Their efforts weren't initially welcome, with city officials citing the illegal nature of their work, however the story changed for the better when the Guerillas attracted media attention. By 1976, Brooklyn Congressman Fred Richmond helped pass a federal program to support urban agriculture that was so successful; it was later expanded to incorporate 15 other states. Over the past 30 years, urban agriculture has taken root in every corner of the city, but Bed-Stuy was uniquly well suited for widespread implementation.

There are now dozens of community gardens throughout Bed-Stuy, many of which have been operating for decades. Bed-Stuy, like many other neighborhoods across the five boroughs, had a plethora of vacant and underutilized lots, which were a blight on the community in the wake of economic hardship and urban renewal. Unfortunate a situation as this might have been, long-term residents didn't simply concede circumstance of their neighborhood. They were proactive in working for a better future. Community gardens now serve as a symbol of community integrity, and while they are a bastion of traditional sustainability efforts, the social aspect must not be forgotten. A truly sustainable community is not one that simply recycles and composts, but one that ensures the lasting communial integrity for its' members. In this paper, I utilize grounded theory that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative research conducted while doing fieldwork in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, which examines the role community gardens have played in its gentrification. I will argue that the neighborhoods' various community gardens have, through the benefits commonly associated with urban agriculture, made Bed-Stuy more attractive to newcomers, thus contributing to the gentrification process. This thesis will contribute to not only a more well rounded view of the impacts of

urban agriculture, but also a new possible contributor to be examined under the wider umbrella of gentrification.

Urban Agriculture

Introduction

Urban agriculture, as the name implies, can be defined as "an industry located within or on the fringes of a town, a city, or a metropolis which grows and raises, processes and distributes a diversity of food and non-food products, (re)using largely human and materials resources, products and services largely to that urban area" (Broadway, 2010). It has seen a surge in popularity world wide in the past several decades, largely due to factors including economic development, job creation, food security, and community strengthening (Whittinghill, 2011). Urban agriculture can be sub-divided into several types of practices, including urban farms, rooftop gardens- some of which are for-profit and operate on an industrial scale-, and community gardens. While each has their own unique attributes and impacts on the surrounding area, community gardens are renowned for their ability to promote a multitude of benefits for their neighborhoods in the areas of health, environmental improvement, and socioeconomic development. Additionally, not only is there an established coorelation between increased property values withint 1000 ft of a community garden, in terms of green space, they provide more affordable access to green space than city parks, which tend to be located in more affluent areas due to gentrification and the commidization of environmental amenities (Voicu & Been, 2008). This is of special importance in marginalized communities, and not only contributes to the broader concepts of social and environmental justice, but is a cornerstone of truly sustainable communities.

Socioeconomic

The positive affects urban agriculture, specifically community gardens, have on the socioeconomic circumstances of a neighborhood are well documented, and highlight their role in community building and place making. They have the ability to transform underutilizaed space into a communal resource, propting greater social interaction and community cohesion in marginalized neighborhoods (Ackerman, Plunz, Conrad, Katz, Dahlgren, & Culligan, 2011). Participating in a common activity leads to better interpersonal relationships and developing a sense of community pride, both of which are important factors for broader mobilization for community improvement. Community gardens can also contribute to a sense of place, which is especially

important for recent immigrants. Aside from affording them the opportunity to interact with neighbors, they also have to chance to grow culturally accptable food from their home countries, which may either not be available to exorbinantly expensive (Wakefield, Yeudall, Taron, Reynolds, & Skiner, 2007). From an economic perspective, local gardens can be an important source cost saving where food expendatures are concerned. This is of special importance to low-income families. Studies have found that a community garden can yield up to $2,000 of produce per family annually (Hagey, Rice, & Flournoy, 2012). Supplementing store bought groceries not only contributes to a healther diet, but can also dramatically reduce annual food expenses.

Health

The beneficial impacts urban agriculture can have on one's health are multifaceted, and affect not only physical, but also mental state of wellbeing. Low-income communities often do not have adequate access to healthy foods, instead relying on fast food and convienence stores to purchace unhealthy processed foods. This is a particular problem in minority communities, and has been a major contributing factor to obesity and a host of other diet related health problems. Studies show however, that improved access to produce leads to healthier diets (Hagey, Rice, & Flournoy, 2012). Gardening is also an excellent way for people, particulairly the elderly, to stay physically and mentally fit. Many community garden participants have attested to the relaxing effects of ineracting with not only nature, but fellow gardeners (Wakefield, Yeudall, Taron, Reynolds, & Skinner, 2007). Furthermore, early exposure to fresh produce teaches children healthy eating habits, helping to promote lifelong healthy eating habits. Overall, the presence of a community garden is a great benefit to neighborhood health, both literally and figuritavely.

Environmental

As a form of green space, urban agriculture is a valuable environmental asset, which not only beautifies the currounding area, but also acts as a meaningful CO_2 sink. This is compounded when emmissions from transportation are taken into consideration. In the United States, produce can travel an average of 1,500 miles from farm to table, requiring substaintial fossile fuel consumption (Pollan, 2006). Additionally, community gardens provide a critical environmental service by helping to manage stormwater runoff. Productive green space has become an important component of urban infastructure, and is a cost effective way to address mounting environmental problems at minimum cost (Ackerman, Plunz, Conrad, Katz, Dahlgren, & Culligan, 2011).

Considerations

While the benefits of urban argiculture are numerous, there are factors which can complicated it implementation, namely soil condition and land access. Soil quality is an important factor for any type of agricultural production, but is most important where human consumption is concerned. Many community gardens in New York City are on brownfield properties, which previously hosted on-site commercial or industrial activity. The substances left behind on such sites, namely lead, arsenic, and cadmium, pose a risk to human health, and should be tested for before hand. Because the New York City area has been inhabited for so long, and various commerical and industrial practices have taken place citywide, it is assumed that all soil is contaminated to at least some degree. A 2010 study took soil samples from 72 homes and 12 community gardens primarily in Brooklyn, and found most of the soil to be heavily contaminated (Ackerman, Plunz, Conrad, Katz, Dahlgren, & Culligan, 2011). Unfortunantly, soil testing is not always accurate, and might not reveal true soil quality. Due to limited research however, it is difficult to guage the level of risk associated with these chemicals and establish a threshold for safe consumption.

Land access and tenure is another imporant consideration that brings about questions of social justice and and access rights. Most community gardens in New York City are located on pubically owned land. The city government, through the department of parks recreation's Project Green Thumb, leases vaccant lots to residents for $1 to use as gardens. While many gardens have existed for decades under this program, there is currently no framework in place to guarantee permenance. In 2010, the City Council implemented a new set of rules that made it "very difficult" for non-open space developmnt to take place on a pre-existing garden, however the specifics were not stipulated (Weiss, Mitchel, & Luna, 2013). Without guaranteed permenance, rights to the land remain at the whim of the ever-changing political atmosphere. One of former mayor Rudolph Giulani's campaign platforms was to privatize public lands and services, and in 1999, his administration put 114 lots that hosted community gardens, many of which were in Bed-Stuy, up for auction (Smith & Kurtz, 2003). Many of these were bought and placed in a trust by the New York Restoration Project (NYRP), actress Bette Middler's non-profit organization. Despite being in a trust however, the land is still owned by the NYRP, and redevelopment is possible with little say from the community.

There are currently over 700 community gardens in New York City, and they are continuing to proliferate (Cohen, Reynolds, and Sanghvi, 2008). The increasing popularity of urban agriculture along side sustainable development and demand for green space however, brings into question the future role of community gardens in neighborhoods. In many ways, they are identical to other forms of green space such as parks, which have been comodified by real estate developers. It must be asked whether community gardens will continue to be

representative of local pride and effort, or whether they will become a victim of their own success and contribute to the neighborhoods' gentrification.

Environmental Gentrification

Environmental gentrification differs form ordinairy gentrification in that it is at least partly facilitated by the creation or restoration of an enviornmental amenity. Historically, the distribution of environmental amenities has been based on social class, and has heavily favored the rich. Neighborhoods with the more environmentally desirable features, such as parks and waterfronts commanded a premium price that was out of reach for those of a more modest socioeconomic background (Gould, 2012). This pattern has recently been exacerbated by the rising popularity of "sustainability" and is being perpetuated by developers and politicians alike.

As in traditional gentrification, early gentrifiers find the niche they can afford in urban housing stock. Their choice however does not imply any sort of social integration with the existing community. Differences in race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic backgroud exacerbate seperatism, and encounters between the two groups can often be uncomfortable. Long-term residents will mobilize against new features or improvements they deem as drivers of gentrification, which can in include everything from historic building restorations to new bike lanes (Zukin, 1987). One aspect that has until recently been overlooked however, are environmental improvements such as parks, waterfront, and even community gardens.

Community gardens have been nighborhood staples around the world, but especially in dense urban areas. With a newfound interest in environmental issues in popular discourse, the term "sustainable" has take on new desirable new meaning that the affluent are willing to pay a premium for. Community gardens have come to be associated with sustainability not only because they are a form of green space, but also because because the demand for locally grown prdouce is at an all time high, and falls under the wider umbrella of sustainability. It is not uncommon for developers to advertise access to local amenities such gardens in a similar fashion as in house gyms, pools, or health spas. Indeed, new development close to existing community gardens can be symptomatic of how gentrification reflects the growing ability of real estate developers to target their consumers under the discourses of environmentalism (Quastel, 2009).

Long-term residents are attempting to combat this corporate encroachment by building coalitions with new residents in an effort to not only educate them in the history and issues facing their new home, but to also utilize the new comers social and political capital to make the issue of gentrification known (Hamilton & Curran, 2012). It is common knowledge that gentrifying

neighborhoods have a higher tax base, and politicians are unlikely to fight the process in the face of budget constraints, especially when the process is driven by supposed sustainability efforts, thus good for the both the budget and the environment. In this respect, the local experiences of large-scale sustainability initiatives are essential to understand the social justice component of sustainability.

Methods and Case Study Presentation

Research Deisgn

This paper is based on a grounded theory approach utilizing qulatative and quantative data collected in the neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. Here, I am specifically focusing on the role possibly played by urban agriculture as a form of environmental gentrification in Bedford-Stuyvesant (Bed-Stuy). Bed-Stuy presents a compelling case study as is it is truly a neighborhood in transistion. For the past several decades, the neighborhood has been the victim of gross disinvestment and neglect, yet since the turn of the century has turned around and is now rapidly gentrifying. Along with its rich architectural stock, Bed-Stuy is home to an abundence of long-term community gardens that have played a vital role in cleaning the area up.

Between January and May of 2014, I collected primairy data from a variety of sources, including articles from local newspapers (New York Times, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, New York Daily News) and local magazines (New York Magazine, New York Observer, the City Journal), community garden blogs, and reports issued by both the city and non-profit advocacy groups. Expand a bit. Be more specific for the reader.

Addtionally, between April and May 2014, I conducted fieldwork through site visits at two community gardens in Bed-Stuy, Green Acres Community Garden, and the Saratoga Farm. Green Acres Community Garden was founded in 1999 on an empty lot, and has since grown into a thriving community space with nearly 40 members. Conversely, the Saratoga Farm just recently broke ground on the oppisite and decidely less gentrified end of Bed-Stuy. While at each location, I interviewd garden operators and members about their reasons for participating and what effect them percieved the garden to have on the surrounding community, in addition to observing the reactions of passersby. I also conducted 8 semi-structured interviews both in-person and over the phone. These interviews included both long-term and new members of the community, garden operators of Green Acres Community Garden and the Saratoga Farm, experts in urban agriculture and gentrification, and a member of the local Community Board. The questions I asked sought to gain insight into the subjects'

perceptions of how Bed-Stuy has changed over time, what underlying processes were driving the changes, what impact they think community gardening has on the surrounding community, and how the activity is perceived by both practitioners and non-participating community members.

This study also included a quantitative aspect that utilized information from the U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor and Statistics, New York Department of City Planning, the NYU Furman Center, and the Oasis map created by the City University of New York. This information was used to track various demographic (ethnicity, age, average income, highest degree earned), crime rate, and property value changes over a period of time. These data portrayed statistical changes typically associated with gentrification taking place in close proximity to community gardens and farms, and is combined with the qualitative aspects to illustrate the community's transformation in its entirety. In the analysis, the goals were to develop a comprehensive understanding of Bed-Stuys evolution as a neighborhood, track the historical and continuing emergence of its community gardening movement, the reasoning behind it, and develop a comprehensive narriative that maps out the coorelation between the Bed-Stuy's gradual gentrification and the spread of community gardens.

Bedford-Stuyvesant – A Neighborhood Reimagined

Bedford-Stuyvesant, more commonly known as simply "Bed-Stuy," is Brooklyns most populous neighborhood, and a place with many faces and many meanings. Its iconic Brownstone townhouses are renowned in the architecture community. It is a bastion of the African American community, and has produced artists such as Biggie Smalls, Mos Def, Jay-Z, and Lil' Kim. There was a time when it has also been referred to as called "the largest ghetto in the U.S," and is commonly known by its unofficial motto "Bed-Stuy, do or die," referring to the extreme crime epidemic it faced for so many years. The neighborhood has emerged as an entity of cultural signifigance, and the hardships it has faced carry meaning with those who have never stepped foot within its boarders. Movies like Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989), made Bed-Stuy's racial and class tensions promoted national discussions on the struggles of those living in the inner city. More recently however, its character has begun to change once more as it has been the site of increasingly aggressive gentrification, ousting long-term community members who crafted the neighborhood into what it is today.

Bed-Stuy's name comes from the combination of the Village of Bedford and the separate neighborhood of Stuyveant Heights. The area was origionally home to the Canarsee Indians before being bought by the Netherlands in 1663 and used for growing cotton and tobacco. By the 1860's, Bed-Stuy had become an attractive destionation for the weathly, allowing bankers and the like to escape

the crowded conditions of Manhattan (Singer, 2012). The completion of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883 opened up Brooklyn for the common man, allowing those who worked in manhattan to easily commute. Soon after, developers sought to capitalize on the rapidly increasing population, and were quick to build housing for the newcomers, which included large numbers of German and Irish immigrants effectively turning Bed-Stuy into a solid working and middle class community.

By the 1930's, the demographics and the very urban fabric of Bed-Stuy underwent a dramatic transformation. In the decade prior, waves of African Americans came to inhabit the neighborhood after leaving the south amid Jim Crow Laws. After the completion of the A train, a large number of African Americans living in Harlem flocked to Bed-Stuy in search of better housing. As the nation's Great Migration accelerated, southern blacks unwelcome in many other parts of Brooklyn found Bed-Stuy more hospitable due to its already large black population. As Hymowitz notes, "by the late 1930's however, decline in the increasingly poor, black area seened inevitable" (Hymowitz, 2013). The Great Depression had a devestating effect on the community, and marked the beginning of Bed-Stuys downward spiral. As the neighborhoods brownstones deteroriated, those who were able left in search of work and better accomidation, leaving the largley black urban poor left behind.

After World War II, white flight to the suburbs and prolific bank redlining left the community in disarray. But the 1960's, Bed-Stuy had become Brooklyns most populous neighborhood with around 450,000 residents, that vast majority of whom were black. In line with the times, government support for the area was minimal at best. As Hymowitz (2013) explains:

> "The city government turned its back; garbage pickup became apathetic, the schools dilapidated and disorderly, the streets dangerous. Around 80 percent of Bed-Stuy residents were high school dropouts. Many had lost jobs when the Broklyn Navy Yard and the Sheffeld milk-bottling plat on Fulton Street closed…Rates of venereal disease and infant mortality were among the nation's highest. Juvenile delinquency, gangs, and heroin added to the misery. Shops on once-vibrant Fulton Street started to close. Blight so consumed Bed-Stuy that the journalist Jack Newfield, after a famous visit with Senator Robert Kennedy of New York, described the area as "filled with the surreal imagery of a bad LSD trip."

This is not to say however that Bed-Stuy had no redeeming qualities, or that all of its residents were condemned to a subpar quality of like amid the rampid violence and drug use. Indeed, if there was another thing the neighborhood was known for, it was a sense of community. In a questionaire, Tremaine Write, a member of local Commubunity Board 3 laments:

> "While there were huge problems throughout the City and Bedford Stuyvesant as well, I was largely immune to it. I did not know people who used crack, my parents worked, owned their home, we attended parochial school and public gifted and talented schools, our Saturdays were filled with block clean ups and Girl Scouts, and we could walk to stores alone" (T.Write, personal communication, May 27, 2014).

To be sure, despite the many challenges Bed-Stuy faced, residents found comradery through struggle, and it served as an anchor for what would be known as a remarkably tight knit community. Though this cycle of poverty and disenfranchisment would continue to define Bed-Stuy for decades, the tide is now rapidly turning. Starting in the early 2000's, reduced crime rates (percentages located in supplementary material) and affordable housing began to make the neighborhood increasingly attractive for newcomers. Chic coffee shops, organic grocery stores, and yoga studios are poping up like weeds. The area has "emerged as a hotspot for arts and culture" in Brooklyn, and is a growing creative community that attracts artisans and artists, and yet, it is still a place of random gun violence and stray bullets. This mix of hipster and hip-hop culture has captured New York City's imagination, as it is representative of how the wider city is constantly reinventing itself (Nixon, 2013). Long time resident and operator of the Green Acres Community Garden Suzan Frazier explained that Bed-Stuy has had a series of booms and busts in past decades, and they usually dictate the demographics and investment in the neighborhood:

> "Well, I moved at the end of the first bust in, actually I moved here around the first boom around ninteen eighty four, and it was always a nice neighborhood, but there used to be a lot more dilipadation. When I moved here, you might have stray dogs, and homeless people with fires on the corner and stuff like that. Then the crack epidemic and the homicide epidemic were really bad in the late eighties and early nineties, so a lot of shopkeepers got shot in those days. There were a lot of crack heads walking around too" (S. Frazier, personal communication, April 9, 2014).

That image of dilipidation no longer adequately portrays Bed-Stuy however, as it has in a sense become a neighborhood of multiple personalities and histories. Demographics indicate Bed-Stuy is indeed changing. Since 1990, white population has increased dramatically from a measly 1.09% of the total population to nearly 15% in 2009, while the African American population has seen a dramatic fall from 81.47% to 58.93% in the same period (Furman Center, 2014). Statistics also show increasing median monthly rent, annual income (both adjusted for inflation), higher education levels, and plummeting crime rates. Just

in the past year, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Bed-Stuy has skyrocketed from $1,587 to $1,835, amounting to a 15.6% increase (Stebner, 2014).

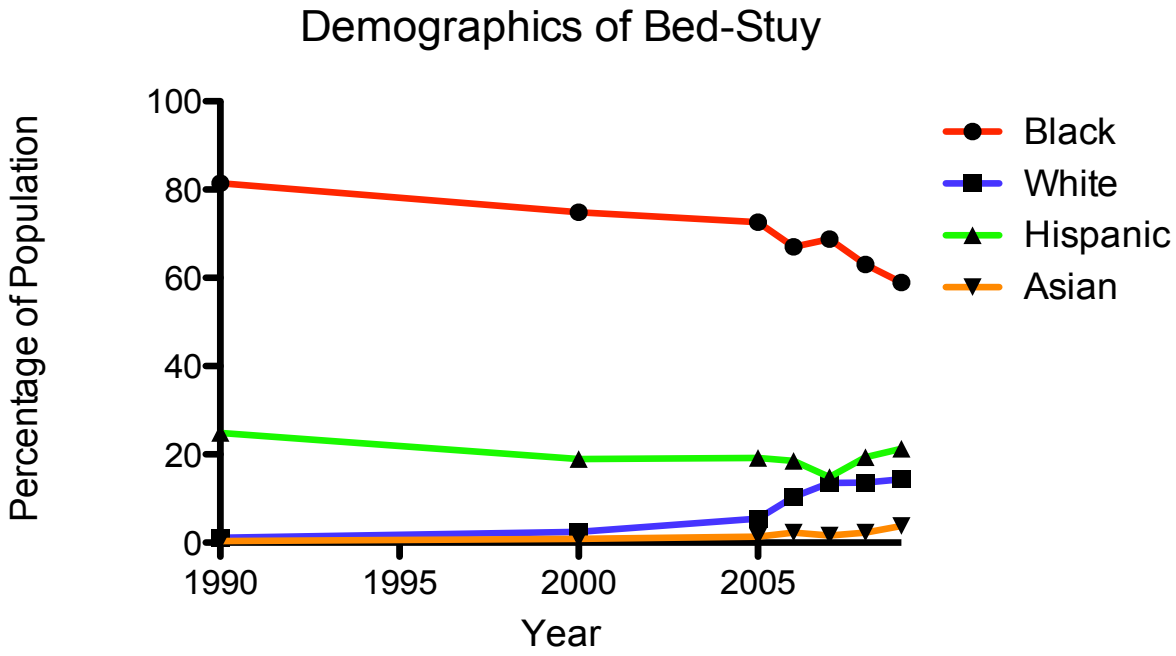

Figure 1: Demographic changes of Bed-Stuy between 1990 and 2007(Furman Center, 2014).

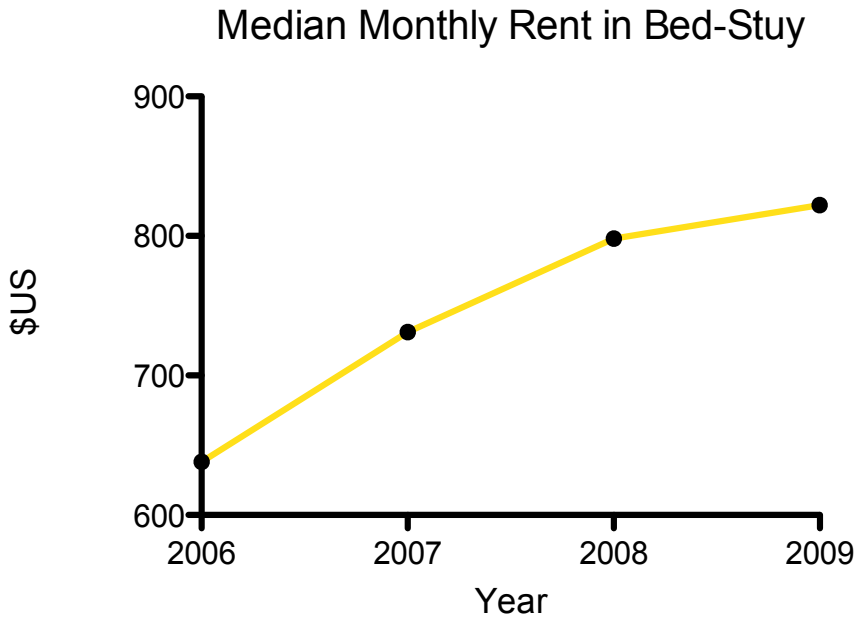

Figure 2: Median monthly income in Bed-Stuy Between 2006 and 2009 in $US (Furman Center 2014).

The current wave of gentrification is markedly different than those past, and Primairly consists of students and other transients, be they recent college graduates or those who just want to live in the city for a short time. Taken on it's own, this data suggests that Bed-Stuy has all the symptoms of traditional gentrification and that the trends are going to continue. This however is an over simplification, and doesn't adequately express the quality of the changes taking place. Many of the changes that are taking place are in-fact spurred from within the community. Long-term residents have been working diligently to bring new life to their community, which has wethered both hardship and neglect. As Hymowitz explains:

> "In fact, black, college-educated men and women—"buppies," as they're sometimes called —are the underappreciated engine driving Bed-Stuy's gentrification. This new black gentry often takes its business to the four-block corridor of Lewis Avenue between Halsey and Decatur, one of the area's several pockets of gentrified commerce, much of it black-owned… You socialized in bars and cafés; you want something like that where you live." Contrary to the conventional wisdom, "it was black folks who opened up the first $3 coffee shops—and black people who complained about it." (Hymowitz, 2013).

This illustration of reinvention from within is largely contrary to traditional views of gentrification. While there are those who are still being displaced due to rising prices, it is rare to see origional residents returning to their formers homes hoping to enact positive change rather than simply moving to a different or "better" community. This type of investment speaks volumes about the intent, which is something that helps characterize the nature of gentrification. Few in Bed-Stuy would consider Tremaine Write, a member of Bed-Stuy's local government Community Board 3, a gentrifier. She grew up in the neighborhood, and has worked tirelessly to ensure that all new projects taking place involve all appropriate stakeholders and that no one is being left out. With this in mind, it is also worth mentioning that she was one of the previously mentioned college educated residents that left only to return and open a new business:

> "Though not mentioning any names, she could have been thinking of local celebrity Tremaine Wright. A University of Chicago–educated lawyer and onetime city council candidate, Wright opened the "fair trade" Common Grounds café on Tompkins Avenue in 2007. In an interview in *Black Enterprise*, Wright remembered that, like most students, she had survived law school on strong coffee. When she returned to Brooklyn, moving into her

> grandfather's brownstone and taking over the mortgage, she couldn't find a decent cup of joe outside her friends' living rooms. Borrowing against the brownstone, she brought university coffee to Bedford-Stuyvesant."(Hymowitz, 2013)."

There are numerous examples of such establishments that have brought positive changes to the neighborhood, such as The Wine Therapy Bar, which beings is the first dedicated wine bar in the area, or Peaches, a restaruant specializing in a hybrid of sustainable foods and southern favorites like jambalaya. Businesses like these not only breathe new life into the community, but also act as a venue for both new and longtime community members to interact in a common activity. While there are very obvious benefits to these new establishments however, one must wonder how much more appealing their presence makes Bed-Stuy appear to both prospective residents and developers. Community gardening has had a similar effect in that long-term residents viewed it as a way to revitalize their neighborhood and create a new amenity. An often overlooked aspect of that community gardening however, is what kind of appeal that new environmental amenity -something that's always in demand in crowded urban areas- will create, and and what the ramifications will look like.

Community gardening is nothing new in Bed-Stuy, and has been going on since the late 1970's when the activety was becoming more and more popular citywide with the emergence of the Green Gurillas and eventually Project Green Thumb. Community gardens offered members of Bed-Stuy a way to not only grow fresh produce for personal consumption and a way to beautify the community, but also served as a symbol for the neighborhoods revitalization. The Vernon-Throop Block Association garden was founded in 1978 on the ruins of an abandoned building. Likewise, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Community garden was started in 1988 on a vaccant lot, and the hattie Carthan Community Garden on the ruins of a burned down church in 1991. Residents have effectively taken back these dilapitated lots and transformed them into something meaningful. There are currently over 44 Community gardens within Bed-Stuy's boarders (OasisNYC, 2014), and they have undoubtly contributed to its revitalization. The commonly documented benefits of urban agriculture aside, both new and long-term residents can attest to the positive ramifications. The questions is these gardens have now become a victim of their own success, and in some way contributed to the gentrification Bed-Stuy is currently experiencing. The next section will detail the qualitative data gathered during interviews with stakeholders in the area, and seeks to create a comprehensive narriative of the emergence of gardens, the current gentrification process, and the relationship between the two.

Results

This section is the result of several interviews conducted between the January and May 2014. Each interview was conducted with a different type of stakeholder, and addressed the topics of community gardening and gentrifiation in Bed-Stuy. The combined information from the interviews has been divided into five sub-categories, which seek to create a comprehansive narriative of the subject to be further explored in the context of existing literature.

Garden Origins: Who and Why?

While he origins of Bed-Stuy's community gardens vary, many were founded by long-term residents who were concerned about both the physial and social condition of their neighborhood. The Green Acres Community Garden for example, was founded by a local environmentalist group that wanted to clean up a vaccant lot that was commonly used for illegal parking, car repair, and waste disposal. At the time of their founding, many gardens like Green Acres took on a political role, protesting the actual and percieved disinvestment Bed-Stuy was experiencing. During a phone interview, Winnifred Curran, author of several papers addressing environmental gentrification explaind that:

> "At one point in time, and I mean I think there's definantly a history in New York especially, of community gardens being political places and kind of revolutionairy spaces, and spaces outside the system…disinvestment that was ravaging their neighborhoods and they wanted to reclaim these abandoned spaces as community gardens. And then over time, what that did was help to make the neighborhood more attractive"

This is not to say however, that all community gardens in Bed-Stuy emerge out of simple desire of neighborhood improvement. In addition to its large black population of southern heritage, Bed-Stuy has become home to a large influx of Latin American and Carribean immigrants, bringing with them their cultural identity into the area. Community gardens offer an opportunity for recent immigrants to become involved in their new environment while partaking in a familiar practice. As was the case at the Juniper Gardens housing development in Kansas City, Kan, immigrants produced food for their families while utilizing traditional farming skills practiced in their home countries (Wiercinski, 2010). Mary Elizabeth Prall, a Bed-Stuy resident, garden operator, and organizer for 596 Acres, explains that many local residents have embraced their gardens as a little piece of their far away home:

> "I don't know, I don't think it's going to go away. I think a lot of people that are from the neighborhood and don't plan on leaving, the gardens are also like an outlet for them, like the culture, especailly the caribbean people, they come from a background of growing things, and I think it's exciting for them to have a place to reconnect with that. So I hope that those people are allowed to stay here and they can continue that."

Community gardens serve a place-making role in Bed-Stuy, allowing resenents a sense of ownership. In the case of Carribean immigrants, the opportunity to grow culturally appropriate foods is an important issue of social justice. Although some culturally appropriate foods might be available at near by shops, it is often not fresh and rather expensive (Wakefield, S., Yeudakk, F., Taron, C., Reynolds, J., & Skinner, A., 2007). They are also spaces of dependence, where community members can invest a signifigant amount of time to forge a sense of individual and collective identity expressed withing that space (Smith & Kurtz, 2003). The rational behind founding these gardens would go on to influence their physial and social impacts on the surrounding neighborhood as they developed.

Redefining Bed-Stuy

Historically, Bed-Stuy is a place that has been systematically underserved in terms of green space and other amenities in New York. Community gardens have not only provided an amenity that the neighborhood was lacking, but through transformation of the physical landscape, affected the social circumstances as well.

As late as the 1990 and early 2000's, the neighborhood was still considered heavily marginalized and rather dangerous. Its violent crime rates were among the highest in the city, but have since dropped to more tolerable levels says garden operator Suzan Frazier:

> "There's still crime here too, but you definantly don't see it, the little shop owners don't get shot like they used to. I think there's still hold-up's and some burglaries, and there's still murders here too sometimes but…there's very little bullet proof glass here…that's a hallmark"

While lower crime rates are a good thing in themselef, they are in part representative of what gardens like Green Acres has been able to achieve, namely eyes on the street. "Eyes on the Street" refers to the theory proposed by famous urban activist Jane Jacobs in her book *The Death and Life of Great*

American Cities (1961). The theory explains that the more of a presence there is on the street, be it foot traffic, sitting on the stoop, or even geardening, the less likely criminal activity is to take place as the chances of being caught are increased. This concept goes hand in hand with the Broken Windows theory which explains that clean, and well maintained environments sends the signal that an area is well monitored, thus disuading criminal activity. Conversely, excessive litter, vandalism, and dilapidated or abandoned buildings signals that an area is not well kept or monitored, and that criminal activity is likely to go unnoticed or unreported (Kelling & Wilson, 1982). In this regard, active community gardens serve as a physical manifestation of two of the core principes in urban studies, and have played a part in reduced crime rates in Bed-Stuy:

> "When the criminals are really, you know, out of control, it's like they're running the show and they stand on the street corners and they intimidate people. They make it all about them, and even if you just have a garden where people are interested in gardening, that takes away some of their territory. Also it's a bunch people don't take drugs, don't care about drugs, don't care about criminals, don't care about all those stupid turf wars bla bla bla. They're just interested in gardening, so it takes away their authority. It just shows that people care about the finer things, they care about their neighborhood, and it's just not a bunch of people that like to take drugs" (S. Frazier, personal communication, April 9, 2014).

As Suzan explained, her garden has had the effect of reclaiming public space for the community, and disuading criminal activity through both beautification and the consistent presence of residents at the garden. Ranasinghe (2011) notes that a city's streets, sidewalks, and public space are key to community circulations. This circulation however, is dependent on perceptions of order and safety, which are further related to asthetic appeal. Community gardens positively affect all three of these variables, and thus contribute decreasing crime rates.

Long-Term and New Resident Dynamic

With the current influx of newcomers into Bed-Stuy, long-term residents like Suzan have seen their neighborhood change in both good and bad ways. While there is certainly a new sense of life in the area, it has precipitated a dramatic change in character. Bed-Stuy is increasingly becoming a transitionary neighborhood, one that attracts outsiders due to the relatively low rent and

more human scale atmosphere. While many interactions are eprfectly cordial, there are tensions between the two groups.

A major complaint that Suzan has had with the current gentrification is the lack of stability in the neighborhood. In the early days of her garnden, the community's interests were much better represented, but have since become muddled with the arrival of new residents. While some of the new comers are young families looking to settle down, most are transient, and won't be living in the area long enough to invest in its future. In the early days of the garden, most of the members were committed environmentalists, but they have mostly moved on because they were young at the time, and although invested in the future of the neighborhood, have commitments that took them elsewhere. It has become apparant that many of the new comers interested in joining the garden aren't necessairly interested in the benefits it offeres the community, but rather for more superficial reasons.

> "A lot of them consider themselves environmentalists, but they're not really committed and haven't really developed their thinking…The younger generation is very atune to consumerism, and branding, and promotion. So they tend to feel like they're joining a gym, and expect services. Sometimes they want to see it functioning like a start up or entrepanerurial enterprise, when it's supposed to be a civic group, and they're supposed to be contributing members"(S. Frazier, personal communication, April 9, 2014).

Suzan's comments on the blasé' attitude new transplants have towards rooted community institutions such as green acres are not new. This sense of antagonism between long-term residents and in-movers isn't completely unfounded either. As knowledge of the gentrification process has spread, people have become more aware that they might be initially viewed with suspicion, especially if they limit communication with long-term residents and don't go to the local busineses. Lance Nation, a recent arrival to Bed-Stuy, admitted that he doesn't spend much time in the area beyond sleeping, and hasn't become very involved in the community:

> "I'm a very shoddy resident. I spend almost no time in the neighborhood. I like it, I just worked in a different part of Brooklyn and most of my time is spent there. I chat with people but most of the conversations are brief and are more out of courtesy than curiosity. "My neighbor "Bird" lives next to my building and used to live in my building before it was renovated. He lives with his grandmother and doesn't do much. Most of his living is made through small jobs. I chat with him about the neighborhood, the

> weather, sports when he's relaxing on my buildings stoop, although I feel the stoop is more his than mine"(L. Nation, personal communication, May 13, 2014).

The general perception from many long-term community members in the area is that in-movers don't say "hello" on the sidewalk, or really take an ective interest in the community they just moved into. Instead, they try to insulate themselves from it. While citizens avoiding contact might speak indirectly to racial discrimination or segregation, what is also important is that the purposeful lack of contact is a product of, and tends to further substantiate, mistrust between people. Public contact thus becomes crucial to a healthy and vibrant city life. This relates partly to what large crowds can do to calm fear (Ranasinghe, 2011). They don't go to businesses that have existed for decades, but instead start their owne businesses. They don't become members of the community groups that have been there forever, but start their own groups. This isolates them from their new neighbors and perpetuates the air of suspicion (W. Curran, personal communication, May 13, 2014). Winifred went on to mention:

> "I do think that a lot of working class neighborhoods are very communal by necessity, you know your neighborhors, you know who people are because you rely on eachother right, you have to draw on collective resources in a way that the middle class doesn't. That is a completly different attitude towards neighborhood, part of a collective, knowing everybody versus just kind of keeping to yourself, not really liking when people are hanging out on the corner or hanging out on the stop playing music loudly, having block parties, that sort of thing. I think it's a very different attitude towards public space, you know what is public, what is private, how to behave in public space, that kind of stuff"

Suzan, who has had her own disagreements with in-movers who chose not to take part in the annual neighborhood block party, corroborated this sentiment.

> "A lot of people have written about gentrification, because people do move in and the dont respect the community values of where they move in. Like we have a block party, one Saturday a year and people really, new transplants just feel like the music is too loud. I feel like it's just one day a year and it's traditional for me. I mean I had block parties on my block for many years and you know, they play the music really loud. That's how they do it, so you know. They're acting like they're so outraged, it's just like leave the

> nieghborhood for a day. It's not every day" (S. Frazier, personal communication, April 9, 2014).

The interactions between long-term and new residents are complex, and can spur tensions between the two groups. The lack of understanding of community history by new residents, and apparant disregard for past struggles continues to be a pressing issue in Bed-Stuy. This type of behavior promotes the gentrification process by failing to integrate the old and new, and working to find common ground. Communication and an open dialouge about the issues facing the neighborhod is essential for productive cohabitation.

Community Gardens and Property Values

Suzan explained that Bed-Stuy has always been a great place to live and has a lot to offer, and that it seems like the wider population is just now starting to realize it as the neighborhood has cleaned up, as if it's just being discovered.

> "A lot of people have written about gentrification, because people do move in and the dont respect the community values of where they move in. Like we have a block party, one Saturday a year and people really, new transplants just feel like the music is too loud. I feel like it's just one day a year and it's traditional for me. I mean I had block parties on my block for many years and you know, they play the music really loud. That's how they do it, so you know. They're acting like they're so outraged, it's just like leave the nieghborhood for a day. It's not like every day" (Suzan Frazier, personal communication, April 9, 2014).

While gentrification is nothing new to Bed-Stuy, the underlying reasons behind it are multifaceted. The rising popularity of urban agriculture and other green space is under the wider blanket of sustainable development must be examined as a possible factor in Bed-Stuys' new appeal to the greater population. Historically, most often green space is the result of community action, the commmunity struggling to get the city to provide resources that it had previously not provided. Recently hoever, because of kind of rise in popularity of sustainability and being able to lable things green, that is increasingly not the case. (W. Curran, personal communication, may 13, 2014).

Community gardens serve as an undeniable amenity that makes a neighborhood more attractive. The recent popularity of urban agriculture also plays a factor especially in places like Brooklyn where there is currently an

abundence of new development. Developers recognize the potential profit to be made, and ease of advertising access to local gardens or roof top gardens when building new condos. Communal green space however is a tricky matter when it comes to redevelopment. While collectively, developers and private land owners- should they be the city, a trust, or an individual- there is an economic inscentive to sell or redevelop the plot as property values increase. Conversely, developers and community groups could also prefer to leave the green space, in this case a garden, as to preserve the rising values of surrounding properties (Kubi Ackerman, personal communication, April 14, 2014). Even if landowners decide that preserving green space is a priority, it does not necessairly mean that a pre-existing community garden would be allowed to stay, as a small pocket park could easily replace it. Green Acres operator Suzan fears that there comes a point when green development in the community becomes a bad thing, by making the neighborhood more attractive for outsiders:

> "They redevelop the gardens they own along a pocket park model so…it wouldn't really be a traditional community garden anymore. It's a funny thing, but you never know. Sometimes, it's good to improve it to a point, then when it goes too far, that's why its...they have had a lot of subsidized housing. HPD housing preservation and development has been active in the area, and they have promoted affordable housing, but you need a lot of affordable housing so that the residents, the traditional residents can stay" (Suzan Frazier, personal communication, April 9, 2014).

Too often, the cleanup of industrial urban neighbourhoods and creation of new green space quite literally "naturalises" the disappearance of working-class communities, as more attractive neighborhoods become ripe for development. The "just green enough" strategy organises for cleanup and green space aimed at the existing working-class population and industrial land users, not at new development (Curran & Hamilton, 2012). In a sense, community gardens have become symptomatic of how gentrification reflects the newfound ability of realestate developers to target new markets under the popular discourse of environmentalism (Quastel, 2009).

> "There is the assumption that in mover equals gentrifier…People have become sophistoicated enough about gentrification that they realize that a lot of these environmental improvements act as a kind of trojan horse, where you know, "Oh here's this new park, or here's this community garden or whatever it may be, now your rents are going to go up 50% or more", and you're not going to be able to afford to stay in the neighborhood and enjoy these new amenities. But eventually people figure it out. So I think there is,

> especially in neighborhood like Bed-Stuy that has a history of struggle, that they don't sort of appreciate people coming in and appreciating the benefits without having to go through any of the struggle that the rest of the neighborhood has experienced" (W. Curran, perconal communication, May 13, 2014).

Words like sustainability have become attractive not only in popular discourse, but in the realestate world as well. Marketing new buildings or neighborhoods as "sustainable" or green" can yield as much as a twenty percent premium in profits. As such, it makes sense to market the entire neighborhood as being green, and advertising any qualifying attributes in an effrot to rebrand it. Neighborhoods like Bed-Stuy that had a historically negative reputation, and remaking the physical landscape through urban agriculture is a very visible way to rebrad a neighborhood.

Gardens as a Venue for Dialogue

It has been observed that in-movers don't necessairly have a full understanding of the neighborhood they are moving into beyond the rental prices and commute time to work. They have no sense of the conflict, struggles, and racial and class dynamics of the place they're moving into. Local Community Boards seek to allay some of these conflicts. The purpose of community boards is not only to help implement local ordances, but to also ensure inclusive and democratic practices in all new projects in the neighborhood. All new projects must clearly be in the public's interest, and not simply for poersonal gain. Given that most new community gardens are started on publically owned land, this matter is even more important. Mary, who started her own community garden in Bed-Stuy, reminisced about the process and how it was not enough to be granted access to the land. She had to work with the community board to canvas the surrounding community and get enough signatures to prove that she had the neighbors' blessings and there was no dissent.

> "When I went to the meeting, it was with two other young women who were new to the neighborhood, and so they asked us all how long we lived there, three years, two years, and they're like no. You need to get somebody who owns a home, somone who lives on the block, someone who's lived there thirty years, you need to talk to people, and they're completley right, I mean we talked to a lot of people, but they wanted to make sure that there wasn't anybody who was left out, which it could totally come and bite us a lot later, you know. People get very upset when they realize there's something happening in the community that they don't know

> about, so if it affects the place like next to their house that's been vaccant for 40 year, they want to know, especially if it's sombody new from the neighborhood that's going to start a garde, maybe they don't want a garden there, maybe they have concerns about a garden. It happens, where sometimes theres one person and they want one thing, but everyone else wants a parking lot" (M.Prall, personal communication, April 10, 2014).

The membership of Mary's garden, called 100 Quincy Community Garden, is an even split between long-term residents and new transplants, mary herself being one having only lived in Bed-Stuy for the past 3 years, and is well aware of the tensions that can emerge between the two groups. Nonetheless, her garden is an example how new and old residents alike can find a common purpose in a participatory activity.

> "My gardens probably half new comers and half long term residents. People are really open about it. I don't know, I think the people that serve gardens can see the bigger picture, they see the new people moving in, but see that they're trying to help. They've been staring at this lot forever, and now they have someone who's going to try to help them" (M.Prall, personal communication, April 10, 2014).

100 Quincy serves as an excellent example of how gardens can serve as a venue for dialouge between long-term residents and new transplants. This type of communication can help bridge the gap in differences between age, race and class, in a common activity that is of importance to the wider community. Indeed, it serves as a sort of assimilation process, giving potentially self-concious in-movers a change to engage with their neighbors on an equal footing in an environment of friendship and accecptance. Likewise, it offers long-term residents a chance to be proactive in the evolution of their neighborhood.

> "Yea, I mean why else, there would be no other reason that I would be talking to all the people on that block. It just wouldn't happen, there'd be no interaction. I lived in Bed-Stuy for two year before the garden, and I didn't know anybody. I knew a couple people from a block party, but not the block that I lived. But then it became that I knew everybody, had everybodys emails address, then everyones going to karokee together" (M.Prall, personal communication, April 10, 2014).

Anything that brings people together and has them talking over a common good is a step in the right direction. Community gardens prodive space

where rich social interactions can take place. They create opportunities for diverse people in communities to come together to talk, listen to each other;s concerns, plan how to solve common problems, and establish trust in one another, thus creating social capital in the neighborhood (Feenstra, 2001). They can act as a voice of the community's history, its past and current struggles, and a scene for new ideas and direction. Winnifred makes the point however, that many of the members on the community board have been on them for a very long time, and maintain a certain sense of ownership with. Each member has their own vision of what Bed-Stuy should be, or where its future lies that interacting with or presenting new projects to them can be a delicate process.

> "They are potentially democratic, but not necessairly because they are appointed, and so it's not necessairly true that every sort of constituency in the neighborhood is going to be represented, but certainly I think community board meetings are really interesting exercises in democracy. You know, to have, well certainly you can see what the different factions are at any rate. It doesn't necessairly mean that there's going to be an inherent;y democratic outcome and of course for larger poliy things, they only have an advisory capacity, so the mayor doesn't have to listen to them. But yea, it's a nice format to at least see the cogs of democracy working you know, not necessairly with the desires outcome but yea I'm a huge fan of community board meetings" (W. Curran, perconal communication, May 13, 2014).

Despite the potential flaws and over represented views that might be present in Community Board 3, as of right now it remains a great asset to Bed-Stuy by ensuring that long-term residents have a say in new projects taking place throught the community. It prevents newcomers that enter the neighborhood with a sense of entitlement from proceeding with plans that might have a detrimental impact on other residents who wouldn't ordinairly be in a posistion to hald such activity.

Discussion, Future Directions, and Conclusion

Bedford-Stuyvesant is a neighborhood in transistion. Rising rents along with new housing and speciality businesses are a clear sign of encroaching gentrification. There are many possible contributing factors behind the changes taking place as Bed-Stuy has a lot to offer as a community. Two of its notable features however, are its strong sense of community and concerted investment in homegrown rejuvination. Gardens like Green Acres have acted as anchors of

community integrity and investment. They are an anthropomorphization the pride residents take in their home, and what they've been able to collectively achieve through hard work and perserverence. With this in mind however, it must be asked whether this dedication has created a positive feedback loop, in which continuing neighborhood improvement is unsustainable in terms of current demographics.

Community Improvement

Bed-Stuy has come a long way in the past twenty years. In alignment with Wilson and Kelling's broken window theory, disinvestment and neglect, combined with racial and class segregation left the neighborhood riddled with crime. In the time since however, the area has cleaned up, and statistics reflect the change. Between 2006 and 2009, the median monthly income in Bed-Stuy rose from $638 to $822 per month. The median sale price of a single family home skyrocketed from $19,450 in 1990 to $410,600 in 2008, higher than the city average. In addition, the neighborhod became substantially safer between 1990 and 2007, with the violent crime rate per 1000 residents dropping from 56.4 to 16.05 and 42.24 to 14.56 in police princincts 79 and 81 respectivly (Furman Center, 2014). These changes have been prompted by a combination of factors. Rising monthly income is reflective of both new high earning residents moving into the area, and old residents starting new businesses that offer serveces previously unavailable in the community. The explosion in home price is a clear sign that the neighborhood has become more appealing. Bed-Stuy has always had beautiful architecture, but at the height of the crack-cocaine epidemic, a beautiful home wasn't enough to draw outsiders to the neighborhood. Now that crime has gone down, they are recognized for the gems they are. Finally, the reduction in crime rate is the result of both increased police presence and community awareness in line with Jane Jacobs' Eyes of the Street theory. While police patrols can disuade crime to an extent, they must maintain a visible presence. This can be difficult to achieve with so many other duties to attend to. Conversely, community gardens use the residents themselves to dissuade criminal activety by not only providing witnesses, but establishing a code of conduct for the neighborhood. By cleaning up blighted lots, they symbolize the communitys' effort to take back the space, and make it known that destructive behavior will not be tolerated. Combined with the comparitively low rents, and its location to Manhattan and several major subway lines, Bed-Stuy has become a neighborhood on the rise.

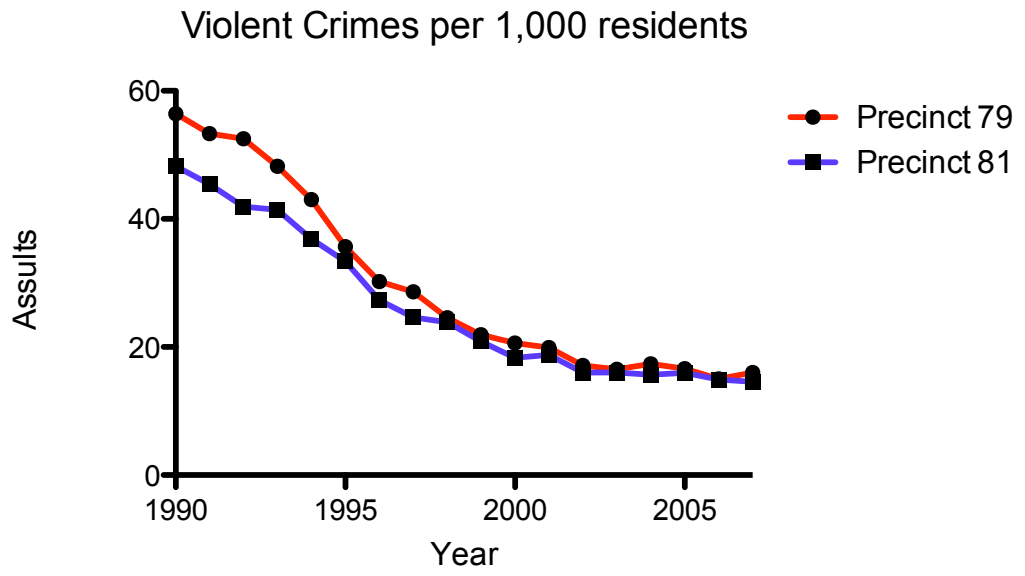

Figure 3: Vilent crome rate per 1,000 residents in Bed-Stuy between 1990 and 2007 (Furman Center, 2014).

Developer Interest

Better conditions in the neighborhood aren't the only factor driving gentrification however. Real estate developers have taken notice of renewed interest in the area and are seeking to make a profit any way possible. One approach they are taking is to comidify Bed-Stuys' green space, including its community gardens. It has been found that properties within 1000 feet of a community garden have higher property calues than those outside the ring (Voico & Been, 2008). Given this reality, it makes sense for developers to advertise the area's amenities to maximize profit. Furthermore, recent increases in environmental awareness have made "sustainability" something desireable that people, especially young high earners, are willing to pay a premium for. As mentioned in the results section, developers are going making the further effort to market entire neighborhoods as "Green," thus rebranding them and driving prices up even more.

As property values continue to rise, land tenure and the future of existing gardens will undoubtedly come into question. For individual property owners, the financial inscentive is to redevelop or sell the land. For local community organizations and perhaps even some developers, it makes sense to preserve gren space, thus maintaing an amenity that commands higher prices. At any rate, new development in this nature is bound to change the character of the existing communiy, if not destroy it all together. This begs the question of whether green development, such as community gardens, is actually good for a community's long-term health.

Community Gardens as a Driving Factor and Buffer

The role community gardens have played in revitalizing Bed-Stuy, and the fact that they're being capitalized on by developers does suggest that they are related to environmental gentrification. This is not to say however, that community gardens and other forms of urban agriculture are bad and should be avoided to keep rents stable. On the contrary, avoiding positive development would be a social injustice, and community gardens present a unique opportunity to mitigate the worst ascpets of gentrification by effectively integrating new residents into the existing social structure. A common complaint from long-term residents about in-movers is that they don't show any inclination to adapt to the existing community, but rather make their own. The lack of communication between these two groups is well documented, and often leads to an antagonistic relationship. Community gardens are known to promote neighborhood interaction, and are an excellent venue for both groups to come together in a common, non-controversial activity. An open dialouge would allow for and exchange of knowledge adressing the neighborhoods' history and struggles, and prompt discussion of a shared vision for its future.

Limitations and Future Directions

The biggest limiting factor in this project was by far time. It was only possible to spend a short amount of time in Bed-Sty, and this greatly limited the number of interviews that could be conducted. This problem was compounded by the fact that most community gardens were not active during the winter months, and were just opening again while I was doing fieldwork. I had some success contacting subjects remotely after leaving New York, however this was not nearly as productive as in-person contact.

The second major limiting factor involved access to adequate mapping software. I was attempting to map increases in housing prices and number of crimes committed within a close proximity to several community gardens, but was unable to gain access to GIS software. There are several publically accessable mapping programs, but unfortunantly they don't provide the information I was seeking. The Data search tool operated by the Furman Center provided the best altervative, however they recently switched online hosts for their mapping service and have been unable to make the map overlay render correctly, thus leaving the only alternative less specific census and police precinct data.

I also attempted finding a complete list of all existing commungty gardens in Bed-Stuy, however no current comprehensive list appears to exist. The number of community gardens I reported present in Bed-Stuy was based upon

the OasisNYC map which had the most comprehansive list of Gardens. Unfortunantly it has not been updated recently, and was no longer current.

In that regard, I believe this project huge potential, and is not an area that has been fully explored in terms of gentrification. To do the project justice however would require a multi-year case study that tracks and surveys every community garden in Bed-Stuy. A much wider interview sample would also be required incorporating a large number or recent transplants, long-term community members, real estate developers, and government officials. It would also be helpful to track the progress of a new community garden from its journey through the community board appeals process to establishing a multi-year garden. This would allow for an interesting case study in relation to more established gardens.

Conclusion

Urban Argiculture has a tremendous amount to offer urban environments around the world. The benefits of its presence are well documented, and and its role in sustainable development is undenailble within the context of the current global agriculture industry. It is important however, to keep in mind that all good things come with a price, and in this case, it is a monetary one. Unrestrained market forces and predatory developers have latched on to the positive attributes of environmental amenities and have sought to profit from them. That said, gentrification is organic in nature, and is not a force that can be controlled or prevented. It's is a cyclical process that will continue to follow affordable properties amid changing demographics and aging housing stock. What can be controlled is the inherent animosity between supposed gentrifiers and the pre-existing community. Gentrification is a contriversial topic, and a well known one at that. Neighborhoods with a strong sense of communial identy have a right to protest the percieved encroachment of those that would displace them. Unfortunantly, protest seldomly has the desired effect. To date, the best approach has been to establish a comprehensive dialouge between the two groups in hopes of reaching a compromise of how the community will develop. There is far more that can be done to combat the injustices of displacement and segregated access to environmental amenities, but that is in the hands of higher powers. At the end of the day though, every great step forward starts with a grassroots movement.

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Figures:

Supplementary Material

Questions for Transcribed Interviews

-Questions for Community Board 3 (Tremaine Wright)

1. Can you describe how Bed-Stuy has changed in the past 30 years?

2. What are the primary drivers of gentrification in Bed-Stuy, both historically and presently? Are new comers having the largest impact, or is is being advanced by realestate developers and city planning?

3. What aspects of the neighborhood make it appealing to would be gentrifiers aside from lower rents?

4. Is there conflict between new and longterm residents? If so, how would you characterize it?

5. What impact have community gardens had on Bed-Stuy and its evolution as a neighborhood? Has it been positive, negative, or a mix?

6. What kind of material and logitical support or encouragement, if any, has CB 3 offered new and existing gardens?

7. What kind of protections are in place to prevent existing gardens from being redevloped?

8. What is the general perception of community gardens in Bed-Stuy?

9. Do you think community gardens are an attractive feature for newcomers? How so?

10. What are your feelings and impressions about the future role of community gardens in the neighborhood? Do you think they will promote positive change?

-Questions for Suzan Frazier @ Green Acres Community Garden

1. How did the Green Acres Community Garden begin, and what were the goals of the founding members?

2. How long have you lived in Bed-Stuy? When did you first start participating and what were your reasons for doing so?

3. In what ways do you think the garden serves as an asset to the community? Have there been any downsides?

4. How do you think non-participating community members' percieve the garden? Do they think of it as an amenity or are they generally indifferent? Do a lot of passersby stop to look and ask questions?

5. How would you characterize the types of people that are active in the garden?

6. How have you seen Bed-Stuy change as a neighborhood since you've lived here? Would you say the changes have been positive, negative, or mixed?

7. What do you think are the underlying reasons promoting these changes?

8. Do you think Green Acres has played any part, big or small, in the changes taking places in the area? If yes, how so?

9. Do you think the garden makes the neighborhood more attractive to new or potential residents? How strong do you think the pull is?

10. How active have new residents been in engaging with long term community members? Is there a lot of interaction? How do you think the garden facilitates communication between the two groups?

11. What types of produce are grown at Green Acres? Is it for personal consumption, or is it sold at local markets, to local restaurants, or through CSA's?

12. What role have the city, neighborhood council, or private investors and real estate developers played in promoting or demoting the garden? What have been their approaches towards the garden?

13. Have you seen the garden advertised by others in the local press, blogs, or other media? If so, what do they say about it?

14. What are your feelings and impressions about the future role of the garden in the neighborhood? Do you think it has any connection with processes such as gentrification?

-Questions for Mary Prall

1. So I know 596 Acres helps people who want to start gardens find vacant land. How did that get started and by whom? What was the overall goal?

2. In what ways do these gardens work to improve the neighborhood, and who benefits the most?

3. What about permenance? What kinds of protections are in place to keep developers from coming in and destroying the hard work of the community?

4. Has 596 Acres ever worked together with developers or city planning to set aside land for gardening or prevent otherwise vacant lots from being developed?

5. The 596 website says you have your own urban garden in Bed-Stuy. What were your reasons for starting it? Did you have community support, or was this an individual effort?

6. Have you noticed any recent changes taking place in the area surrounding your garden?

7. Do you make an effort to engage new residents and get them involved in community gardening? What appraoches do you take?

8. What are your feelings and impressions about the future role of the garden in the neighborhood?

9. Given the benefits associsated with community gardens, do you think they make Bed-Stuy a more attractive neighborhood for newcomers?

-Questions for Kubi Ackerman

1. I've read quite a lot of material that you've contributed to recently. How long have you been involved with urban agriculture and what sparked your interest in it?

2. How do you think New York is especially suited to take advantage of UA?

3. What kinds of benefits do you think community gardens and urban farms offer neighborhoods?

4. What types of people commonly start or participate in community gardening? Young, old, new residents, long-term residents?

5. What do you think common reasons are for starting a community garden?

6. How are community gardens percieved by community boards and non-participating residents? Do you think they're generally thought of as an asset to the community, or are there those that would disagree?

7. Do you think gardens make the neighborhood more attractive to new or potential residents? How strong do you think the pull is?

8. What about realestate developers? Have you seen them advertise community gardens or any other type of urban agriculture as a local amenity?

9. Do you think the benefits associated with community gardens such as neighborhood beautification and reduced crime rates might in some way contribute to gentrification?

-Questions for Winnifred Curran

1. How does environmental gentrification differ from ordinairy gentrification? Is it simply the mechanism, or is there more to it?

2. What kinds of improvements would qualify as "environmental improvements"? Is it purely natural, or could it include aspects of the built enviornment as well?

3. Many of these environmental improvements that might lead to gentrification would be considered part of sustainable development, yet they're often not socially sustainable as residents are priced out of the housing market. Why is the social dimension so often ignored?

4. Who is usually responsible? Are remediation efforts or the establishment of some sort of park or green space pushed for by long-term community members or new comers?

5. How present has environmental gentrification been in Bed-Stuy and to what degree do developers promote it through advertising?

6. Are new transplants often thought of as potential gentrifiers by long-term residents? What is the dynamic like between the two groups and how do they generally interact?

7. How can long-term residents and new comers work together for environmental improvements without causing run away gentrification?

8. Urban gardens have often been praised for their ability to serve as a venue for community interaction. Do you think this interaction might work against the gentrification process, or are community gardens just another environmental amenity that makes the neighborhood more attractive to would be gentrifiers and developers. (urban gardens are "active" rather than passive green space)

9. Have you ever seen developers advertise community gardens as a local amenity?

-*Questions for Lance Nation*

1. How long have you lived in Bed-Stuy, and why did you move there?

2. What about the neighborhood appeals to you?

3. What don't you like about Bed-Stuy?

4. How have you seen the neighborhood change in the time you've lived there?

5. Do you know any long-term residents? What's your relationship like with them?

6. How engaged are you with what's going on in the neighborhood?

7. Are there any community gardens around you? Have you ever visited or participated in one?

8. How do you think community gardens might make Bed-Stuy a more attractive place to live?

Interview Transcriptions

-*Tremaine Wright*

1. Can you describe how Bed-Stuy has changed in the past 30 years?

This question is asking me to compare the impressions of a child to that of a grown woman. However, in answering that I am going to say I have watched as all of NYC changed… We were once a grimy city, now we are sanitized and pretty. The 1980's was a difficult time for NY because we had a crack epidemic, the City was rebounding from the financial crisis of the 1970's, and we had the rise of rap music (I was 10 years old, that was news!). While there were huge problems throughout the City and Bedford Stuyvesant as well, I was largely immune to it. I did not know people who used crack, my parents worked, owned their home, we attended parochial school and public gifted and talented schools, our Saturdays were filled with block clean ups and Girl Scouts, and we could walk to stores alone and purchase both beer and cigarettes.

In my opinion I saw the greatest changes in the City in the 1990's. That was also when I was in my twenties. The City instituted carding at clubs and bars changing the culture of nightlife. We had a strong economy and internet money was oozing into the City. However, most of the improvements to streetscape were in Manhattan and not in Bedford Stuyvesant; but there were improvements to trains and buses generally. Bedford Stuyvesant was beginning its revival as well. Magazines were following the progress of the "revival" happening on Lewis Avenue, and so was I.

2. What are the primary drivers of gentrification in Bed-Stuy, both historically and presently? Are new comers having the largest impact, or is is being advanced

by realestate developers and city planning?

Not sure what you mean by gentrification. You should have provided a definition. That word in the most general sense is a way to describe the influx of those with more education and money.

I will say then that gentrification was occurring in Bedford Stuyvesant as early as the mid 1990's. Bedford Stuyvesant had a growing number of Black professionals moving into the area and I think it was lead by a desire to be in the City opposed to Long Island, as well as reasonable home prices, and opportunity. A number of historical factors that probably influenced the trend including: a lot of kids whose parents left in the 1980's still owned homes in Bedford Stuyvesant, the history of redlining in the area prohibited home improvements that occurred elsewhere in Brooklyn, Bedford Stuyvesant was one of the areas with the highest levels of home ownership for Blacks in the country, the homes are beautiful and while the retail lagged there was opportunity for retail to grow, and great transportation.

The current wave of gentrification seems to be a lot of students and other transients. Be it folks just graduating and coming to NY for a 2 year job or those who just want to live in NYC for a short time. Those populations used to remain in Manhattan and recently they have "discovered" Brooklyn. 15 years ago, most of those in that population did not venture into Brooklyn or they only went to Park Slope but over the last 15 years we've had a major influx into Brooklyn and Bedford Stuyvesant has to bear its share.

The impact of Newcomers, RE investors or City Planning? Each of these players has an impact on when and how populations move across the City. In Bedford Stuyvesant, I will say City Planning has not been the greatest influence. The zoning changes to Bedford Stuyvesant over the last few years were lead by the Community Board and they were instituted to preserve the character of the neighborhood. However the Bureau of Standards and Appeals routinely allows variances that are changing the character of northern Bed Stuy. Real Estate investors are pushing home prices at this time but I would say those pushes have been most influential over the last two years. The prices of homes hover over $1 million dollars currently. Banks are not financing that amount and the only buyers are those with their own financing or cash. As a result the type of owners is changing and the homes are being filled with renters and that changes the character of the blocks and the investment folks make in the community. It also hinders those who want to buy homes and settle in the area because they are largely left unable to afford the sale price. However, the rents are still competitive and you could find a reasonably priced apartment with a little work. But the rising rents are shifting population as well.

3. What aspects of the neighborhood make it appealing to would be gentrifiers aside from lower rents?

Bed Stuy is all about neighborhood and community. Blocks unite and neighbors know each other. The homes are beautiful and our east west blocks are generally quiet.

4. What efforts are being made by the community and CB 3 to combat

gentrification in Bed-Stuy? Is it an inevitable process that can't be stopped, or is there a way to mitigate its effects?

Community Board 3 is not doing anything to combat gentrification in Bed Stuy. We work to mitigate the negative effects of gentrification on our community by supporting efforts to create and preserve both low income and affordable housing within the district. We advocate for services that support our senior citizens and help them to remain in their homes and within the area. For example Bed Stuy is a designated aging community and we are able to request and secure additional services to support the elders in the community. We also have a new senior apartment building on Quincy and Stuyvesant.

Communities grow and change over time. Community Board 3 is tasked with making sure City services are provided to those within this community and that is what we focus upon. We want to make sure our community does not splinter and shred as change occurs. We want to assist with helping everyone here enjoy the community they live in.

5. Is there conflict between new and longterm residents? If so, how would you characterize it?

I am sure there is some but the Community Board is generally not brought into those conversations. For more detail on that you may want to speak with the man who recently wrote an article in Ebony.com about this subject. http://www.ebony.com/news-views/when-gentrification-brings-racism-to-the-hood-405#.U4Pk-RTD9Ms It may lead you to change your question. Community Board addresses some of the issues detailed in the young man's account and that relates to the delivery of police services. We ask for police and yes we have had an impact zone for the last 6 years or so which dispatches foot officers to "high crime" areas. We have more police on the street. We try to foster good working relationships with out precincts because we don't want people feeling like the man who wrote the article. We want fair, humane service from police officers working in our area.

6. What impact have community gardens had on Bed-Stuy and its evolution as a neighborhood? Has it been positive, negative, or a mix?

That's funny considering Bed Stuy has had a long history of gardens. I guess folk think they are new and began when their gentrifier of choice moved in – but no, they have been here for years. Since the 1980's there have been green thumb gardens and there are a host of Brooklyn Queens Land Trust gardens. The Hattie Carthan Garden is over 30 years old. Gardens build community. Simple as that, they are community efforts and they stabilize. Now, we have not seen any dramatic increase in the number of gardens. We don't have a lot of empty land. A number of our gardens have finally been developed by HPD or whomever the City allowed to use the land. I guess if gentrifiers are joining gardens, it's great.

7 . What kind of material and logistical support or encouragement, if any, has CB 3 offered new and existing gardens?

Any garden that is getting land from NYC is supposed to get a letter of support from CB3

8. What kind of protections are in place to prevent existing gardens from being redevloped?

If a garden is on land that can be developed they are only given access to use the land until the City is ready to develop. The only instance when that is not the case is when a garden has been displaced from its original lot because of development the second lot it is granted is one that is permanent.

9. What is the general perception of community gardens in Bed-Stuy?

We have always had them.

10. Do you think community gardens are an attractive feature for newcomers? How so?

Don't know if the gardens in the community are what attract people to live in the area. However, since gardens have existed here for decades it would be nice to hear that newcomers have an appreciation for what exists and they intend to join in to preserve it.

11. What are your feelings and impressions about the future role of community gardens in the neighborhood? Do you think they will promote positive change?

The gardens already promote community, neighborhood beautification, healthy eating and living in commune with the land. That has always been their mission as far as I know. I imagine they will continue their good with the support of community and the City. They already promote positive behavior so I am not sure what "promote positive change" you are referring to.

-*Suzan Frazier*

N: So how did the green acres begin, and what do you think the goals were of the founding memebrs? Are you a founding member?

S: I'm like a founding member, actually I was, came in like a year, maybe a year after the founding. But I can tell you that this garden was among a group of gardens back in the julianni administration, which was um, two thousand, or..yea, um, and juliani was very conservative for a mayor of new york city, and he didn't like the idea of community gardens. And so he decided to sell off, I forget, but it was like a hundred. He wanted to auction off a hundred gardens to developers or to whoever wanted to buy them.

N: Oh geez

S: Just to get, to discourage the movemnet. So some land trust people stepped in and just bought them. He was selling them even at the bottom of the market, so he wasn't even making money on them for the city. He was just trying to destroy them really. So different land trusts, or different non-profits stepped in, but it was mainly, the one that bought this one was NYRP, if you head of New York Restoration Project, that was Bett Middlers non-profit.

N: Bett Middler?

S: Yea.

N: Oh I didn't know she did anything like that. I love her.

S: She's a fearless leader of NYRP, which is a very high functioning non-profit right now. So she bought fifty of the ggardens that were up for auction, so they still own that, this land is still in trust. Around that same time, an enviornmentalist group called time's up wanted to do something environmental. This was like a young bicycle riding environmentalist around this area. And so they saw this big, this was a big vaccant lot, people maybe fixed cars, they did some parking or something, but it was just a rubble filled lot. In two thousand was the big clean-up and the establishment of the garden. They've been composting since then and it's been a community garden since then, and it's developed little by little, so that we have a large high functioning compost system, we have a pond with goldfish, we have htis water harvesting system, an eleven hiundred gallon tank, we have a native garden, and this whole garden is organic, so all these beds are organic vegetable beds.

N: How many people garden here?

S: So we have like, we always have around 40 members, and theres something like twenty five beds.

N: So they just share?

S: People have their own beds, their own vege beds. A lot of community gardens use that system

N: Ok

N: Were developers really aggressive when juliani was mayor and grabbing up these lots?

S: No, that was when you could hardley sell these. No one wanted to live in Bed-Stuy. New York city real estate has booms and busts, and during the busts it's really hard to sell anything. So in two thousand it was still you know, you could still get realestate for cheap and even this apartment building was almost up for grabs back then too. It was really, developers are building on every vaccant lot they can get their hands on now, but since this is in trust the, even if nyrp wanted sell it legally, they would have a hard time selling it.

N: What kind of protections are there in place to keep them from just selling off this land and letting a developer come in and plow everything?

S: I'm sure that, there are leagal protections, I'm not really sure what they are, but when you have a trust, you can't just break it up. THere's trust instruments, trust documents that have a lot of porvisions against developing. It's supposed to stay a green space.

N: How long have you lived in Bed-Stuy?

S: I've lived in Bed-Stuy for like thirty years.

N: Oh wow. How have you seen it change since you moved here?

S: Well, I moved at the end of the first bust in, actually I moved here around the first boom around ninteen eighty four, and um, it was always like a nice neighborhood, but it used to be, there used to be a lot more dilipadation. When I moved here, there were like, you might have stray dogs, homeless people with fires on the corner and stuff like that. And then the crack epidemic and the homicide epidemic were really bad in the late eighties and early nineties, so a lot of shop keepers got shot in those days. And there were a lot of crack heads walking around.

N: Fun.

S: Yea, there's still crime here, but it's not the same.

N: It doesn't seem like that now.

S: No.

N: When did the neighborhood really start to clean up?

S: It's been a process since I'd say, two thousand and eight.

N: Wow that recently?

S: Yea.

S: I mean it's cleaned up little by little, but gentrification got up momentium around tow thousand and ten. SInce then it's been out of control.

N: How do you think the garden serves as an asset to the surrounding community? Have there been any downsides or no?

S: Well just preserving green space in itself is a big asset because obviously the developers are building on every empty lot. The fact that its a trust is really good. It beautifies the neighborhood; we have dafodills coming in now. Local kids have

found education on environmentalism, healthy food and how vegies grow and stuff. We don't have that many formal education sysstems, but we have had local kids who kind of grew up around the garden and that was a good thing for them. We probably should move into more institutionalized type relationship with schools and daycare centers and things like that, but we have not yet made that progress.

N: It's a process.

S: Yea, but the downsides, some people would, a lot of people would rather have a parking lot because they like to park their cars. Some people are afraid of bees and mosquitos.

N: Oh do you have bee hives here?

S: We don't have bee hives, but if you have flowers, they attract bees. Also also some pople would say if it were a parking lot there would be less misquitos in the neighborhood, they wouldnt have to worry about bees. Some people think that flowering trees aggrivate their allergies. We've never had official complaints about our complost, but some people might say it smells. Some poeple don't like chickens, they think chickens in the city are really stupid, but these chickens are not that noisy. Gardens get a lot of complaints, but so far we've had pretty good relations, but you never know.

N: I never thought people would complain about the mosquitos or the bees.

S: A lof of people, just average joes nation wide. I'm not talking about this neighborhood in particular. even if you watch the house and gardens channel on tv, you look at their landscaping shows when they redo peoples backyards, they usually pave over most of the back yard and just add some pots of plants. A lot of people aren't that big on plants and they don't care about environmentalism. It's like a process to educate people about the importance of envirpnmentalism.

N: How do you think non-participating community members percieve the garden? Do they think it's an amenity to the neighborhhod or are they generally indifferent?

S: I think we get a lot of compliments with people walking by. So a lot of people like it, a lot of people walk by and don't even notice it. I'm sure there are some people that would voice those complaints if they had a chance, but so far we haven't run into that really. But I know that because I just know people, and just know that people do think that.

N: Do all the people just stop by when you guys are open, ask questions and wander around?

Yea, we used to be more, in the early days before so much gentrification, it was more like a traditional Bed-Stuy people. But now we have a lot of recent arrivals, and they're kind of transient. There's a lot of little children, families with little

children. And like this guy with the dog comes in every day, and I'm kind of like not that crazy about him because he lets his dog run around off leash, and it kind of stomps around some of the areas he probably should stay out of.

N: Pees in the corner?

S: Yea. Myrtle green, if you go to myrtle green, they have an actualy dog run. They developed last summer, really, I think people think of them popping up, but they, I think it was a long time in the making, then one summer they did a great job of organizing and developing. So they have a dog run.

N: Theres one small garden I walked by in lower manhattan, I forget what the area was called, it's got a lot of smaller builds though.

S: Yea, probably the lower east side.

N: Yea on the lower east side, and they just have a long stretch of grass where two dogs were running back and forth.

S: Dog owners are a real constituency, thats like a bone of contention because a lot of people think we shouldn't allow dogs in the garden at all. But I feel like we get, as a place to just walk your dog around, its a good thing for the community because there's a lot of people with dogs. A lot of the people that come in here have a dog, but most people don't let them off the leash. But this guy, I'mnot really a dog person, so I think he loves his dog a little too much. It's like it's just a dog, but individual viewpoints there.

N: What do you think the underlying reasons are for the gentrification and changes that have been going on in Bed-Stuy?

S: The underlying reason, that's a good question. New York, since it really was kinda teetering in the 70's, they've done a lot to promote new york. There's been a lot of sucessful efforts to just promote the idea of new york as a fun place to come and for a while, and the idea of moving to the suburbs is not as attractive as it used to be with your children. A lot of suburbs are having the same problems that cities used to have. The underlying reasons, I think it's because Bed-Stuy has always had a lot to offer. It's always been a great place to live in a lot of ways, but now it's just being discovered I guess.

N: Is it also because property values are lower here, and houses are more affordable?

S: Yea, that was in the beginning, that's a good point.

N: Is it changing now?

S: Yea, now it's getting to be really expensive here.

N: Do you think the garden, or any of the gardens in Bed-Stuy in general have helped make the neighborhood more attractive to potential new commers.

S: Yea, I do think so, definantly. Having them as gardens instead of vacant lots, and also a lot of the condos are like cheaply constructed and not attractivly designed, so had it been just turned into like generic condos, it would not be an asset at all.

N: Have you seen any developers advertise green acres or any other nearby garden describing their properties.

S: This place over here actually was built at the end of the last boom, and was vaccant for at least three years and they never finished it. Now that the market is picking up, they're actually finishing it. So they let it be a blight on the community, just typical realestate developers. They dont feel any sort of responsibility toward the neighborhood, they just go for the money.

N: Do you think they just try and advertise every asset?

S: Yea they totally do, and I mean it is an asset. It won't be developed and the views from that building will be better, we wont have a parking lot or building.

N: How active have new community members been. Are they mostly transient, or are there new comers that actively seek out the garden and want to participate when they move here?

S: When we had the committed envionmnetalists that we used to have, they mainly moved on because they were young, in their twenties at the time. And the new people we're getting, we just get like random people, so a lot of them are, consider themselves environmentalists, but they're not really committed and haven't really developed their thinking. They have a long way to go to really participate on a high level frankley.

N: They're superficial environmentalists?

S: I think so. I definantly think so. The new, it's like, your generation is very atune to consumerism, and branding, and promotion. So they tend to feel like they're joining a gym, and expect services. Sometimes they want to see it functioning like a start up or entrepanerurial enterprise, when it's supposed to be a civic group, and they're supposed to be contributing members.

N: Do you think there's really a divide between long-term resdents and younger new transplants, or is it really mixed?

S: A lot of people have written about gentrification, because people do move in and the dont respect the community values of where they move in. Like we have a block party, one Saturday a year and people really, new transplants just feel like the music is too loud. I feel like it's just one day a year and it's traditional for me. I mean I had block parties on my block for many years and you know, they

play the music really loud. That's how they do it, so you know. They're acting like they're so outraged, it's just like leave the nieghborhood for a day. It's not like every day.

N: Is the produce here mostly personal consumption?

S: Yea it's mostly for personal consumption.

N: You guys don't sell to any CSA or anything?

S: No. It's hard to do it. The truth about urban farming is that it's hard to get a good harvest. It's hard to get anything substantial. It's mainly like demonstration; you can't really produce that much food. Your sun is compormised.

N: I could see how that's an issue here.

S: Some places, if you even went, there' a few urban farms that are well capitalized that are on rooftops.

N: Like Brooklyn grange?

S: Yea like Brooklyn grange, and they actually produce.

N: I was there in the fall and it was a lot bigger than I thought it was.

S: Yea I never was up there.

N: They also have a bunch of chickens and bee hives up on the roof. A giant water tank, composting bins. It's pretty impressive.

S: They, I think the people who, I think they're really nice when I went there. But they're like, they didn't have to scrape up capital, they're from a wealthy background. So they didn't have to do things on a shoestring. They're able to capitalize with themselves, so I hear. But they did get grants and things. They got a grant from the DEP for, I think it was $500,000 for a green roof. I think you can look that up on the DEP website if you want to. The new york city green infastructre website.

S: They were also lucky I think, to find a building that could support that much weight on its roof. That's not every building

S: Yea, a lot of those buildings I think were very sturidly built. Maybe they were built at a time of overbuilding. That question came up when I was at the Brooklyn grange. They said there's no question that the building could support that amount of weight. Some of them were military buildings origionally.

N: I didn't know there were any military installations in New York.

S: Yea the Brooklyn navy yard and the Brooklyn army terminal or something like that.

N: Have the community board or private investors, or the city in general play any role in the development of green acres, or has it mostly been community members pushing it forward?

S: Well New York City has a kind of sustainability section departmnet called, I'm not exactly sure how it's set up, but there's GrowNYC and there's green thumb. And green thumb has been in place for at least twenty years and they support community gardens. We have gotten a lot of resources from green thumb, like tools. You get access to the hydrants, so we use city water to water, which is very important. The community board hasn't been that active. When we wanted to do a block party, they kind of put obstacles in our path around getting a petition and stuff, and that turned out to be a good. It was a really good thing that we had to go out and canvas because we found supporters everywhere who wanted to be part of the block party.

N: I'm surprised they would have ogtten in the way. That seems like the kind of thing they'd want to support.

S: Yea, but there's still some streets in Bed-Stuy, I think gates ave. that aren't allowed to have block parties because there's too much out of control, crime and stuff. And this was like that for a long time, so we had to really....

N: That's actually where I used to live. When I was here in the fall I live at the corner of halsey and ralph. It's definantly got a much different feel than this side. I think there's definantly a gradient in how far the neighborhood has gentrified.

S: There's still crime here too, but you definantly don't see...the little shop owners don't get shot like they used to. I think there's still hold- up and some burglaries, and there's still murders here too sometimes so.

N: A lot of the shopkeepers are protected by bulletproof glass.

S: Oh right, yea that's a hallmark. There's very little bullet proof glass around here.

N: What are your feelings or impressions about the future of the garden in the neighborhood? Is it going to grow and get more participants, or stay the same?

S: That’s a good question. NYRP, like I said , is a very high functioning non-profit. They redevelop the gardens they own along more like a pocket park model, so it could be that if we don't really, I don't know eventually they might move in and redevelop it. It wouldn't really be a community garden like a traditional community garden. (pair with winnifreds comments on developing parks as a comodity to be exploited. It’s one thing to found a garden with certain intentions, but another with someone else owns the rights to the land).

N: Why do lots of green thumb gardens have fences?

S: Oh that's a good question.

N: Is it just to keep people form coming in and vandalizing it at night or is there some other reason?

S: In New York City, we just wouldn't even fathom having the idea of not having a fence around an empty lot.

N: It just seems like you would want to encourage people to come in, and with having a fence, it's kind of uninviting. Especially if no one's here and the gate's locked.

S: Well even if this were a park, it would have a fence around it, but the gates would be open most of the time. A lot of playgrounds, I mean, it's just not even done to have a park without a fence or an empty lot without a fence.

N: Come to think of it, I guess even morningside park has a fence. I've never really noticed it before.

S: I guess you're right, like small town america, they would not have fences around their parks. Even if you have a playground, you really need a fence because children can wander off, it's like the busy traffic and everything is too dangerous.

S: That's a good point.

N: I know urban gardens have a reputation for beautifying the neighborhood and helping to reduce crime because there are people outside to watch the streets. Do you think that's contributed at all to the gentrification that's been going on in Bed-Stuy, by making the neighborhood more attractive with redued crime.

S: Yea definantly, just having...when the criminals are really, you know, out of control, it's like they're running the show and they stand on the street corners and they like intimidate people. They make it all about them, and even if you just have a garden where people are interested in gardening, that takes away their, some of their territory. Also it's like a bunch people don't take drugs, don't care about drugs, don't care about criminals, don't care about all those stupid turf wars bla bla bla. They're just like interested in gardening, so it takes away their authority. It just shows that people care about the finer things, they care about their neighborhood, and it's just not a bunch of people that like to take drugs.

N: In Pittsburgh there was one neighborhood that was organizing a bunch of old people go out on the streets in the middle of the night to play checkers. They'd go in back alleys and play checkers to discourage drug dealers from dealing.

S: There's people watching them, but also that they try to say they're like keeping to really, that's what it's all about. It's like no, people like to play checkers in Bed-

Stuy, people like the garden. There's quilting groups, there's a lot of churches that do a lot of bible study.

N: What's the motto, Bed-Stuy do or die?

S: I guess, i mean do or die could mean anything. It could also mean, you like

N: Well a bunch of famous rappers grew up here right, didn't JayZ?

S: Yea, a lot of famous rappers did grow up here.

N: Do you think that just the benefits grant a neighborhod have made it more attractive for new comers?

S: Yea.

N: Since there's lower crime now, there's some green space, why not live here?

S: Yea it's a funny thing, but you never know. Sometimes, it's good to improve it to a point, then when it goes too far, that's why its...they have had a lot of subsidized housing. HPD housing preservation and development has been active in the area, and they have promoted affordable housing, but you need a lot of affordable housing so that the residents, the traditional residents can stay, otherwise it just turns into another like, like the upper east side now can be kind of a ghost town sometimes because so many people just own, so many millionairs just own pad out there and they're just there for a few months of the year, so there's like nobody there someitmes. You don't have a vibrant neighborhood when all the apartments are empty because people are at their ski chalets or their country houses, or their beach houses. (pair with winnifreds comments on the injustice of the concept and reference her theories in the discussion)

Do you guys ever advertise or try to actively recruit new members or do you just rely on people who are interested wandering in?

S: Yea we haven't done active recruitment. It would be great to recruit people with more commitment instead of just people who want to grow their own vegetables, and they find out it's not that easy and then they just wander off.

N: Do you guys do any kind of organized growing, where everyones here at the same time and plants certain types of produce, or is it just come whenever you want, plant whatever you want?

S: Well every second saturday, or once a month, we have a work day and pretty much every spring and summer we get a fair number of people. We usually do projects, clean up projects or small repairs and weeding, but we don't have a space because the general space, like this area over here, this tree puts out a lot of shade in the summer, so you can't grow vegies along the fence. So this is really the only area that you can do vegie gardening. Yea actually it wouldn't be a bad

idea to just make it into a big...cause we waste a lot of space. If I were to do it again, I'd have one large growing space. Some places are like that, the places that are like that, you have the model where you have an actual, like old time farmer from the south or something, and he really knows how to far. He basically tells everybody what to do, and you can have more productive vegie farming in my view because you use the space more efficiently, but this plot is more individualistic. I think it was good in the beginning because people feel like they have a, what do you call that, like stakeholders, I can't remember, there was a buzzword a while ago. Like you bought into the porcess or something. But now I almost feel like we have enough people that are interested that we could probably have a benevolent dictator that ran this whole area. I never thought of this before, as an actual farm that produced more food and we would just have volunteer crews, cause a lot of people just want to vounteer for a day. You can really just maintain it with volunteer crews and one gardener, one farmer.

N: The farm worked for in pittsburgh was kind of like that. They only had a few people that worked every day, but occasionally they would have work days.

S: Sometimes you have more freedom if there are fewer people that are really interested. The more people think it's a good thing, you get people that are really good at promoting their opinion, but aren't good with the follow through.I mean, it does sound like you had a church group that would be made up of people that understand that you're supposed to contribute to this organization.

N: They would just have a big group of twenty volunteers and maybe work for 6 hours on a saturday morning. Often times they would split them in half. The first would work on the farm and the other half would go help build a house or something.

S: That sounds like a really good model. This model is kinda based on the idea that people in the city don't have a place to grow, but yea when realestate gets really expensive, it's like, should it really be devoted to people growing their food. A few tomatoes for themselves.

N: Well it's nice that the neighborhood has so many gardens and some amount of greenspace. I'm starting to look at different cities to live in when I move back to the US next year and I definantly am going to be taking that into consideration. Whats affordable, am I actually going to be in a neighborhood where there is a tree or two.

S: Well it sounds like in Pittsburgh you could develop your own community garden if you were well versed, there's a lot of space you could work on.

(me talking about pittsburgh)

N: Do you guys interact with any of the other gardens at all?

S: I'm friendly with the people at the next garden. Yea, we interact, but we haven't had programs together yet. But I'm friendly, we say hello. We see eachother at garden gatherings sometimes.

N: Are you guys in associatiion with 596?

S: That's actually the moving force behind myrtle green.

N: I know they're having a garden meeting tomorrow night that I was planning on going to.

S: Ah, is that myrtle green or 596?

-Mary Prall

N: So I know 596 acres connects people with empty lots right? How did that all start?

M: So Paula, and she can tell you, maybe a better version of this, but she lives up near myrtle av. And there was a huge lot thats actually the top of a water tunnel site, so it's actually like a roof to something. So it had actually been kinda laid out that it was going to be turned into a public space at some point, and it just had never happened, so there was tons of people in the neighborhood who all had an idea of what they thought should be there. They thought it was their right to have, and so Paula started investigating all of that, and she came up with all of this data about all the property in the city, all the city owned property is basically a giant spreadsheet that no one could understand. She'd sent it to people, like this lays out whats vaccant and what's city owned. So she, her and her friend made a poster for a compitetion that is actually.

J: So that was like, the poster came before the organization?

Yea

J: That's cool. It's a nice poster.

M: And then a programer saw it and, his names eric, and he's the one that took all the data and put it into a map.

N: ok

M: So the organization kinda just, I don't know if you've seen this. Here, one for you. You guys can have several if you want.

N: Where'd the 596 come form?

M: There's, at the time when this all started, there was 596 acres of vaccant land in Brooklyn alone. At least that's what was recorded. I think that's just Brooklyn, I know it's bigger than prospect park. I feel like it's specifically city owned,

private is not something on our map, something we help people with, private land, it's a different situation.

N: And you also work with food justice and advocacy type stuff right? Not just hooking people up with land.

M: Yea, well I mean, we're not, we don't technically in urban agriculture. We're all about connecting people in neighborhoods with understanding that they have a right to change the way their neighborhood looks and that they can participate. But most of the spaces turn into gardens and most of those produce food, so and those are of the people that get involved are people that want to grow food and have feelings about food justice and things like that, so it kinda goes hand in hand. So like, we definantly, like on our website, we have our resources page and we have 6 steps on how to create a food production site and so we have organizations that we're definantly friends with, that we connect people to. After we work with a space, and they gain access to a lot, then they're like "ok we did it, this is a huge victory" and they're like "now we need soil".

N: That's not provided through green thumb?

M: It is, but sometimes, green thumb is really busy, and they have over 600 gardens.

J: You can get soil from them, but there's always a long wait. So what a lot of gardens do, is they'll buy soil, you have to go to a work shop, and then if you go to a spring workshop then you get soil in the fall. So if you're trying to do a garden now, you wouldn't be able to grow anything until 2015 with green thumb soil. So you kind still get the soil from them, but it doesn't all happen right away. They just have a certain budget and proceedures.

N: Ok so their resources are just too limited.

J: It's limited, and they have to put these little rules on it. So they still have the soil, but they, for whatever the rules are, it makes it just a little more difficulut to just get it right away. But people just have to go to, whether it's for a community garden or school garden, you just show up to a workshop, you listen, and you sign a form. And I'm friends with the people there, they say like it's too limited where they can't cut me any extra favors. There can be a workshop on something I could be teacher, but I have to show and be seen and sign the thing. Or I could just send someone from our organization, I could send any person involved, a volunteer, a friend, a neighbor who will sign in and say they were here for the saratoga farm and they're representing us. They sign the form and 6 months later we get a truck load of soil. So it's there, just thats the way..

M: Yea, that was my group, one of the groups we're working wtih now, they're like we can't get soil until the fall. What do we do, and they worked so hard to get their garden started, or to get access to grow this year. Green thumb is just very under staffed and very under funded.

J: I mean you can fundraise, we got most of the soil, we got a truckload of soil that was about twelve hundred dollars. So for a smaller garden, you could probably get something. Like if you have a school garden with just a few planters, you could probably do something for several hundred dollars. It's still money, but there's ways to fundraise, like maybe a kickstarter grant to get a half a truck load of soil. So there's ways to make thigns happen, and you still get the additional amount later.

N: Do you guys ever go to private organizations or companys like home depot and ask for donations?

J: They're give some discounts. We've always tried that, but one school I worked with actually had a home depot specific grant. You have to apply for their yea, it's very coiporate, so the home depot owners are just going to say here, we like what you're doing, take a bunch of bags of soil. BUt then if you go to places like channens, over by greenwood cemetary, they give discounts. But soil is like the one kind of, the difficult commidity to get. You can get water, GreenNYC is a little quicker to get. But soil is an expensive component, but if you get the home depot grant, it might save two thousand dollars, and then you can get soil, lumber, whatever covers. So then you could shoose x amount of soil, and they bring like bags and bags of soil off the truck.

N: You have a garden of your own right, that you started? At least that's what the website says. Was that in conjunction with other members of the community, or was it just an individual effort on your part?

M: Yea, oh you looked at that. So all the projects are witht the community bacause we're working with city owned land. If you're going to use it, it needs to be for the benefit of the public, so you couldn't have interest in a piece of city owned land and go through green thumb, or just try to have somehow get free without a licence, free to use the space unless it involved the community So for example, when you go through the application of applying at green thumb, a bunch of the requirements, like things you have to do kind of demand that you talk to people in your neighborhood. So you have to get a certain number of people to sign on, you have to get the approval of your community board, you have to make a drawing of the site. But, for example if you need to go through the community board and maybe you have the certain number of people that green thumb wants you to have, you could talk to your community board and be like "we have the ten people green thumb wants" but your community board might be like "we want..."

N: So you're in Bed-Stuy, you're dealing with community board three?

M: Yes.

N: And were they helpful at all, cause I was at green acres community garden yesterday talking to a woman named Suzan. She was saying they were getting some red tape from the community board, especially when they wanted to host a block party.

M: Yea, so community boards are a funny things. Sometimes people fly through them really easily. You want to start a garden on this land, great. The agency thinks its a good idea, the neighbors think it's a good idea, go for it, and that's it. But community board is just one of the really tough ones, and they'll send people in circles, they'll send you to their meeting 4 or 5 times, asking for more asking for more. The group that I was a part of which is on franklin and quincy, we went to the community board I think three times, and actually never got their approval truly. But, yea it wasn't all bad. They were like, for example, when I went to the meeting, it was with two other young women who were new to the neighborhood, and so they asked us all how long we lived there, three years, two years, and they're like no. You need to get somebody who owns a home, somone who lives on the block, someone who's lived there thirty years, you need to talk to people, and they're completley right, I mean we talked to a lot of people, but they wanted to make sure that there wasn't anybody who was left out, which it could totally come and bite us a lot later, you know. People get very upset when they realize there's something happening in the community that they don't know about, so if it affects the place like next to their house that's been vaccant for 40 year, they want to know, especially if it's sombody new from the neighborhood that's going to start a garde, maybe they don't want a garden there, maybe they have concerns about a garden. It happens, where sometimes theres one person and they want one thing, but everyone else wants a parking lot.

N: Have you noticed much a divide between long term residents and new comers in Bed-Stuy?

Um, I haven't so much. No, because I think they do a good job of trying, at least because I've been through it. I was on of the first group to become a garden through 596 acres, so I think now we do a good job of making sure people understand what they're doing. cause a lot of people that do, we like half the people that contact us are new to the neighborhood, and we want to make sure.

N: Are they generally younger people?

M: Yea, a lot more younger people. I've never actually thought about this stuff before.

N: My thesis isn't just on urban agriculture in Bed-Stuy, its urban agriculture as a form of green gentrification (explaingin my thesis).

M: Yea, it's true, it does. Well so the other part of it is a lot, well like the places in new york that have all the vaccant land aren't places with money, they're places where there was an urban renewal. There's Bed-Stuy, east new york, the south bronx, harlem, have like a lot of vaccant land because that's where urban renewal happened and that's where nothing ever actually got built up. That's kind of where a lot of poor people lived and that's where a lot of people stayed also. So now, even though we have a lot of places where there are people who have moved in and are starting stuff, still a lot of the community is really inbeded there, and theres also a lot of spaces, I mean it is just the people...

N: Yea I think theres definantly a gradient the further down you go in Bed-Stuy.

M: Yea, yea sure. My gardens probably half new comers and half long term residents. People are really open about it, I don't know, I think the people that serve gardens can see the bigger picture, they see the new people moving in, but see that they're trying to help. They've been staring at this lot forever, and now they have someone who's going to try to help them.

N: Do you think gardens act as a good venue for interaction between the two groups?

M: Yea, I mean why else, there would be no other reason that I would be talking to all the people on that block. It just wouldn't happen, there'd be no interaction. I lived in Bed-Stuy for two year before the garden, adn I didn't know anybody. I knew a couple people form a block part, but not the block that I lived. But then it became that I knew everybody, had everybodys emails address, then everyones going to karokee together.

N: It definantly seems to be a big thing in Bed-Stuy.

N: What do you think the future of urban agriculture in Bed-Stuy looks like. Do you think it's something that's going to flourish and expand or fade away?

M: I don't know, I don;t think it's going to go away. I think a lot of people that are from the neighborhood and don't plan on leaving, the gardens are also like an outlet for them, like the culture, especailly the caribbean people, they come from a background of growing things, and I think it's exciting for them to have a place to reconnect with that. So I hope that those people are allowed to stay here and they can continue that.

-Kubi Ackerman

K: Ok sorry about that.

N: No problem. Alright so um, how long have you been involved with urban agriculture, what sparked your interest in it?

K: Um, so I would say probably two or three years um, and I should say that's not currently my primairy area of focus. It was while I was at the urban design lab, and I finished there, approximately, less than a year ago. Um, but, uh, the impetus for becoming involved is kinda a long story but essentially my background is in architecture and planning, and I was involved in a number of projects having to do with planning for, in urban design, or climate change adaptation, including some green infastructure projects. And we, some years ago had a partnership with a group up at MIT to develop design based approaches to addressing diet related disease, specificially childhood obiesity in urban areas, and that led us to an interest in systems that spun off into a number of differnet projects around mapping, ananlyzing, and deisgning food sysytem infastructure to get healthier

food into cities at a variety of scales. We have a national project we're working on, we've got some regional work which I'm still quiet heavily involved in, and um, over the course of this process, we participated on the advisory committee at the city council when they were developing thier comprehensive food policies called food works which came out in 2010. They had an advisory council that represented a variety of different groups leading up to that, or leading up to the development of reccomendations in the proposal, and at that point, you know, it was clear from a the policy side of it, they were seeing a lot of interest in urban agriculture, but not a whole lot of actual cooresponding data or information about what the potential was and what the implications were for increasing that type of activity in the city. So, those reccomendations came out, but there was still, you know, a long list, that kind of process of developing them was maybe a 6 to 9 month porcess. Then again, you know, we were not essential in that, but involved in an advisory capacity but during that time, as the gap became clear, you know it seemd that this was an area that required more research. I felt, and we felt that the lab, because of some of the work we'd don and the fact that it touched on a variety of issues that we'd already been involved in, it was a good area to explore further. So we got some funding to do that, and this was um, from the funders prospective, a parallel project to um, the design trust for public space was also doing a research project on urban agriculture, or started one at that point and they were focusing more on the kinda of the social and community benefits and drawbacks urban agriculture, and you've seen that study right?

N: Yea,

N: I mean, they would probably, for this particular interest you have, better people to talk to, because it aligns a little bit more with the research they were doing than what I was doing because it was kinda a parallel project and my background is a little more engineering focused and little bit more on, and less on the social and environmental implications.

N: Yea, I sent out an email, but haven't gotten a response.

K: They just relesed the second volume last week I think.

N: Oh.

K: Yea, so I would definantly reccomend getting that. I don't know when you sent out the email, but I know that they were probably very very busy in the lead up to that. But now that that's out and complete, you might have better luck. And the person to talk to I guess would be Rosemund Fletcher who's the project director there for that.

Yea,

N: Ok thanks. How do you think New York is specially suited to take advantage of urban agriculture and implement it on a wider scale?

K: Uh, so I think it's especially well suited, in some ways, I think it's especially challenged and especially well suited. So I mean the challenges obviously have to do with the fact that it's in this large metro area where there's comparatevily less urban land available, and also the land costs are astronomical compared to most places in the world and most places in the united states, so very high property costs. Which makes agriculture, which is you know, a low margin activity economically, a particular challenge. At the same time, I think it's uniquley well suited because, for a lot of reasons. I think partially, culturally, you have a hugh concentration of people who are enthusiastic about environmental issues. You know, you have a very active kind of community participation and engagemnet culture. you have a lot of young people, especially increasingly interested in participating in this type of activity and on the kind of demand side, you have foodie culture, you know just from the economic perspective, demand for products. Obvipously there's socioeconomic issues at play here, but you do have demand for locally grown healthy food and that kind of stuff, which I think is important as well as an actively engaged academic community, you know I think helps get some of these types of things off the ground. So yea, I think it's a huge challenge, and it's still working itself out, it's in the early stages just to see what becomes of this and how much it's able to expand. But I think New York is definantly you know, at least in the United States, one of the places more suitedfor rooftop agriculture, but also other types as well.

N: Do you think gardens make neighborhoods more attractive to potential residents, and do you think developers advertise it as a local amenity at all?

K: Yes, definantly. As a matter of fact, there have been some signifigant studies on this which you're probably aware of that have to do with green space and the kind of ecnomic implications of green space for local property values. So they are definantly an amenity to make a neighborhood more attractive. As far as urban agriculture is concerned, because it's kind of like hip and trendy now, especially in places in Brooklyn where there's a lot of new development, and you have condo developments going up advertising that residents will have access to garden bed or plots on the roof, and that kind of thing. It's kind of an easy development. As far as communal green space in any area, it gets a little more tricky right, because while collectively developers may benefit from that type of amenity, you know, and Im not an economist so I don't know how you analyze something like this but, you know individual plots of landwhich are either privately owned or owned by the city, and for any individual, the economic inscentive is going to be to develop it, wher eas the communal economic inscentive form the perspective of either the community groups or developers might be different right, to keepit as open space to increase the surrounding property values.

N: What kind of protections are there, if any, to prevent developers from coming in and plowing down an existing garden on city owned property?

K: Yea, so there's the legacy of the community gardening movement which basically is really, I think it's an underappreciated factors, in the 90's in particular, there was a huge battle between the Julianni administration, the

mayor at that time, and community gardening groups specifically around this issue. So around community gardens which were on city owned property which the city decided to sell to private developers and one of the few sucesses of you know, community empowerment at that time, I think a lot of people thought of there being a lot more central control and a more oppressive government. The community garden movement prevailed though in the preservation of those spaces. It wasn't a complete victory in the sense that what they really wanted was protection and perpituity, which they didn't get. I'm not sure the terms exactly, there's something that tells how the law actually works or how long they're rpotected for. I think it was a couple years ago that the charter or whatever it was that establishes those protections was renewed but again, I think many people were dissapointed that it wasn't renewed indefinantly but only for a certain term which some people feel like doesn't give those spaces enough protection. But the fact is, yes they have been protected, many of them for over twenty years now from development, and as far as I can tell that is likely to continue, but it's not permenant. So that being said, another administration, I doubt it would be this one, but you never know, could come in and try to -now I don't know when the charter expires or if there's a legal possability of revoking the carter or anything like that- for all practical purposes, they're pretty well protected for now.

N: Ok, how are community gardens or urban farms generally percieved by community boards and non-participating residents. Do you think they're still generally thought of as assets for the community, or are there people that would disagree and think the land should be used for something else?

K: I don't think there's any one answer to that question. I think that there's a very wide range of opinions on this issue. I will say, and I think theres a pretty big distinction, especially in this stuff, between community gardens and for profit urban farms. I consider them to basically be two totatally different types of entities. Or even non-profit, most of them are, urban farms are quite different from community gardens where there's a community based enterprise, and you know as one would imagine, there's probably more skepticism or resistance to the later than the former, but even with community gardens, i think it really depends on the communtiy board, on the community, but it certainly is not, from what I've seen something hat's universially embraced. usually you have a few people who are very enthusiastic about it or the primairy movers or initiators to get things off the ground, and you generally have a few people who are strongly opposed to implement community gardens, because you know they're not a real public access because it still requires some sort of membershi, even if it's free, and only some people in the community or a very small percentage are actually going to use this space, and believe it should be used for something different and then the general public by and large probably doesn't have strong opinions one way or the other but uh, I'm hesitant to say that there's, to generalize that there's a lot of support or a lot of resistence. I think it really varies depending on the project and I think in the case of most projects, there's usually both. Some people who really support it and some who can't stand it.

N: Ok, I think that pretty much answers everything. Thanks a lot for talking with me.

K Sure, and I will say, and I don't know if you want any more of my persona; opinion, but I think this issue of you know, gardens being a force or factor in gentrification is a very interesting one, and a very important one. I think it's very, it's a very complicated issue. Even with actual terms and processes of gentrification, I don't know, I think it's a hugely interesting issue and I also feel like it's one that's often over simplified.

N: Me talking about the different gardens in Bed-Stuy

K: Yea, and I think that makes for a potentially more interesting, but more difficult project. Even the term gentrification can be a interpreted in different ways as well in the sense that one the one hand that it's very important that it be taken into consideration for all planning projectsbecause it is a very real destructive thing, but at the same time I feel like it's thrown around a lot, particularily in the academic community as entirely negative, whereas if you actually ask people in the community, you'll find a wide variety of perspectives. Some of which may be "I don't really like what's happening in the neigbohrood" but other neighbors might divert quite substantially and I think one has to be careful not to impose from the outside a kind of impression or judgement of what's going on. You know what I mean? This may or may not actually square with how the community sees those changes.

N: Me talking about gentrification having a prejorative connotation.

K: Right right yea. I think it's a great topic, it's so rich.

-Winnifred Curran

N: Alright I think it's going.

N: So, how does environmental gentrification differ from ordinairy gentrification? Is it just mechanism, like it's simply green space or parks and things like that, or is there more to it?

W: I think it's just an extenstion, it's a different strategy of regular gentrification that as sort of the consumerist element of the environmental movement has become so predominant, that if you're trying to sell a neighborhood one of the amenities that you need to provide now, is some sort of greening. So whether that is in the form of urban agriculture, or a new park, or cleaning up a site that had previously been contaminated, it's just one of those sort of list of things, one of the amenities that's now required, you know that people look at as one of the benefits they want when choosing a neighborhood. And so therefore it's one of, and obiviously the spaces in the cities these days that are left to be gentrified are often the parts of the cities that have been most environmentally disadvantaged historically, so you know, industrial areas, or areas that had been long underserved in terms of provision of green space. So I think it's one of the things

that in many ways the state can do, it's one of the way I think that government really gets involved in the gentrification process also, is by something like the provision of new parks. You know, only the state can really do that, so it's a way that the governmnet makes it clear that it is intveneing in a way that is pro-gentrification. So I think it's an extension, it's a new strategy for gentrification. I don't think it's a brand new element.

N: Do you think that's intentional?

W: Yea, I do think it's intentional. I think again, like I said, because, words like sustainability are so attractive and thrown around lately, and within the realestate world, if you can market a building for example, as sustainable or green, that typically brings in a premium of around twenty percent. So if you want to market your building as green, you want to market the whole neighborhood as green. It's a way to rebrand neighborhoods that have had certain negative associations historically, and I think Bed-Stuy is a really good example. You know Bed-Stuy means things to people who have never stepped foot in Bed-Stuy. So that remaking the physical landscape of the neighborhood through things like urban agriculture is a way of rebranding the neighborhood and getting people to think about it differently. And urban agriculture is a very visible way to do that, and it's something that everyone loves. You know, who's against an urban farm or a community garden these are things that are very superficailly attractive across race, class, and all these kindas of things.

N: Actually, when I was visiting one garden in Bed-Stuy not too long ago, the operator was telling me that they had gotten complaints when they were trying to start the garden thirty odd years ago because they wanted a parking lot instead.

W: Well of course thirty years ago, our environmental standards were quite different. At one point in time, and I mean I think there's definantly a history in New York especially, of community gardens being political places and kind of revolutionairy spaces, and spaces outside the system. And over time, the system has found a way to co-opt them, but now rather than them being, you know like I think porbbaly the lower east side is the best example of this, where it was a way that communities responded to the disinvestment that was ravaging their neighborhoods was to reclaim these abandoned spaces as community gardens. And then over time, what that did was help to make the neighborhood more attractive so then when the realestate market comes back, the city's like "oh, all those lots that we let you use for community gardens, we're taking them back now". You know so, it kind of started out as a community empowerment strategy that then kind of came back to kick them in the butt, because it was part of what made the neighborhood more attractive and I think having seen sucess through things like community gardens in places like the lower east side, that now that becomes a strategy not of the community, but the city and developers to make certain places attractive for investment.

N: Ok, now you mentioned sustainability as kind of a buzzword. I agree that no one is against sustainability, it's got a bunch of proven benefits, but it seems kind

of strange that the social aspect seems to be left out whenever anyone talks about sustainability, especially in the context of gentrification. Why do you think the social dimension is so often ignored?

W: Because that's the hard one. That's the one that really makes us ask serious questions that require structural answers and solutions, and I think most people, especially at the policy and certainly from a realestate development point of view, they're not really interested in that. You know, part of what gentrification is trying to achieve is the removal of the origional population right, but that part of the rebranding of a neighborhood is getting rid of the stuff thats associated with the old brand, and that often includes the population that was there before. So the gentrification at its heart, is a social injustice. I think displacement is essential to the process of gentrification, I mean that's what gentrification is, so just to slap this environmental monicor on it is trying to cover up that social injustice, not do anything about it, it's not attempting to fix it at all, and I think if we were really to look at the social justice issues that led to places like Bed-Stuy being Bed-Stuy, that requires a whole host of sacrifices and compromises and fundamental restructuring of government and the economy, and that kind of stuff that no one actually wants to tackle. It's much easier to just be like oh this many acres of green space. You know it's something visible that people can talk about and see that feels like change, but can be part of just replicating the same inequalities in the system.

N: Do you know how present environmental gentrificaiton has been in Bed-Stuy thus far, and to what degree developers might have promoted it through advertising?

W: I have not spent a whole lot of time in Bed-Stuy recently.

N: Well just generally speaking.

W: Yea, I certainly think so, because I think historically Bed-Stuy is one of those places that's been underserved in terms of green space in New York, and that it's part of enhancing the environmental benefits that Bed-Stuy does have, which includes some amazing architecture depending on what block you're on. So I think first you improve that kind of physical environment, buildings and that sort of thing, but then again you need to provide more amenities than Bed-Stuy has had historically. So green space is one of those amenities that people are looking for, and it's something that, I don't know if you're familiar, there's an article by Melissa Checker about a new park, or an attempt to put a new park into Harlem, and people in the neighborhood who had been organizing for a new park for ages, because it came about as a result of this new development and was really sort of pushed by the city and by gentrifiers, people all the suddden become against the park. Not because they don't like parks, but because they know the park is simply an attempt to gentrify the neighborhood and push them out. So I think that probably a lot of, whatever kind of greening and that sort of stuff is going on in Bed-Stuy has that same element to it. The sort of why now questions, you know we've needed green space for decades, so why is it only

now when the neighborhood is being "discovered" by upper income residents that we see this interest in the provision of green space.

N: Is that kind of backlash becoming increasingly common, where residents will fight against seemingly positive green development?

W: I think so, I think people have become sophistoicated enough about gentrification that they realize that a lot of these environmental improvements act as a kind of trojan horse, where you know, “Oh here's this new park, or here's this community garden or whatever it may be, now your rents are going to go up 50% or more”, and you're not going to be able to afford to stay in the neighborhood and enjoy these new amenities. I know like a big thing here in Chicago in certain neighborhoods, has been resistance to bike lanes. People actually call them gentrification lanes. The people who are being planned for in terms of the infastructure of bike lanes are not, you know long term working class residents of the city, but are hipsters who bike to work, and that's not the culture of many neighborhoods, and you can sort of see the map of bike bike paths in Chicago is sort of a proxy for gentrification. So these things, bike paths aren't bad, but who are they for? I think that's what people are really questioning, yes we would love to have these amenities, we just want to make sure they are targeted for us, that we're not going to put these things in the neighborhood as a way of displaceing ourselves.

N: What do you think is more common, green development or green space founded by long term residents organizing and trying to improve their neighborhood, or is it more often promoted by gentrifiers, newcomers to the neighborhood?

W: I think historically, if you look at the long sweep since the sixties or something, most often green space is the result of community action, commmunity struggle in trying to get the city to provide resources that it had previously not provided, but i think just very recently, really just in the past 5 years or so, again because of kind of rise of the sexiness of sustainability and being able to lable things green, that that is increasingly not the case. You can see, I mean I think it sort of depends on how a community garden or park or whatever it is, the process through which it comes into existence. Who'se idea was it in the first place, who's supporting it, where are the resources being drawn from, who's going to maintain it, those sorts of things. Process matters as much as outcome here. Do people feel like they are involved in the creation of this new amenity, or is it something that is being imposed from the outside. (this is where the community board steps in)

N: Are new transplants often immediately thought of as gentrifiers by long-term residents? What's the dynamic like between the two groups, and how do they generally interact?

W: Yea, I think there is the assumption that in mover equals gentrifier. And there are ways in which that doesn't necessairly have to be true. You know certain class position; I think race can be a mitigating factor. You know the people are

maybe sort of more patient if the first wave is racially similar to themselves. But eventually people figure it out. So I think there is, especially in neighborhood like Bed-Stuy that have a history of struggle, that they don't sort of appreciate people coming in and appreciating the benefits without having to go through any of the struggle that the rest of the neighborhood has experienced. And I do think that there is a hostility both on the part of the Long-term residents who don't like being made to feel like they're being invaded by these new residents, but I think also on the part of new residents who often, again not always, but often move to a neighborhood like Bed-Stuy with the assumption that it is a hostie place. Right, and so try to insulate themselves from it, and don't go to the businesses that have been in existance for decades, but start their own businesses, don't become members of the community groups that have been there forever, but start their own community groups, that sort of thing. I had an interesting case; I do work here in Chicago in a neigborhood called Tolson, which is a Mexican American neighborhood that is being very rapidly gentrified. So I was down there with one of the organizers I work with and we ran into the owner of this new, very smancy business that's going to be a performance space, and there are, you know, luxury rentals on top and blah blah blah, and so the organizer says hi to the guys, and the guy says "oh, I thought you were going to beat me up". And so, it was just because we had a group of people with us, and it was just kind of like that really sort of crystalized for me the mindset of a lot of in-movers. That they know they're moving into hostile territory, not even because they have been the recipients of any kind of hostile actions, but because they know what gentrification is, they know what the effects are, and they know that no one would welcome that in their own neighborhood. No one wants to be priced out of their own neighborhood, so rather than going in with a very sort of open minded sort of collaborative attitude, they go in assuming that things are going to be hostile. I think that there are a lot of racial overtones to this as well, class overtones that, they don't feel comfortable in that, that there is something about the neighborhood that even though they live there, they are afraid of it, and I think that that has been replicated in the interactions that they have with long term residents. So that it's very hard for people to live very easily next to eachother because sorta of both sides form the get go are assuming the worst of eachother. On the part of long-term residents, there's plenty of justification frankly.

N: Is it common for young hipsters to just move into a neighborhood and just stay shut up in their apartments and wait for the neighborhood to change to be more appealing to them?

W: I think so definantly. I mean, I've heard this from tons of long-term community residents, that the in movers don't say hello on the sidewalk, they they all get pit bulls when they move nto a neighborhood that is deemed scary, and that their dogs are sort of aggressive and they're sort of aggressive in letting their dogs off leash in public parks and potentially scaring children and that sort of thing. So there's definantly very little room for interaction and understaning because I do think that a lot of working class neighborhoods are very communal by necessity, you know your neighborhors, you know who people are because you rely on eachother right, you have to draw on collective resources in a way

that the middle class doesn't. So I think that is a complete different different attitude towards neighborhood, part of a collective, knowing everybody versus just kind of keeping to yourself, not really liking when people are hanging out on the corner or hanging out on the stoop playing music loudly, having block parties, that sort of thing. I think it's a very different attitude towards public space, you know what is public, what is private, how to behave in public space, that kind of stuff. Again, I think antagonism is sort of natural when you come from these very different ideas of what living in this neighborhood is suuposed to look like.

N: Now how can long-term residents and new transplants work together for environmental improvements without causing run away gentrification? Is that even possible?

W: Yea, I certainly hope that it's possible, and this is kind of… I think one of the articles I sent you, "Just Green Enough", that's what this is about, how can we get long-term residents and new residents to find common ground, and I think that the environment is one of the ways that we can find common ground. Everyone wants clean air and clean water, and not contaminated land, and some access to green space. These are good things for everybody. And so how do we do it in a way that it benefits everyone who lives in the nighborhood and doesn't result in the displacement of the long-term residents. So I think in how we organize in the spaces that we create, we have to be very mindful that we don't want to create displacement by doing this, and so I think what just green enough was trying to capture is first we have to undo the environmental wrongs. You know, the spaces that are wildly polluted have to be cleaned up. It's not accecptable to say well in order to keep this place from gentrifying, we're going to leave your land contaminated with all sorts of stuff that makes this an unhealthy place to live. That is not a good choice, we have to clean up. But we should clean up everywhere right? You know we should be looking to do this. And again part of this is where is the impetus for cleaning up coming from? You know, is it coming form long-term residents who are trying to get this done, or is now a city or developer looking to clean up a particular site specifically because upper income, often white people are moving there, and I think that's really where the tension is. It's like who is this for? And so how do we guarantee that these amenities can be enjoyed equally, and that's the really difficult part to accomplish. I think one part is making sure that the process through which these environmental amenities happen is a genuine democratic process. That everyone is at the table, that everyone's interests are represented. They types of green space that we get can be quite different depending what our, or are our target audiences is. (community boards) For exapmple, I'm thinking of when tomkin square park was redone in, at this point ten or fifteen years ago, and all the suddent part of timkin square park, you know what used to be homeless encampments, now becomes a dog run. You know, in most working class neighborhoods, a dog run is not a priority. You know, that is totally like a middle class gentrifier type thing. So, you know who is being served? If we have green space, where is the space for children, that's something long term residents tend to be interested in, whereas a lot of gentrifiers don't have children, so it's not a concern for them. How democratic of a space are we creating? Who can get involved? How easy is access

to get involved? Like there are not a lot of community gardens, if you want a plot, there's a certain fee you have to pay. Well how affordable is that fee for long-term residents? Is it, will we waive the fee for a cerain percentage of people who have lived in the neighborhood for a long time and don't have the income to pay it. You know, like how do we make these spaces not just green, but democratic. I think again, it requires understanding form both sides, which is certainly not impossible. If we think it's impossible, then it is impossible. Right if we don't try and assume that it can't be done, then of course it's not going to get done, so we have just hold everyone accountable and say whois involved in this, and if you're missing a major segment of the community, why? Like we're going to call you out on that, and we're not going to go forward with this until that group is represented. Something like that.

N: Now you mentioned different kinds of green spaces. I've always thought of community gardens as kind of an active space, where people are participating in a common activity and able to interact with eachother, versus a passive space like a park that you just look at it or go sit in. Do you think the interaction that takes place at community gardens might work against the gentrification process as new and old community members are in a common venue and can talk and get to know one another, or is it just another environmental amenity that makes the neighborhood more attractive?

W: Yea, I think it certainly has the potential to do that, and really anything that brings people together and has them talking over a common good is a good thing. And so I think that there is a lot to be learned from, I think that's really one of the, if communitygardens can be an educational space, not just in terms of "this is how you grow a zuccini" but "this is what the neighborhood used to be like thirty years ago when we couldn't play zuccini because bullets were flying over our heads" or whatever it is. Lots of the disconnect is that so many people who move into a neighborhood, gentrifiers who move into a neighborhood have no understanding of what that neighborhood is other than a place that they can afford an apartment. And they have no sense of the conflict, and the struggles, and the racial dynamics, the class dynamics, all this other stuff that has shaped this neighborhood. And therefore sort of don't understand, like if people are giving them funny looks when they walk down the street because they're not used to seeing white people in Bed-Stuy. They need to understand why people are giving them funny looks, people aren't just giving them funny looks because they're mean, but because they know this trajectory and what it's like and I think for a lot of gentrifiers, you know sort of move into a place very ignorant of it. And if they do the work to learn about it, I think that can go a long way to bridging those differences. If you become someone who, you know, yes ok you're a gentrifier when you move in because you're paying more in rent or you bought an expensive apartmnet, but that doesn't mean you have to stay one. Right, you can actively engage with your neighbors, become a force for good. You use the sort of social capital that you have in a neighborhood to organize around issues that are importance to long-term residents, and achiecve good things on the ground. I thin a space like a community garden is absolutely a kind of place where that kind of stuff could happen. You know, I think the potential is there. I don't Think it's guaranteed by any stretch of the imagination. People get very

sensitive about their gardens too, you know? Hey, you're kale is getting in the way of my blah blah blah, whatever, they could just as easily be a place of conflict as it is of education. Things that bring people together to genuinely talk to eachother and come to some sort of understanding absolutely has the potential. And again, sort of get's us back to the start of community gardens, you know when these really were alternative spaces. I think that ideally we can get back there.

N: It really does depend on the type of garden I think, and who starts it, what the intention is behind it. Because I visited one that was started thirty years by long-term residents. I visited another one that's just now starting, and it's being done by a food bank and just local residents who want to beautify this empty lot whereas I saw another one that was run by a group of hipsters that are growing exotic microgreens.

W: Yea, yea, exactly. I think that says it all. You know, and again I'm a huge fan of microgreens. I'm sure there are plenty of long-term residents that would love microgreens if they got to try them, but you know, where's the impetus that this is coming from. It becomes pretty clear, of how much do you want to be of the neighborhood, versus how much do you want to change the neighborhood. If you are sort of acting as though the neighborhood is broken and you need to fix it, that is really insulting to the people who have been there all along who have been fixing it in their own way, which is why you now find it a safe neighborhood to live. You know like, I think that's what is often really ignored in smith's stuff with the revaunchionism of the city, that like you people of color who were trapped in a disinvested inner cit, you ruined the city. We let you have the city and this is what you did with it, so now we have to take it back. And if that's your attitude, of course you're going to get a hostile response right? And that also doesn't recornize why you consider it safe to live in Bed-Stuy now when clearly thirty years ago, this wouldn't have been happening. Again thirty years ago, the only community gardens being started were ones by long-term residents and there were no microgreens to be seen. Why? You have to understand the trajectory here, and why people are not going to welcome your mircrogreens, cause guess what, it's not about the microgreens, at the end of the day that's what it comes down to, it's not about the community garden, it's what the community gardens represent, it's the general trajectory of what are the amenities and who are they for.

N: (Me talking about Garfield community farm)

W: Yea exactly, and I think it's a remaking of the landscape. And also the sad assumption that you can, you know. If you, whatever the legal things are and how they got this particular plot of land or whatever, the way in which people of a certain class or posistion just feel so comfortable taking over. Just claiming space that working class people have not had the privledge of having, and so I think it's that too, that assumption that you are right and have the right to do what you're doing with this space and not make it communal, like genuinely communal in any way. You know I think that just oozes privledge in a way that is

very isn't very easy to reach for many long term residents who don't have any privedlege.

N: Well at the same time, I guess that's the benefit of having local community boards in New York. If you want to start a garden, you have to get the approval of community board. They're there to make sure that you're being inclusive.

W: Right, and of course, and what's really interesting about community boards is, like yea, they are potentially democratic, but not necessairly because they are appointed, and so it's not necessairly true that every sort of constituency in the neighborhood is going to be represented, but certainly I think community board meetings are really interesting exercises in democracy. You know, to have, well certainly you can see what the different factions are at any rate. It doesn't necessairly mean that there's going to be an inherent;y democratic outcome and of course for larger poliy things, they only have an advisory capacity, so the mayor doesn't have to listen to them. But yea, it's a nice format to at least see the cogs of democracy working you know, not necessairly with the desires outcome but yea I'm a huge fan of community board meetings. Even just as entertainment.

N: I've gotten the impression that it's so variable. They can act comepley defferent from meeting to meeting depending on who's there, how you're trying to spin your project to them. Goes on...

W: Yea I mean, I think there's some of that. A lot people on community boards have been on them for a long time, you knwo, they've been on these things for decades, so they definantly feel an ownership and a right, and so I think depending on how you go at them, it makes difference. But I know, I used to spend a lot of time at community board one meetings in Williamsburg when, and gentrification had already happened, but it was getting even hotter. The big issue was the number of liquor licences that were being applied for. You would have these impassioned things like people falling down drunk on the streets and our kids are seeing this, never in all my 80 years have I blah blah blah, and this kind of stuff. And there was this one bar that came to the community board right away and they were like "what can we do" they were super duper present. They went around to all their immediate neighbors and told them what they were doing, and asked them if they were ok with it, and blah blah, and it sailed right through because they were just on the ground and very friendly, very welcoming of people and also not coming in like"oh you have to give us this liquor licence, because this is what we're doing and blah blah blah. You know because a lot of businesses, come in with and attitude like oh the community board is just another hoop to jump through, it's not really important, so they don't have to give it too much attention. If you come into it with that attitude, then you're going to get some attitude. YOu know, and I think there's a lot of PR that goes into this, that sounds sort of superficial, but it reflective of the deeper attitudes about the neighborhood, you're like here I am trying to improve the neighborhood and you're fighting me on this thing. You know if that's how you come in, people will be like hey we dont need you help, we don't want your improvements. But if you come in like hey, we really want to work with you to make this a better blah blah blah. Ive seen it in New York, I've seen it in Chicago,

that if a new entity comes in super understanding, and super you know, what can we do for you, how can we make this place a resources for you, then people will be very open to it, even thought echnically it fits in the category of a gentrifying thing. I think theres a lot of attitude and social relations here are really important to the process.

N: Speaking of attitude, do you think now that gentrification has become such a big issue that people who are considered gentrifiers are more concious and making more of an effort not to be a gentrifier?

W: Yea, I think it has made them both more self-concious and guilty, like guilty feeling, which does not necessairly lead to better behavior. I think that because people are feeling this guilt and this kind of hyper awareness that they then try to suppress themselves in that particular way, but that often, and this is a very very broad generalization but, what I dont see in most places, and what I think is what makes long term residents resentful is that you don't see a lot of gentrifiers jumping into the fray of community activism. You know, sort of taking a side, or if you do, they're starting a new organization. They do their own thing rather than joining the environmental organization that's existed for thirty years, they start their own. And so I think that seperation of people in the neighborhood, I was just here talking to this guy and he's trying to justify his place and was like "we have one of the business owners in this development has been in hilton for 9 years, like that's an extraordinairy length of time, It's like, and you're standing next to people who are the third generation, like living in the same house. In that sense that they justify themselves in a way that doesn't mean very much. You're 9 years doesn't hold a candle to their 95 years, so if that's your leg to stand on, you're going to fall down. You need to get your legitimacy someplace else, and so I think one way of doing that is becoming active in commnuity organizations. You know, finding out what is of interest, what the interests are to the community, what kind of burning issues are, and working with them to organize. If you are a constituency that is valued in the city by the local councilman, in chicago it would be alterman, go and talk to them and be like hey I'm one of the new residents and this is what I bring to the table right, this is my skill set, these are my resources, and I'm not going to vote for you if you don't get this done. Or you know, if there's a campaigne going, and again this is what i wrote about in greenpoint, theres a campaign going on for cleanup, we'll do media training for long term residents so they can talk to the local news and make a case. We'll come up with an interesting graphic and make posters and make this a really visible issue. We'll make it political because we have this voice as monied people, people are going to pay attention to us. We'll make connects to national environmental organizations to get this thing done. And so using your privledge to help those who have not had that privledge. I don't see a whole lot of gentrifiers doing that.

N: Alright, I've got one more question. Have you ever seen developers community gardens as a local amenity?

W: I can't say that I have. I've seen them advertise thigns like green roofs, or maybe like rooftop gardens. I can't think of a case where I've seen a community

garden as a selling point. Again, like for a particular development, it tends to be broader than that, but it'd be interesting to see if things go in that direction. Cause I think even community gardens are this, in a gentrifying neighborhood, it's interesting to think about how long a community garden can actually last. If the land becomes so valuable, whoever owns it is going sell it for something else.

N: Yea, that's a big argument that lots of people are having with the city right now. Even if a garden is on city owned land through green thumb for years and years, there aren't really strict protections that would prevent the city from just deciding to sell off the land.

W: Exactly, and that's what happened in the lower east side in the 90's, it's like guliani sold off a bunch of that stuff, and you need a rich famous persono to step in. At that time it was bette middler, right, who just bought a bunch of the gardens. Agian, but does every neighborhood have a bette middler that would be able to do that? So yea, they are, community gardens are often temporary spaces, even if they've been there for decades they don't have that. I think they can be really stabilizing forces, but then are almost victims of their own success. Because they do become these wonderful community spaces, and everyone wants to live near this great community garden while that makes the community garden too valuable to continue to stay a community garden.

W: Alright, well thank you so much. You've just given me a load of information to look through.

N: You're welcome, and good luck.

-Lance Nation

1. How long have you lived in Bed-Stuy, and why did you move there?

9months. Larger rooms and cheaper rent than most of NYC.

2. What about the neighborhood appeals to you?

Cost of living compared to other parts of Brooklyn. Access to several subway lines. Reliable busses. Not gentrified. Great Chinese Buffet for $2.99 a pound.

3. What don't you like about Bed-Stuy?

Distance from work. Not easy to travel North/South through the borough. (East/West is very accessible.) Dirtier than other neighborhoods (trash is littered throughout the street). Very little sense of neighborhood, especially East Bed-Stuy feels abandoned.

4. How have you seen the neighborhood change in the time you've lived there?

I have not. Although I have not lived there long.

5. Do you know any long-term residents? What's your relationship like with them?

Yes, my neighbor "Bird." He lives next to my building and used to live in my building before it was renovated. He lives with his grandmother and doesn't do much. Most of his living is made through small jobs. I chat with him about the neighborhood, the weather, sports when he's relaxing on my buildings stoop (although I feel the stoop is more his than mine).

He did tell me thanks for moving into the neighborhood. "Now that there's a few white folks walking around the police have started to care again."

6. How engaged are you with what's going on in the neighborhood? Do you make an effort to meet local residents?

I only know what my roommates tell me. I'm a very shoddy resident. I spend almost no time in the neighborhood. I like it, I just worked in a different part of Brooklyn and most of my time is spent there. I chat with people but most of the conversations are brief and are more out of courtesy than curiosity.

7. Are there any community gardens around you? Have you ever visited or participated in one?

One is directly across the street from me. This summer, I am making it a goal to visit.

8. Do you think community gardens make Bed-Stuy a more attractive place to live? How so?

Honestly, the streets need to be cleaned than a garden would be nice. Even the garden across from my apartment has trash surrounding it. I think the gardens show that people care for the community. And hopefully they will help people look past the waste buckets that are the streets of Bed-Stuy.

9. What are you feelings and impressions about the future role of community gardens in Bed-Stuy? Do you think they have any connection with processes such as gentrification?

I believe that community gardens in gentrified neighborhoods are a luxury, while gardens in current Bed-Stuy are the first signs of gentrification.

There becomes a point in gentrified neighborhoods when community gardens are sold because of monetary gains. Often landowner, when given a chance to make a fair profit, will sell gardens to developers. Their monetary gains outweigh the communal gains that gardens provide. (There is a garden in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, that must show its value to the community throughout the

upcoming year or it will be sold to a developer next year.) And although gardens give residence a chance to bring fresh produce into their homes, people living in gentrified neighborhoods are financially able to buy into a CSA and shop the local farmers market. The gardens in gentrified neighborhood are a luxury because they are not needed.In Bed-Stuy gardens seem to pop up in areas where the first signs of gentrification are taking place. People have a bit of extra cash to contribute to the garden. They also have that little bit of extra time to help the garden grow. The people starting these gardens don't live in gentrified areas because they cannot afford to. Although they don't want to live in a place that looks/feels dirty. A garden is a sign that people care about a community and want it to get better. Once a neighborhood gets nice enough, then come the people with money.