**AT THE INTERSECTION OF URBAN AGRICULTURE AND SOCIAL
JUSTICE ACTIVISM:**

PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS IN WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

by

Todd Sundberg

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fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Geography

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ABSTRACT

Academic literature on USA urban agriculture's (UA) potential for social justice (SJ) primarily centers on larger cities, such as Detroit or NYC. This focus obscures lessons from smaller cities such as Wilmington, Delaware. A diverse array of participants and organizations engage in UA in Wilmington with varying SJ goals and everyday practices within their sites. These goals and practices range from community change, education for underprivileged youth and marginalized communities, and providing economic opportunities. Participants' perceptions of the impact of their social work also vary. Data gathered over the course of fieldwork conducted in 2017 suggests that considerations of the practice of UA in Wilmington, Delaware offers an alternative trajectory for evaluating its transformative potential. While possibilities for subversion of structural oppressions are observable in Wilmington's UA, there are also possibilities for UA to augment existing inequalities. This thesis is comprised of two papers, in the form of Chapters 3 and 4, that address everyday experience of social justice through urban agriculture in Wilmington, Delaware. In Chapter Three, I argue that applying a (feminist) geopolitical framework into UA allows for an understanding of the different everyday lives and experiences of urban agriculture participants, which in turn influence how the wider network of UA organizations operates. In Chapter Four, I argue that issues of (in)visibility or (in)accessibility of UA sites impact participants' perceptions of their social justice potential, which can be influential in the continued practice of UA as a site of social justice. Through my research I argue that an understanding of SJ orientated UA, and SJ more broadly, attuned to participants' everyday experiences, worldviews, the sites in which they attempt to

facilitate justice, and the relationships between these elements creates a more effective

platform for scholars and activists to analyze, plan, and ultimately affect SJ.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

I like gardening. I like the workout I get from shoveling dirt, building or

maintaining infrastructure, or harvesting crops. I like working with my hands - how

soil feels as I manipulate it, the way different crops feel not only in their stages of

development but amongst one another, and the satisfaction gained from the fruition of

the labor of my own body. I like the *je ne sais quoi* atmosphere of gardening - the

warmth of the sun, the vitalizing nature of the fresh air, the visual splendor of shades

of green and other colors and the calmness provided by the micro-elements of the site

of the garden. I like that gardening, as a form of the wider umbrella of agriculture, can

be practiced by people in many environments. Cities are one environment where

people engage in agricultural practices, in the disparate set of forms collectively

known as 'urban agriculture'. People perform urban agriculture differently and for

different reasons, as a hobby, for profit, or to contribute towards the pursuit of social

justice. In this thesis, I examine urban agriculture participants' daily experiences and

perceptions of their activities in relation to their social justice goals in the city of

Wilmington, Delaware. While there is enormous transformative potential for social

justice through urban agriculture, there is also equal opportunity for injustice. By

examining the perceptions of the individuals who engage in the practice, one can gain

an understanding of the relationships of social justice and urban agriculture at an

individualized scale rather than being informed through wider analyses which may favor a more universalized experience.

Wilmington, Delaware, like many other cities, goes by many monikers. One of the most common ones employed by the city government is the "corporate capital of the world" (City of Wilmington n.d.), or at least "America's Corporate Capital" (Greater Wilmington Convention and Visitors Bureau 2016) due to the vast number of companies based there. Indeed, Delaware's population is roughly 950,000, and yet is home to over one million businesses. Fifty percent of publicly traded US companies chartered in Delaware are based in Wilmington, and the city is home to fifty-eight percent of all Fortune 500 companies (Wilmington "In the middle of it all" n.d.). Another moniker of Wilmington which contrasts with 'Corporate Capital' is 'Murdertown USA'. The name hails from a 2014 Newsweek article (see: Jones 2014), which references numerous contemporaneous articles detailing the longstanding position of Wilmington at the top of lists of most dangerous American small cities (see also: Payne et al. 2017) and the high per capita homicide rate of the city, standing at 1,625 per 100,000 people during the time of the Newsweek article. While this homicide rate is much higher than the USA national average of 4.9 per 100,000 (UNODC 2014), it mirrors other cities in that it is spatially concentrated in a handful of neighborhoods (US of America n.d.), the title 'Murdertown USA' has nonetheless

remains attached to Wilmington[1]. The lasting image was perpetuated by media and

government officials' varying responses to the Newsweek article (see: Barrish 2014,

Phillips 2016), which harmed the image of Wilmington.

The city government, then under Mayor Dennis Williams, responded to the

"Murdertown" article by attempting to create a different image for the city and

working with or aiding different groups to create various cultural and greening

programs in order to make Wilmington appear more attractive to citizens and

corporate investors alike. These programs include but are not limited to biking

initiatives, landscape renewal, and arboreal projects. A key element of the greening

initiatives involves urban agriculture. Mayor Williams is quoted regarding the

potential of urban agriculture "[u]rban farms have been a proven factor in bringing the

crime rate down" (in Malgiero 2016), underscoring the social value of urban

agriculture. Delaware's state government has provided monetary support to social

justice organizations that engage in urban agriculture, awarding grants totaling

$10,000 across eleven groups 2016 and $27,671.74 across eighteen groups in 2017,

throughout the state but concentrated in Wilmington (State of Delaware News 2016;

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[1] To further contextualize Wilmington's homicide rate, the city's "per capita homicide rate is higher than that of Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles" (Payne 2016, 796), cities whose populations are much larger than Wilmington's and more frequently receive media coverage.

State of Delaware News 2017)[2]. Former Delaware governor Jack Markell and former

Dept. of Agriculture Secretary Ed Kee also participated through visiting urban

agriculture sites in the city (Natoli 2013). Many organizations rent the land on which

they operate their urban agriculture sites from the state or city government for low

prices[3].

Although urban agriculture receives attention from state entities in Delaware, it

may not be visible on city websites. For example, despite support, the city website

does not feature urban agriculture, focusing instead on bike trails, recycling programs

and urban forestry programs. Wilmington, Delaware's tourism website

Visitwilmingtonde.com does mention urban agriculture, but it does not talk about those

sites used for social justice, suggesting that communities struggling for social justice

are not perceived as tourist destinations. Rather, the website highlights the high end

horticultural sites of Brandywine Valley, describing these sites with terms such as

"*magnificent"* and "*premier,"* while underscoring the conservation efforts of the

DuPont family. However, conduct a web search for 'Wilmington Delaware Urban

Agriculture' and you will find local news articles about urban agriculture not only

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[2] Delaware's state government itself provided $17,671.74, while the New Castle
Conservation District provided an additional $10,000 for New Castle County sites,
concentrated in Wilmington

[3] Whether an exaggeration or a literal value, the participants of one peri-urban farm
stated that the state's price for them to operate the site was $1 annually.

alleviating so-called food deserts but also producing other social changes, such as economic opportunities, youth employment, and enhancing a sense of community unity[4]. Thus, with internet connectivity, UA is made visible to those interested in social justice and urban agriculture.

While the city website and Delaware's tourism website speak to a civic-minded audience, businesses, or tourists, this omission suggests that urban agriculture is not a high priority for government agencies promotion. Such exclusion opens the door for analysis of urban agriculture in Wilmington not centered on the state's interactions with it, but with those organizations, groups, and individuals who participate in it. This intervention is needed as non-state actors may attempt to circumvent or subvert the structural oppressions which cause injustices, which are often deliberately or unintentionally augmented by the state through neoliberal forces.

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[4] Examples include:
Stuart, Meredith. "Wilmington Community Cultivates Center of Urban Agriculture | West End Neighborhood House," November 8, 2013. http://www.westendnh.org/2013/11/08/wilmington-community-cultivates-center-of-urban-agriculture/.
Pizzi, Jenna. "Urban Farm Grows Hope for Wilmington Community." delawareonline, July 15, 2015. http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/local/2015/07/15/urban-farm-grows-hope-wilmington-community/30190357/.
O'Connor, Rebecca. "Delaware Urban Farm Offers Residents Oasis to Grow Crops in Food Desert," November 8, 2016. http://seedstock.com/2016/11/08/delaware-urban-farm-offers-residents-oasis-to-grow-crops-in-food-desert/.

In this thesis I examine the intersection of urban agriculture and social justice activism in Wilmington, Delaware; paying particular attention to the everyday practices and perceptions of urban agriculture participants in the city and just beyond it. Tornaghi (2014) observes that urban agriculture literature is unevenly focused on the global periphery, and that literature which exists on the global core is narrow in disciplinary scope to a few large cities. The global periphery includes countries such as Somalia or Uruguay that are considered by Western economic standards to be 'less developed' than global core countries, such as Norway or the U.S. Urban agriculture literature concerning the global core, especially concerning the U.S., is further narrowed by its overwhelming attention to larger cities. In a U.S. context, urban agriculture literature focuses primarily on New York City (see: Reynolds and Cohen 2016), Detroit (see: Colasanti et al. 2012), Philadelphia (see: Meenar and Hoover 2012), the San Francisco Bay area (see: Pudup 2008, McClintock 2012) or other California locations (see: Alkon and McCullen 2011; Broad 2016), and Minneapolis (see: Lang 2014), among others. This creates a substantial gap in the literature for analysis of smaller cities in the USA, which I aim to fill in through my research. The US Census Bureau (2017a) shows the populations of 761 American municipalities, a plurality of which are edge-cities or satellite cities of larger cities. These satellite or edge cities are smaller in population than the city they 'orbit', closer in population size to Wilmington [about 72000] than the large cities more commonly studied in urban agriculture literature; for example, Philadelphia is the most populous city of the Delaware Valley metropolitan area at about 1,600,000 people, whereas the largest

surrounding urban areas range from about 40,000 to 88,000 (US Census Bureau 2017b). It is critically important to understand what role urban agriculture can play in these under-researched settings.

It is important to consider smaller city settings because the United Nations and other organizations' reports indicate rising urban populations; especially in small cities, in the USA and around the world. Globally, slightly over half of the world's urban population lives in urban areas (UNDESAa) which is expected to increase to over sixty percent by 2050. The "fastest growing urban centers are the small and medium cities with less than one million inhabitants" (Lederer 2016), and only one in eight urban dwellers live in cities with populations of 10 million or more while close to half live in cities with populations less than 500,000 (United Nations 2014). Although these numbers are driven by the cities of the global periphery, the United States is one of the most urbanized countries in the world. The latest United States Census Report found that over eighty percent of people living in the USA live in urban settings (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). While there is some evidence for urban population decline in favor of suburban habitats (see: Frey 2017) reversing earlier trends of urban population spikes, including slightly in Wilmington (US Census 2017), overall urban population growth is rising, and the more populous cities cannot account for that growth alone. Thus, while the larger body of U.S.-based urban agriculture literature focuses on cities with large populations, it leaves out the less populous cities that account for a larger portion of the U.S. population. Additionally, cities are often divided into formal and informal sections. For example, Manhattan is a

borough of New York City, and is divided itself into several neighborhoods such as East Village which itself is comprised of different informal neighborhoods such as Alphabet City. These sub-administrative areas of larger cities may approximate or reflect smaller cities' population sizes, further underscoring the need for analyses of social justice programs, such as those through urban agriculture, at smaller scales.

By scaling down in this research, urban agriculture's transformative potential for social justice can provide analysis for researchers, policy-makers, planners, and urban agriculture practitioners that is more attuned to smaller cities which comprise the bulk of wider regions. Data from my fieldwork in Wilmington, demonstrate a common hope of urban agriculture participants that their individual and collective projects would serve as models for 'the region' and beyond, underscoring the need for small city cases. As smaller US cities such as Wilmington or other incorporated places grow into, or are recognized as, regional centers in their own right, more attention must be brought to them, their social justice and injustices and social justice participants' perceptions of their work in order to elicit social change.

Wilmington as a Place: Historical and Demographic Geographies
In order to situate urban agriculture as a modern social justice practice in Wilmington, Delaware, it is important to consider its historical and demographic geographies. Wilmington is one of the earliest European colonial cities in the U.S. and has, like other U.S. cities, gone through periods of decline and renewal. The effects of

uneven development and opportunities in Wilmington, coupled with wider socioeconomic trends in the U.S., lead to its position today.

In this section, I will discuss the historical narrative and demographics of the city of Wilmington. First, I will briefly cover Wilmington's history; including pre and initial European settlement, and industrialization. Finally, I will end by discussing contemporary demographics of Wilmington. It is important to look at the location of Wilmington as it is situated between larger (and more researched) cities such as NYC, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and DC. As a corporate center, Wilmington has long influenced the region despite its smaller population comparative to other cities and serves as a key factor in regional economics.
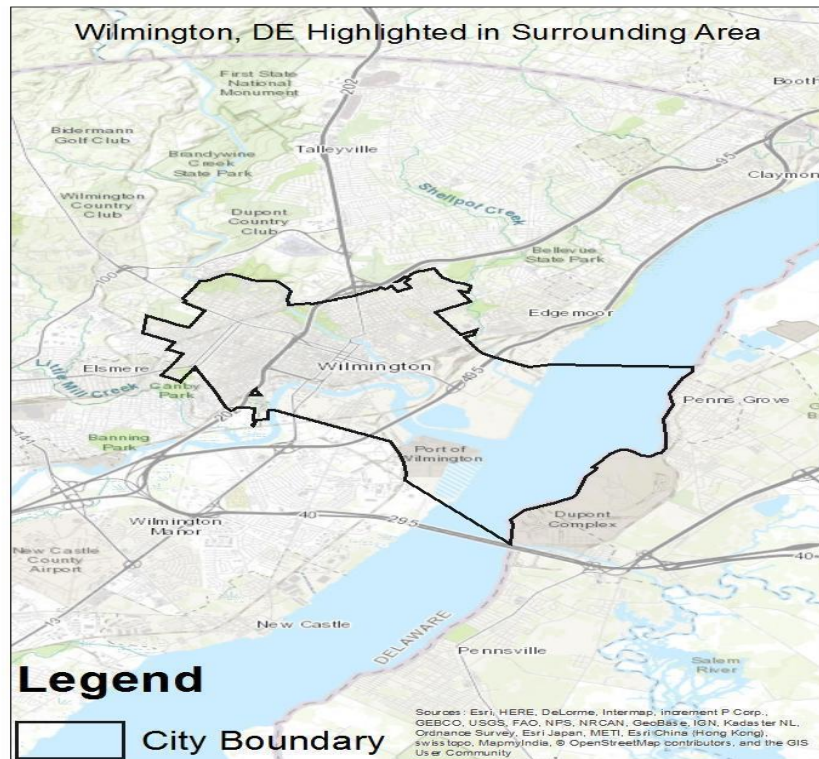
Figure 1   Wilmington, Delaware

Figure 2   Wilmington within Greater Philadelphia Region. Image produced via www.policymap.com

When the land that is now Delaware was first colonized by Europeans in the seventeenth century, they exploited the Native American nation Lenni Lenape in the area that would become Wilmington. The Lenni Lenape became first known to Europeans during a time they were suffering from conflicts with the Iroquois Confederacy and Susquehannock. While the English, Dutch, and Swedish all explored the Delaware River, the first permanent European settlement was made by the Swedes in 1638 at the mouth of the Christina River (Munroe 1993). The Swedes purchased land from a Lenape chieftain and established Fort Christiana, calling the wider colony New Sweden. From 1655 to 1674 this area was controlled in succession by the Swedes, then the Dutch, and finally, the English.

11

After receiving a royal charter in 1739, which included changing the name from Wellington to Wilmington, the city grew steadily (City of Wilmington, n.d.). During the American Revolution Era, Wilmington was considered strategic due to its geographic location and industries, and was held by the British until the end of the war. Later, Quaker-led groups turned Wilmington into an important and lasting base of the Abolition Movement (Williams 1999) which would add a vibrant African-American presence in the city. During the American Civil War, Wilmington produced more ironclads (then the most advanced naval vessel) than all other American cities combined, and ranked highly in the production of other war materials such as gunpowder and leather (City of Wilmington, n.d.), bringing income that was then invested in city infrastructure. New industries and businesses set up operations in Wilmington following the Civil War. Notably, the State of Delaware enacted the General Incorporation Law of 1899 as a means to attract businesses. Its laxity on regulations and fees combined with other attractive qualities of the state exponentially increased the number of Delaware corporations over the years, primarily based in Wilmington (Munroe 1993).

The outbreak of WWI and later WWII also brought wealth to the city as various weapons, vessels, and materials of war were produced there. Post-war labor shortages allowed new opportunities for African-Americans, who had previously been excluded from the labor market. While the city's overall population decreased due to white flight to the suburbs caused by desegregation programs among other social

changes, the African-American population grew in both number and percentage of total population. Urban renewal projects in the 1960s such as the construction of I-95 caused further suburbanization and racial tensions, as the highway was deliberately planned to disproportionately affect low income African-American populations at the outskirts of the central business district without compensating the communities.

These tensions boiled into race riots in 1967 and following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. The latter case led to the "longest occupation of an American city by state armed forces" (Munroe 1993, 229) since the American Civil War. This conflict exacerbated preexisting tensions between races in Wilmington, centered on unequal socioeconomic factors such as a decreasing industrial base and uneven impacts of urban renewal projects. Although African-American communities were growing poorer, the city of Wilmington grew richer. The Financial Center Development Act of 1981 and 1986 policies, which were sparked by banking institutions seeking more revenue, attracted many financial and insurance companies, and thus the rise of 'the corporate capital'. Indeed, disproportionate to Wilmington's population (pop. 72,000) presently over 300,000 companies; including Apple, Google, and Coca-Cola among other giants, have their legal address listed as 1209 North Orange Street, Wilmington (Weaver 2017). Due to this concentration of wealth, Wilmington suffers from a racialized poverty.
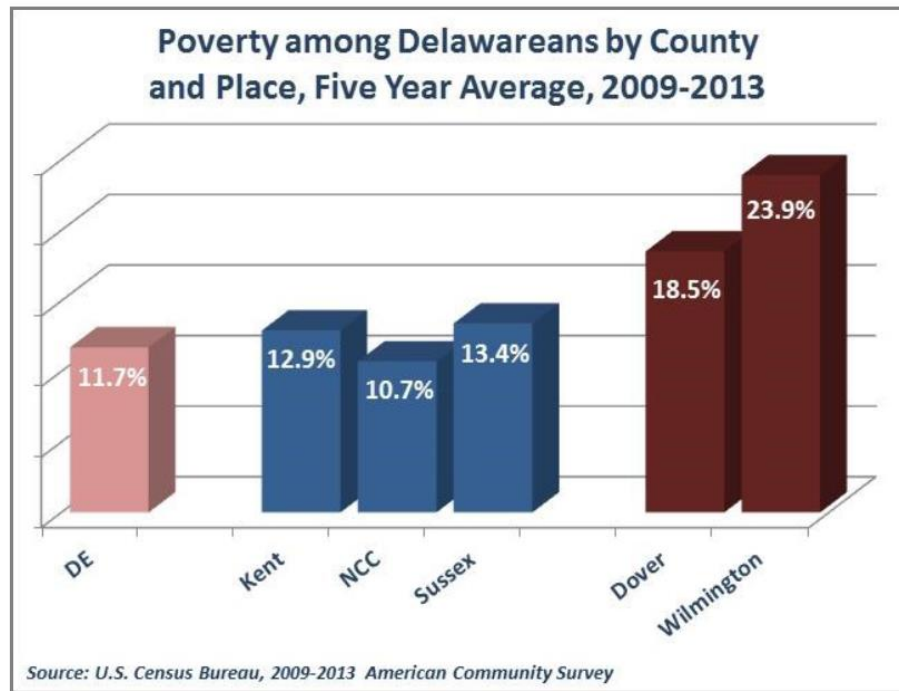
Figure 3   Poverty among Delawareans by County and Place, Five Year Average, 2009-2013. Adapted from (From Peuquet et al. 2015, 2)
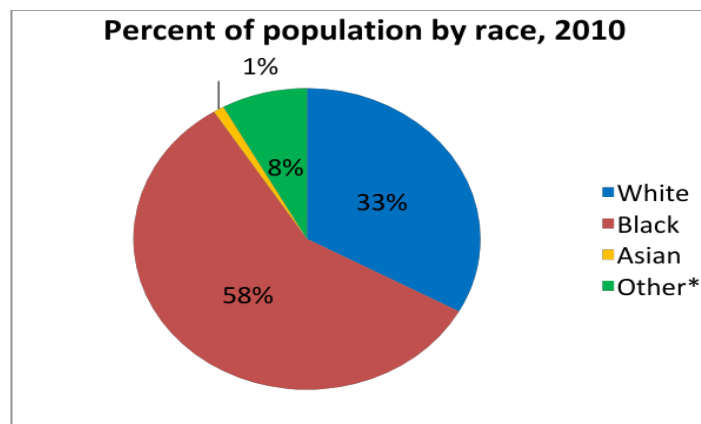
Figure 4   Percent of Population by Race in Wilmington. Data from City of Wilmington. (2010). Analysis Areas

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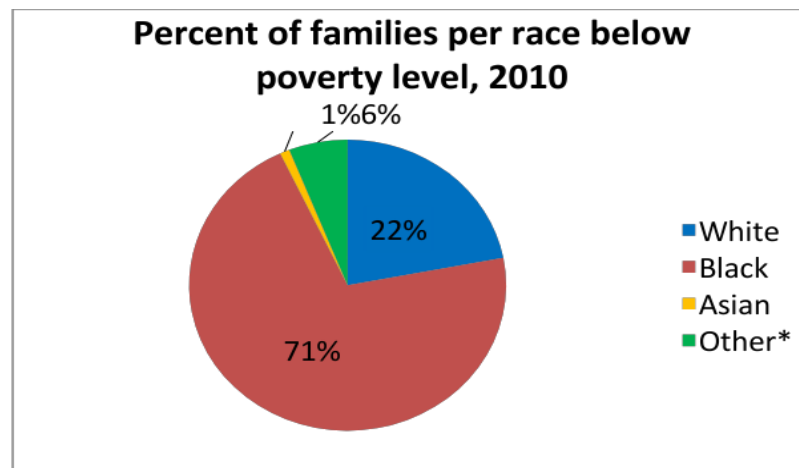
Figure 5   Percent of families per race below poverty level in Wilmington. Data
             from City of Wilmington. (2010). Analysis Areas

As Figures 3 through 5 indicate, poverty – in which a family or individual lack

the income to purchase basic food and household needs - is a major issue in

Wilmington[5]. Slightly over a quarter of Wilmington's population is considered in

poverty, with one study finding, "[p]overty rates for individuals are particularly high

within census tracts in Wilmington and range between 40% and 69%" (Peuquet et al.

2015, 3). Poverty thus affects nearly 20,000 people in the city. This economic

marginalization takes on a racial dimension; while African-Americans are

approximately three-fifths of Wilmington's population, over seventy percent of

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[5] The source data for Figures 3-5 describe "Other" as including American
Indian/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, Some Other Race Alone
and Others of Two or More Races

African-Americans families are under the poverty line. This racialized economic disparity reflects a nationally overwhelming intersection of poverty and food insecurity in communities of color, especially among African Americans (Gundersen et al. 2016). Understanding the historical and demographic geographies of Wilmington allows one to see how Wilmington 'came to be' and provides a basis for understanding why urban agriculture has arisen as an avenue in the pursuit of alleviating social injustices within the city.

Wilmington, Delaware's urban agriculture history is not readily known by urban agriculture participants or recorded in literature. While the urban agriculture participants I interacted with usually knew at least their organization's immediate history, Wilmington's earlier urban agriculture histories are not well recorded. It is nonetheless important to know these earlier histories to show that urban agriculture is not a recent phenomenon in Wilmington, but a continuation of a long-standing practice. The earliest entry is a brief newspaper article from 1898, describing how a gardening program was started at a Wilmington industrial school presumably for children to learn farming skills (The News Journal 1898). During the First World War, Delawareans, likely including those in Wilmington, planted victory gardens (Delaware's Role in WW1). In 1977, the Delaware Center for Horticulture (DCH), was founded in the wave of greening initiatives in the 1970s, and became an urban agriculture leader in Wilmington over the next few decades. Together with University

of Delaware's Cooperative Extension, DCH has been monumental in founding or aiding in the establishment of the numerous urban agriculture sites in Wilmington.

DCH, alongside other organizations, critically including the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension and its vast network of resources and connections, recognized the need for greater cooperation in explicitly urban agriculture and co-founded the Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition (DEUFFC) in 2008. Michelle Obama's breaking ground on the White House lawn for a vegetable garden further galvanized renewed public interest in gardening, among other forms of agriculture (Naylor 2012). While I was conducting my fieldwork in Summer 2017, a number of organizations were planning to, or in the process of, expanding their sites, services, networks and connections, and social activism (if not expressly social justice), including those in Figure 6. Not all the sites I visited are featured, due to scarce records or knowledge of their fruition, and Figure 6 includes sites I did not visit but was able to find dates of establishment for.

Date of Establishment	Urban Agriculture Site/Program

Pre-1985	A garden[6]
1985	Shearman Street Community Garden
1986	UD Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener Program
1999	Baylor Women's Correctional Institution Garden
2001	Valley Community Garden
2009	12th and Brandywine Urban Farm
2010-2011	West Side Grows Together Rodney Reservoir Community Garden
2010	Planting Hope Urban Farm
2010-2016	Bright Spot Ventures Bright Spot Farm and Mobile Truck Program[7]
2011	Southbridge Community Garden
2012	Conscious Connections Urban Garden
2014	Bellevue Community Center's Urban Farm and Garden

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[6] An urban agriculture participant mentioned that she knew this site existed, but did not know where it was located or what it was called, much less when it was founded.

[7] This organization went through several variations in location, urban agriculture form, and services throughout 2010-2016, they are currently operating a mobile farmers market and a peri-urban farm with associated programs 2016-current.

Figure 6   Date of Establishment of Garden, Farm, or Program

In summary, Wilmington, Delaware is a city marked by contrasts. It is 'America's Corporate Capital' and yet 'Murdertown, USA'. Wilmington is founded on exploitation and conquest, and yet (some of) its people thrived in periods of violence. Wilmington based industry allowed for marginalized communities, especially African-Americans, a chance for labor market participation where they had previously been excluded, while introducing later gentrification and de-industrialization. Today, poverty afflicts a quarter of Wilmington's population, and this poverty disproportionately affects African-American families, who are the largest racial group in Wilmington. As part of efforts to alleviate social injustices, many organizations were created that either utilize urban agriculture as part of their broader goals, or use urban agriculture as their principal site of organizing around social justice as a means to ameliorate these racial disparities. Research on UA examines the potential for social justice across multiple fields, but also its potential to reinforce injustices. The next section is focused on scholarly examinations of UA and social justice.

Literature Review: The Nexus of Urban Agriculture and Social Justice
Urban agriculture has been described as a potential site of social justice. However, to understand why, it is important to contextualize what social justice and urban agriculture are separately, as well as the social justice orientated history of urban agriculture in order to discuss this nexus. Paradoxically, despite urban

agriculture being described as having the potential for social justice, there is equal

opportunity for injustice as participants engage in daily practices, as is shown in

historical and modern examples. In this literature review I will first define social

justice and then discuss several forms that social justice can take, in order to highlight

the multiple connections between injustices. Urban agriculture will be defined next, as

it is an umbrella concept encompassing a diverse array of forms which may not always

be connected to the wider group. Following that, I review a history of urban

agriculture. Once the two concepts are discussed, I conclude with a section reviewing

the intersections of social justice and urban agriculture, which will lead into the

methodology and methods section.

While social justice has become ingrained in everyday vocabularies, it may be

difficult to define (Reisch 2002; Merrett 2004; Turhan 2010), much less perform, and

some even argue that more radical proponents paradoxically work against it by

augmenting communities and individuals' reliance on the state (see for example:

Novak 2009). As there are multiple definitions for social justice, I rely in my thesis on

a single version that attempts to capture unequal relations as a whole. For

Papageorgiou, "social justice is intimately related to the concept of equality, and that

the violation of it is intimately related to the concept of inequality" (1980: 110), and

this simplified definition is the one I use in my research as it is an umbrella term that

allows for discussion of multiple sites of social justice, such as the environment, race

relations, and food access. The simplicity of Papageorgio's definition also allows for

conversation with research participants who may think about social justice in a

number of different ways. This nexus of (in)justice and (in)equality is experienced differently by different bodies, and marginalized groups face more oppression than others (Crenshaw 1991; Valentine 2007). Others reinforce this view, stating that working towards one justice requires addressing several injustices as the structural roots are the same (Billings and Cabbil 2011; Cadieux and Slocum 2015; Wartman 2015; Broad 2016). It is nonetheless important to discuss different components of social (in)justice; they may be connected, but cannot be understood or solved universally. Here I focus on: environmental, economic, racial, and food (in)justices; all of which intersect with urban agriculture (see also: Reynolds and Cohen 2016).

Environmental justice can be broadly defined as equal consideration and participation of all people regardless of gender, race, religion, nationality, income, and so on in environmental governance (Bullard and Johnson 2012, 558). The US Environmental Protection Agency says environmental justice will be achieved when all have "the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work (US EPA 2018, n.p.). Despite the US government's official environmental narrative, there is ample evidence that environmental injustice disproportionately affects socially marginalized U.S. populations (Bullard and Johnson 2002; Mohai et al. 2009; Grove et al. 2017) that are to varying degrees excluded from environmental policy-making (Schlosberg 2004). For instance, the Native American Standing Rock Sioux Tribe formally filed a lawsuit against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline through their sacred lands, but were denied

by the U.S. government. Recent examples of environmental (and other) injustices in the U.S. include the Flint water crisis, oil leaks from the Keystone Pipeline, and the Trump Administration's slow response to post-Hurricane Maria Puerto Rico, among numerous other environmentally-damaging aspects of the forty-fifth president's tenure. Environmental injustices frequently impact populations that suffer from economic injustices, as they lack either the investment from state or other entities or the financial ability to withstand environmental degradation.

Economic justice can be thought of as working towards an equitable financial foundation for all people regardless of *whom* they are. While one of America's many unofficial mottos is 'the land of opportunity', economic opportunities are unevenly distributed based on race, gender, and national origin (The Movement for Black Lives n.d.; McGowan 2012). Economic injustice manifests in/through gentrification, disinvestment or continued non-investment, unemployment, wage gaps for the same work, homeownership, and so on. The structural roots of various populations' economic injustices may be diverse, but ultimately return to capitalistic socioeconomic systems. Mona Domosh is a historical-cultural geographer that explores, among other things, the connections between whiteness, nation-building, consumption, and gender. Domosh observes that imagery of commodities was used during the 19th and 20th centuries to promote particular economic activities based around gender and national identities based around race (2005). While this imagery implied that anyone could become American through mass consumption, there existed a restrictive economic system which favored white patriarchal hierarchy and that the "sharing of

prosperity was rarely, if ever, accomplished" (ibid 2005, 547), remaining in the hands

of white patriarchy. The legacy of this system particularly impacts low-income

communities of color; in geographies of food, this is evidenced by the prevalence of

'food deserts' or 'food swamps', areas which lack of accessible healthy food or an

abundance of junk food respectively, in these communities. Urban agriculture sites can

produce supplemental or even all the food needs of the communities in which they

reside.

At its nucleus, racial justice can be thought of as seeking equity across races

and securing de jure *and* de facto rights structurally denied to non-dominant racial

groups. Racial justice connects to differences [oppressions] in education, law

enforcement and surveillance, economics, and a host of other injustices. A

foundational piece of racial injustice against African-Americans today is the legacy of

slavery. While slavery in the United States was officially outlawed in 1865, the

practice of marginalizing African-Americans continues today. Wacquant (2006) notes

in his paper on race and incarceration, more specifically:

> "[...] that slavery and mass imprisonment are genealogically linked
> and that one cannot understand the latter—its timing, composition, and
> smooth onset as well as the quiet ignorance or acceptance of its
> deleterious effects on those it affects—without returning to the former
> as historic starting point and functional analogue" (Wacquant 2006,
> 41-42)

Incarceration rates, and therefore the deleterious impacts of criminalization, are

proportionally much higher for African-Americans than whites in the U.S. (Payne

2011, Alexander 2010). Indeed, protests and organizations for racial justice are often

disproportionately surveilled by law enforcement agencies. Rios writes about the

protests in the wake of the unlawful killings of young black men by police in Oakland,

California towards the end of the 2000s, and how media portrayed the protests as riots

which delegitimized "their appeals for social justice" (2011, 25) and in turn reinforced

negative images of African-Americans across the USA. Moreover, inequalities in

cities surrounding race often intersect food injustices (Heynen et al. 2012).

Rasheed Salaam Hislop developed a definition of food justice that calls it "the

struggle against racism, exploitation, and oppression taking place within the food

system that addresses inequality's root causes both within and beyond the food chain"

(2015, 29). Hislop's definition is useful here as the food justice movement is a

relatively young social movement that has the potential to transform food systems in

order to address inequalities (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010) prevalent among marginalized

groups. Cadieux and Slocum produce a guide towards that transformation, arguing that

food justice must address "four key points of intervention: trauma/inequity, exchange,

land, and labor" (2015, 2), each of which is a significant undertaking in their own

right. Many scholars note that attempts to do food justice - such as urban agriculture,

alternative food networks, farmers' markets, mobile markets, and the like - become

co-opted by whiteness and other neoliberal processes and thus exclude the very people

they aim to help (Guthman 2008; Alkon and McCullen 2011; Alkon and Mares 2012;

Naylor 2012). Minkoff-Zern discusses how the U.S. government attempts to address

food justice assume that low-income and communities of color simply do not know what healthy food is, and thus "[e]ducation becomes the way to tackle the problem of food insecurity" (2014, 1190) rather than addressing the structural root of the issue. The food and welfare systems of the USA take on paternalistic and hierarchical perspective on communities of color and place the blame on the very people that are impacted while simultaneously ignoring these peoples' longstanding knowledges of food production and healthy eating.

Urban agriculture is similarly a common concept that can be challenging to define based on its various forms. It is thus important to define these different spaces in order to discuss urban agriculture. In discussions of urban agriculture, some use the term 'community garden' (see: Draper and Freedman 2010; Gregory et al. 2016), defined by Kurtz as "tangible arenas in which urban residents can establish and sustain relationships" (2001, 656) with one another, the environment, and their wider community. Many others use the broader term urban agriculture. An industrial definition of urban agriculture can be found in Shackleton et al.:

> "Urban agriculture is an industry located within (intra-urban) or on the fringe (peri-urban) 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 material resources, products and services found in and around that urban area, and in turn supplying human and material resources, products and services largely to that urban area."(Mougeot 2000: 10 in Shackelton et al. 2009: xxiii)

This definition suggests that urban agriculture is merely a market enterprise: just another business in a particular city. This definition does not consider the social role of

urban agriculture that other terms, such as community gardens, do. While these elucidations are certainly of merit to those in the academy, they may not be accessible to other audiences. Some nonacademic sources provide pragmatic clarifications on the differences between terms, with definitions such as "[s]imply put, urban farming is growing or producing food in a city" (in Greensgrow Farms n.d.) or other densely populated area, and that urban agriculture has some degree of inherent commercialism whereas community gardens do not. For the purposes of this thesis I rely on McClintock (2014) and Tornaghi (2014), as they provide analysis of the many varieties of urban agriculture forms, the scales that this practice may take place in, and how sites are organized, among other criteria.

In the U.S. context, urban agriculture as a widely recognized practice began as a consequence of the economic depression of 1893-1897 in Detroit (Warner et al. 1987, Lawson 2005). In 1894 Mayor Pingree called on landowners in fringe areas of the city to lend their property to the city government so that it could create a vacant-lot gardening program for hundreds of unemployed to grow potatoes to sustain their families during winter (Lawson 2005). The project was immensely successful in terms of food production and economic activity, and so other U.S. cities followed Detroit's example, though not to its scale. Further marginalizing these early urban agriculture programs was their design as temporary philanthropic solutions to economic issues - it was beyond the (wealthy and politically connected) American psyche for poor urbanites to have enclosed crop area or open spaces, places reserved for rural farmers

and the urban elite. Nonetheless, the various social justice benefits ascribed to urban agriculture today such as access to fresh, nutritious foods, economic opportunities for marginalized people, and improvement of health were recognized during the late 1800s vacant lot programs (Lawson 2005). An American approach to urban agriculture –tended to be, as Lawson notes, focused at sites of education "[...] by 1906, the United States Department of Agriculture was estimating over 75,000 school gardens" (2005, 52).

During World War One, urban agriculture became something of a matter of national security. The National War Garden Committee under the American Forestry Association began a campaign with patriotic slogans such as "Sow the Seeds of Victory" for urbanites to grow their own food, so that primary agricultural industries could ship their produce to troops overseas (Warner et al. 1987). Five million gardeners produced hundreds of millions of dollars worth of foodstuff. While successful, support for the so called victory gardens waned during the Interwar Period, and most sites were repurposed for other economic development (Lawson 2005). In the Second World War, "the home garden became the first line of defense for the country" (Naylor 2012, 487) as the U.S. Government urged and supported urban agriculture for civilian use while it allocated as many resources, including food, as war supplies. Though some forty to forty-four percent of America's domestic vegetable needs were met by urban victory gardens (Warner et al. 1987) and yet again its social benefits were recognized. Much like the case post-WWI, the U.S. government stopped assisting urban agriculture programs, partially due to war rations no longer being

needed and partially due to the U.S. fully embracing industrialized food systems (Naylor 2012) that lowered demand for urban agriculture.

In the 1950s-1960s, urban agriculture was more focused on grassroots efforts fueled by politicized social movements, such as the African-American civil rights movement, taking up vacant lots left from urban to suburban migration. Due to the often decentralized nature of grassroots movements, records during this time are scarce (Warner et al. 1987, Lawson 2005). Despite these efforts, vacant lots began to decay and become blighted areas. Some cities, such as Syracuse, NY, began new gardening programs, this time encouraging residents to garden to clean up abandoned land. Various groups such as the NYC based Green Guerillas, Seattle P-Patch, Boston Urban Gardeners, and Philadelphia Green reinvigorated interest in urban agriculture during the 1970s aimed at combating environmental crises (Naylor 2012, 488).

Urban agriculture programs in the 1970s and 1980s took on more community involvement along all processes of planning and participation (Lawson 2005), which combined the impetuses from prior eras of urban agriculture with a new focus on community engagement, resiliency to decay or other urban ills, and positive social processes. In the 1980s urban agriculture organizations took on more roles in everyday community life and consequently needed more funds than the grassroots movements of the 1960s-1970s - just as today, there is a discrepancy between various organizations in abilities to secure funds. The federal government created the Urban Garden Program in 1976 which funded urban agriculture programs in twenty-eight

cities - these produced roughly twenty-one million dollars in estimated value. While

the 1980s saw some urban agriculture sites demolished in favor of other city

development, U.S. urban agriculture expanded. Projects in the 1990s were broadened

from gardening to 'greening', the change in nomenclature divided practitioners based

on motivations, organizational structure, and other elements of operation (Lawson

2005).

Today, some urban agriculture sites as used economic or cultural preservation

activities for immigrants or other groups, or are parts of wider social justice missions,

or assist in community food security, or to 're-wild' cities, and more. The recent

attention placed on the practice of urban agriculture in the U.S. is perhaps most

directly related to long-standing food movements including alternative food networks,

sustainable food movement, and local food movements. Alternative food networks, or

AFNs, can be defined as "efforts to respatialize and resocialize food production,

distribution and consumption" (Kontothanasis 2017, 667) by considering the

sociocultural elements of the local community and promoting an alternative

capitalism. AFNs arose from a desire to challenge the economic dominance of

mainstream agri-food systems which have inherent injustices at every part of the

conventional network. Sustainable food movements are related to AFNs, but focus

more on ecological concerns: for example, establishing a food system in sync with

natural systems and living organisms. Local food movements are yet another

permutation of these strands of thought, focusing on the political 'place of food' as an

everyday act of resistance to globalization (Feagan 2007) or as an everyday act of

'doing good' for the environment by limiting food miles (Meryment 2010). In all these movements, urban agriculture plays a key role in working toward their objectives: many of which seek social justice.

To recall, I have discussed four types of social justice: environmental, economic, racial, and food (in)justices; and also discussed the plethora of definitions of urban agriculture and its history. The two concepts of urban agriculture and social justice have a degree of synergy, as the physical site of urban agriculture and the practices of participants within it can serve as sites of social justice. Literature discussing the potential of urban agriculture for social justice covers a diverse range of various social changes.

Projections indicate that the world population will surpass nine billion by the middle of the 21st Century, with the majority living in urban areas especially in peripheral countries (UN DESAa). This expected growth has only heightened calls for urban environmental justice. Mendes et al. note that common benefits ascribed to urban agriculture include "creation of vibrant green spaces, revitalized brownfield sites, improved air quality, food that travels a shorter distance from field to plate, preservation of cultivable land, cooler buildings, and improved urban biodiversity" (2008, 435), underscoring the potential of urban agriculture in addressing varying environmental issues. Smit and Nasr discuss how an overlooked limiting factor to urban growth and sustainability is a city's ability to dispose of its waste, stating that urban agriculture can "play an especially significant role in the recycling of organic

wastes" (1992, 143) as it can convert food and water waste into food [and fuel] products within the city or just outside it. Using wastewater for agriculture frees more freshwater for consumption, which is important as across the world water quality and readily available resources are depleting (UN DESAb). Other environmental injustices that can be mitigated in part by urban agriculture are soil contamination (Brown and Jameton 2000; Knizhnik 2012; Beniston and Mercer 2014) through a process known as phytoremediation, and urban heat islands - the phenomenon of areas within cities to be hotter than their surroundings – as studies note vegetation can cool surrounding urban areas (Knizhnik 2012; Goldman 2017). These biophysical changes can be considered environmental justice as areas suffering from the root environmental harm are frequently located in low income and minority communities. However, urban agriculture is not without environmental risk. Some note that urban agriculture can increase pest animal problems by providing a habitat sanctuary in the city (Gregory et al. 2016). Others caution that should pesticides and fertilizers be used in urban agriculture, as is the case with more intensive products such as grapes, the harm to citizens' health may be great (Mancebo 2016).

Urban agriculture has a vast potential for social justice at the community level. Perhaps urban agriculture's greatest social benefit is as a mechanism for augmenting or fostering community identities, through the particular urban agriculture form of community gardens. Kurtz found that community gardens "serve as tangible and dynamic arenas in which urban residents construct and reinterpret" (2001, 668) the notions of garden and of community, and that different actors negotiated community

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gardens in different ways. Kurtz centers on how different racial and class groups in three gardens in Minneapolis, Minnesota held different opinions on how gardens should appear and what gardens should do, and that these perceptions were informed by the demographic composition of the communities these sites were situated in. Other authors support this idea of urban agriculture's potential to promote community cohesion, noting that gardens must be designed and maintained by local community members in order to bring about that cohesion (Kingsley and Townsend 2006) and that this contributed to communities' perceptions of safety and unity. As community gardens can be shared spaces, different people will come into contact with one another. The act of creating a common space and maintaining it with other people may result in diverse members of the community conversing and sharing knowledge, but the creation of common space can also lead to tensions over it.

Hanna and Oh state that when community members "[…] begin to know their neighbors, they believe they can create a strong community" (2000, 211) and because of this sense of community, can overcome individual or community obstacles as a collective. Kurtz found that in the case of at least one garden, "gardeners agreed that neighborhood adults have come to know each other better through gardening together" (2001, 665) than through other activities, and in getting to know one another, possibilities for cooperation are opened. Lang underscores Kurtz's finding, stating that ""[c]ommunity" is imagined as being "strengthened" and "built" through the encounters between people and gardens" (2014, 483) as they come to know one another. In addition to community building benefits, urban agriculture may have

individual and community health benefits not directly related to the environment.

Calhoun (n.d., 4-5) notes that engaging in urban agricultural practices provides an

opportunity for moderate exercise, an affective space for stress relief, and the potential

for local jobs and entrepreneurship.

Moreover, urban agriculture can also be a site for youth-skill building, where

children and young adults can be taught skills that they can use to further their

employment prospects (Weissman 2015). It allows for marginalized groups such as

female migrants to resist further marginalization and even begin challenging structural

oppression (Hovorka 2006). This economic improvement comes with a potential for

negative community change: gentrification, or the redevelopment of an area to become

more middle class, which pushes out low-income community members as the

neighborhood becomes less-affordable. Many social justice organizations fall victim

to neoliberal, or market, realities, in which the very benefits of urban agriculture

undermine its participants' use of it in social justice as property rates in the area

around an urban agriculture site rise past marginalized community members' financial

resources. Delind asks "Has not urban agriculture also functioned as a strategic

neoliberal tool as well as an attractive place holder on the road to gentrification, thus

keeping power and privilege in its place?" (Delind 2015, 3), augmenting the potential

for urban agriculture to be subverted by neoliberal forces. Related to this issue of

gentrification caused in part by urban agriculture is *who* is being pushed out, tying into

economic and racial justices. Most studies find that, it is low-income people of color

who are most impacted. One manifestation of impacts is uneven food geographies,

where marginalized groups have less access to nutritious food than more affluent communities, a situation that is commonly referred to as living in a food desert.

In the notion of 'food deserts' and 'food swamps', Hu et al. state that "low-income, primarily African American urban neighborhoods have experienced the flight of grocery stores into wealthier suburbs" (2013, 69) underscoring how racial, economic, and food injustices intersect. While urban agriculture may and indeed does serve as a site of radical racial justice (see: Reynolds and Cohen 2016), it and related vehicles for food justice can be threatened by proliferation of normative discourses such as whiteness, ignorance of cultures and practices of communities of color, and neoliberal market processes. Many authors find that, in the case of African-Americans, resistance to both participating in and consuming the things produced by urban agriculture initiatives is due to connections with slavery or cultural loss of specific foods (Guthman 2008; Hu et al. 2013; McArthur 2017), which psychologically alienates individuals from possible participation in urban agriculture.

Hu et al. write that African-Americans feel that choosing healthier food grown via urban agriculture "over traditional foods is sometimes seen as giving up African American culture for mainstream White culture" (2013, 70) surrendering their identities to a whitened norm. Others talk about how the media portrays urban farming as 'white', concealing a rich history and contemporary practice of people of color in urban agriculture (Reynolds 2015; Reynolds and Cohen 2016). Social justice oriented urban agricultural programs often seek to educate communities on particular

conceptualizations of diets, food choices, and methods of food production. Guthman (2008) remarks that white dissemination of knowledge bears colonial leanings "in that it seeks to improve the other while eliding the historical developments that produced these material and cultural distinctions in the first place" (2008, 436), ignoring the capitalist commodification of African bodies and their forced labor that form the structural root of injustices. This whitened knowledge base obscures other forms of food culture and knowledge building, contributing to cultural diversity loss.

The co-opting of alternative food networks by elitist whites and the food epistemologies they propagate is well-documented in California (Guthman 2008; Alkon and McCullen 2011; Lyson 2014). Lyson's study included a sample of the "most active, well-known, and accessible activists in the [food and urban agriculture] movement" in Oakland (2014, 318), a sample that was primarily female, white, and college educated. Although Lyson (ibid) states that this sample is not emblematic of urban agriculture participants in Oakland, her study's sample highlights the disproportion of white-dominated urban agriculture venues' visibilities compared to other racial groups. Both the knowledges urban agriculture organizations spread and the visibility of primarily white-controlled urban agriculture sites [despite the good work that they often do] shows us that a structure is in place that actively promotes whitened ideas of food that are considered to be dominant in society.

When it comes to food justice, urban agriculture's greatest potential for positive social change is through food justice as an alternative, community-based

economic system. Guthman observes that at least some urban agriculture participants are "highly cognizant of the whiteness of the alternative food movement and strive to alter both the economic and cultural conditions in which the alternatives to the alternatives operate" (2008, 442). There is an active process of maintaining community culture and serving a community in some urban agriculture organizations, but in others this may not be the case. As livelihoods increase in low income communities of color, state social welfare is decreased and urban agriculture organizations "ultimately fill in gaps left by the rolling back of the social safety net" (McClintock 2012, 2). Urban agriculture entities are cautious of state intervention of their work, and thus "often organize outside the space of the state" (Cadieux and Slocum 2015, 7), though it is observed that organizations in the so-called 'Global North' are more favorable of state involvement in their processes. For urban agriculture to serve as a site of a food justice that not only struggles against various injustices but also addresses their structural roots, organizations and participants of urban agriculture must be vigilant of being co-opted by neoliberal forces, be politically active vehicle for social change, and remain grounded in the community they seek to serve. Urban agriculture, as a component of an alternative food network, has the potential to change those very structural roots that have twisted our food system to what it is today, but only if agents make it so. Guthman argues:

> "They are rejecting the limited tools of the market and thinking about
> other ways in which food issues can galvanize social movements for
> global justice - because, ultimately, what needs to be put on the table is

not only fresh fruits and vegetables (and really, whatever you want to
eat), but capitalism." (2011, 46)

In summary, social justice and urban agriculture have a degree of synergy. Both

concepts are broadly used but difficult to define, made all the more challenging by the

concepts' breadth. Urban agriculture has a history of being used in times of strife,

alleviating the injustices faced at that time. It has been adopted into more fluid forms

today by participants that may use the site as an everyday platform for varying social

justice pursuits in the communities the sites are situated in. It is this fluidity,

everydayness, and direct involvement with the community that informed my

methodological design and methods of my research.

Methodology and Methods

Agriculture takes hard, determined work in order to succeed, whether that is in

the countryside or the side of the block. Urban agriculture is every bit as dirty as its

rural counterpart. Participants bleed, sweat, and muddy their clothes and bodies as

they plant and harvest crops, rotate compost, maintain the grounds, and so on. It is this

everyday visceral nature of practicing urban agriculture, in addition to my theoretical

framework, that helped shape my research methodology.

In this section, I will discuss this methodology – my theoretical framework,

positionality, research questions, methods and data collection, research participants,

and data analysis. I will lead with a review of feminist geopolitics: where it fits in

within political geography, how it came about, and feminist approaches to fieldwork,

as it informs how I developed my research questions and why I asked them, and how I

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positioned myself with research participants. Then, I will discuss my positionality as an academic conducting fieldwork in order to showcase who I am and how that influenced my research. Following this, I will cover my research questions in depth, and next, my methods and data collection, in order to illuminate how I analyzed the data. I will discuss my research participants next, as their experiences and worldviews shape the data, and then my methods of data analysis attuned to the wider methodology, concluding with the limitations of the research.

In this research I examine urban agriculture as a potential site for social justice activism by analyzing the different ways in which urban agriculture participants perceive and practice their work. I frame this research in feminist geopolitics, a specialization of political geography constituting diverse trajectories of exploring power dynamics in everyday lives of people. Dixon writes, "Feminist inquiry is arguably an approach that feels for the borders of thought and practice" (2015, 1), rather than conforming to a 'standardized' way of being. Similar to other forms of geographic inquiry, feminist geopolitics is concerned with - and complicated by - understanding *difference.* These differences can include, but are not limited to: race, sex, and class, and as *geo-* implies, can be investigated at any scale and *anywhere*, a concept borrowed from feminist geography. As feminist geopolitics de-centers the state by focusing on materialities and everyday lives it can deconstruct uneven power dynamics and open new possibilities of knowledge and being (ibid, 13). In doing so, feminist geopolitics provides opportunities to understand others' experiences and

perceptions and how these inform their worldviews. Such knowledges challenge the dominant narrative written generally by white men in positions of political or economic power by unleashing avenues of understanding obscured by the standard white patriarchal views.

A key component of what a feminist geopolitics can do is situate research at the site of the body, which can help to more clearly understand the material impacts of statecraft on individuals and communities, or whom Dixon and Marston call "the bodies at the sharp end" (2011, 445) of warfare, transnational immigration, or uneven development. Dixon and Marston borrow this from Dowler and Sharp (2001) who called for a geopolitics that would render 'bodies at the sharp end visible'. This idea comes more broadly from feminist theorizing. Feminist geographies are "anchored by the body" (Nelsen and Seager 2005, 2) to a number of topics such as ethnic struggles or resistance, or the ramifications of global economic and environmental changes. While these conflicts can be, and commonly are, understood from a 'top-down' approach that favors a uniform analysis based on a 'universal' body, feminist geographies allows for analyses of issues from a 'bottom-up' approach. Feminist geographic frameworks can be more beneficial to social justice studies than other geographic field as they engage with the different impacts of conflicts caused by the circumstances of particular communities or individuals. I use feminist geopolitics in my thesis as I research urban agriculture as a potential site of social justice for those 'at the sharp end' of poverty and injustices, which is the result of unequal development in geographic spaces that are most often inhabited by marginalized communities.

Feminist geopolitics comes out of feminist work in anarchist/radical political geography during the late 1990s and early 2000s and has greatly contributed to these subfields with regards to rethinking gender and race (Kofman, 2005). Its methodological design[s] pushes against hierarchizing research which places the researcher as an omniscient entity – or what Haraway calls the "god's eye view" (1991, 183-201); which "produces masculinist forms of objectivity by obscuring the role of the observer as an agent involved in producing knowledge that is necessarily interested and partial" (Sundberg, 2003, 183). This is common in objective methodologies, which place the researcher above and beyond their subject of study. Instead of the researcher regarding their research participants as social equals and fellow people with potentially different worldviews, the subjects are *objects* wholly separate from the researcher. This physical and social distance essentially amplifies othering which thus results in the perpetuation of difference rather than co-creation of knowledge. Naylor cautions that "[i]t is not enough to re-theorize from within; as scholars we must investigate difference" (2017, 28). As research participants embody various layers of oppression, a researcher must recognize that their research participants' experience everyday life in different ways. Feminist methodology encompasses a broad range of methods and approaches connected by intersectional approaches, a rejection of researcher-participant hierarchy, social significance of the

differences in bodies, recognition of everyday experiences as valid data, and perhaps

ultimately the liberation of oppressed people (Hammersley 1992)[8].

The aforementioned hierarchizing and distancing of the researcher from their

research participants reproduces Western and white-centric interpretations of the

world. Falcon notes that even at the level of the United Nations and its programs

during the 1990s, "emphasizing differences based on race, culture, or sexuality or even

acknowledging intragender dynamics" (2016, 12) was not in-line with prevailing

political agendas or discourses. Instead of focusing on the diversity of 'women' and

'females' and their various individual oppressions, the United Nations privileged a

less radical, more universal women's platform that reinforced a Global North

hegemony as it would be more acceptable to states such as the United States. Falcon's

observation of the privileging of a Western and white feminism is, unfortunately, a

pervasive element in even feminist geopolitics. Naylor (2017) notes that despite

feminist geopolitics' project to deconstruct existing and unequal systems in order to

create new possibilities, it does remain a highly Western-dominated field (see also:

Naylor et al. 2018).

Sundberg (2003) notes that masculinist epistemologies are created and

recreated through situating oneself from a vantage point, a practice commonly taught

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[8] For a critique of unified feminist methodology even existing see: Eichler 1994 and
Hammersley 1992

in Western pedagogies. This vantage point was argued by Sauer and later geographers to allow the researcher to look from on high down on their subjects in order to "create authoritative pictures of the land, people, and human-land relations" (ibid, 182). This method thus frames the researcher as a disembodied objective entity that paints reality from their position while disengaging from the realities of whom they are observing. Sundberg found that her research respondents, all of whom were relatively privileged academics conducting or having conducted research in Latin America, had the most difficulties during fieldwork situating themselves based on their own and of their research subjects' gender, class, positionality, and race - challenges which are not reflected in the literature (Sundberg 2003). It can be concluded that much geographic, and by extension geopolitical, research reflects this Westernized, masculinized, and whitened knowledge; which thus proliferates a particular and biased a biased worldview that may not reflect on-the-ground knowledge and ways of being.

Since the 2000s, feminist geopolitics has grown into a diverse field that examines power, oppression, and resistance across geographic scales in everyday lives through an embodied, reflexive research methodology that challenges the researcher to consider their own positionality along that of their participants'. While no means exhaustive, these are some of the themes addressed by scholars of feminist geopolitics. Anti-racism is often discussed in feminist geopolitical work (Kobayashi and Peake 1994; Kobayashi 2005; Falcon 2016). Naylor (2017, 27) provides a compact review of other case studies, such as those that focus on issues of security and conflict such as

(in)security (Massaro and Williams 2013), geographies of fear or other emotions (Christian et al. 2016), and warfare and terrorism (Hyndman 2004; Pain 2009) and addressing neoliberalism (Casolo and Doshi 2013).

The field of feminist geopolitics serves as a useful methodology for research on social justice and urban agriculture because, as Dowler and Sharp argue, it "offers a lens through which the everyday experiences of the disenfranchised can be made more visible" (2001, 169). This disenfranchisement can and often does come from state or neoliberal forces. Some authors have a Marxist focus on neoliberalism, framing capitalism through a lens of exploitation. Kosek (2006) observes how media and state agents can depoliticize marginalized people's poverty and structural injustices by blaming their issues on cultural stereotypes 'native' to the group - specifically negative elements such as drug usage, crime, and the like - of these communities rather than the politics or economics that produced the social conditions in the first place. Harvey (2005, 64-86) notes contradictory practices within neoliberalism that officially calls for little government oversight of economics but yet paradoxically requires elitist and state intervention [in economic systems] to suppress the masses, even turning to globalization and global process and entities to crush anti-neoliberal activities in sovereign states. Scholars argue that disenfranchisement exists in urban agriculture as it can "mask deeper structural inequalities" (Reynolds and Cohen 2016, 6) such as uneven access to resources based on sex or race. These systems of control

over and their associated impacts on African-Americans intersect feminist geopolitics and social – particularly food – justice.

Hayes- Conroy and Hayes-Conroy state, "eating – due to its sensual, visceral nature – is a strategic place from which to begin to understand identity, difference and power" (2008, 462) as the everyday act of consuming food can highlight much broader structures and illuminate inequalities within them. To consume food, food must be produced and accessed. The control of agricultural processes and locations where (nutritious) food can be purchased are disproportionately out of the hands of low income communities and communities of color (Billings and Cabill 2011; Broad 2016) even as social justice groups aim to counter this inequality. This politicizing of food fits in with feminist geopolitics' goal to understand "the more material aspects of how geopolitical processes shape and are shaped by the everyday lived experiences of individuals and communities" (Naylor 2017, 27). As agriculture is an embodied practice, as the act of eating let alone acquiring food is an embodied practice, and as the pursuit of social justice ultimately entails political engagement of and with marginalized people, other groups or participants, and perhaps state forces, urban agriculture participants' daily lives and thoughts of social justice shape and in turn are shaped by wider sociopolitical processes.

Regarding reflexivity, my positionality as a white male academic played a key role in how I framed my research and conducted fieldwork. This is a necessary conversation as reflexivity in one's research is a crucial way to promote greater

researcher accountability to research participants (Galam 2015). My physical body: relatively young, tall, thin, white, masculine, bearded, tattooed, able-bodied, embodies a particular assemblage of privilege, power, and social conceptualizations that my research participants, other academics, and the individuals of the communities I visited do not experience the world in the same way I do. That said, at no point during my fieldwork did I feel threatened, which contrasts with experiences of some other, female graduate students in my department based on stories they shared with me. However, I do think my positionality was a detriment at times. With few brief exceptions, mostly from white female participants of all ages, my research participants remained silent on the issue of race. I still grapple with interpreting this silence, but discussions outside my research site, led me to consider that my research participants' may have been reluctant to share their perceptions of race issues with a privileged white man. An additional explanation may also be understood in the tensions in conversations about race in the United States more broadly.

I am also still learning and reflecting on fieldwork processes, which is a critical piece in how I approach the writing as part of becoming a producer of knowledge. At one urban agriculture site, where I was potentially the only white male in the wider area, I was frequently mistaken as the person in charge, and even after I corrected community members they still looked at me while talking with the site managers. Regarding the potential of being seen as an authoritative figure on urban agriculture, I followed the advice of my advisor and other mentors to position myself as a listener. I

was there to learn about my research participant's practices and perceptions, not to highlight the literature I read or provide unsolicited advice, which was likely unneeded anyway. I find that situating oneself as a listener in fieldwork is essential to feminist methodologies and those concerned with social justice, especially when your physical body resembles and status is in part the result of a systematic white male privilege.

There were times during fieldwork that required manual labor; I had to actively prevent myself from assuming a conventional patriarchal gender role (i.e., offering to help move objects or perform 'harder' tasks) towards female research participants. Indeed, my own perception of others was initially unchecked. In one example, before an interview, I made the mistake of assuming that a black male urban agriculture participant lived in the community where his site was based, which is generally characterized as a neighborhood populated by low-income people of color. It was to my internal embarrassment that he told me his upper-middle class upbringing and position. We both, therefore, could exercise some degree of flexible mobility, but our mobilities are experienced differently. This experience helped me reflect and continuously check my position as a researcher. Academics are typically able to, among other things, travel with relative ease to locations, leave field sites at any time unlike research participants, and be seen as authoritative figures (Caretta and Jokinen 2016).

The differences, perceptions, and experiences of urban agriculture participants, coupled with the contrasts of poverty and wealth in Wilmington along with its relative small population shaped my research questions. Those three questions are:

1. What are the broader goals of organizations that engage in urban agriculture in Wilmington, Delaware?
2. What are the everyday actions of urban agriculture participants in Wilmington, and what are their perceptions of these activities?
3. Who are the urban agriculture services targeted at in Wilmington, and who primarily accesses these services?

I asked these questions in order situate the social justice missions, or lack of, of urban agriculture organizations and participants in smaller US cities in discussions of social justice oriented urban agriculture, and to gain participants' own insights into their activities. I hypothesized that organizations that engage in urban agriculture have a various social justice aims, as well as some degree of monetary gain, in the practice. I expected to find that urban agriculture was a component in much broader missions which sought to re-shape the communities in which sites were situated. I hypothesized that urban agriculture participants' everyday actions revolve around field work tasks, and direct engagement with communities. I expected to find that participants found the practice of urban agriculture a rewarding experience, in line with literature, but had different perceptions on their ability to conduct social justice. Finally, I hypothesized that organizations focus their urban agriculture services to low income, minority [primarily African-American] individuals or others in need; however, I expected to find that this intended audience accesses services less often than those of the white middle-class.

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To undertake this work, I visited sites of urban agriculture to learn about the social setting and people within the space through participant observation in an ongoing interaction; and recording notes in a systematic way while doing so (Emersen et al. 1995). Knowing that the short timeframe of my research would not allow for the level of trust creation that is quintessential to longer projects, I sought to be accountable for the short period of fieldwork through providing labor at the site, developing a system of confidentiality that research participants held a degree of control over, and keeping in somewhat regular contact with them. This "getting close" (ibid, 1) allows for a more fluid understanding of research participants' daily lives while ensuring that the researcher becomes more aware of everyday happenings and reports what they see, not what they want to see or read through secondhand sources. The researcher's active presence in the field allows them to be known to the people that they are reporting on. In my research, I used two ethnographically informed research methods: semi-structured interviews and participant observation.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty-six urban agriculture participants, and one rural agriculture participant, primarily from May to August 2017, working in thirteen different sites. I discuss my research sample and methodology in-depth in Chapter 2. I use 'sites' for this scale of analysis instead of organization, as many sites were ultimately operated by a small number of occasionally inter-locking organizations. Research participants that performed physical labor had different everyday experiences than those who performed administrative functions at organization headquarters. My interviews were semi-structured in order for

participants to 'speak for themselves', which allowed them to express how they

perceived and experienced things. This is important as I draw from feminist

geopolitics, which is concerned with intersectional experiences, the value of everyday

lived experiences and feelings as data, and a rejection of hierarchical systems placing

one person over another or others. Though interviews had a habit of becoming

unstructured when multiple research participants were engaged in conversation with

each other and myself; this augmented discussion by allowing for topics that may have

not been mentioned had it been more structured. Most interviews were held either in

the field or in private office settings, with a handful occurring in other locations such

as coffee shops or at organizational meetings and events. I had several goals in my

interviews, which were to learn about organizations' and individuals':

1. Background (education, were they community members or not)
2. Why or if, they were engaging in urban agriculture and social justice
3. What they do for their organization or community
4. How they defined their sites
5. How they felt about their social justice work
6. How they feel about urban agriculture work
7. How they felt practicing urban agriculture

While semi-structured interviews allowed individuals to speak for themselves,

direct participant observation allowed me to attach meaning to everyday practices.

Participant observation can be defined as the process in which a researcher learns

about the daily activities of research participants through observation and participation

in those actions. It allowed me to gain understanding through everyday immersion into

urban agriculture. This, in turn, provided me a working knowledge of practices and

labor of urban agriculture across sites and people. While I prioritized recording notes

over directly engaging in activities, I nonetheless 'got my hands dirty' whenever possible. This included directly assisting urban agriculture participants in various planting and harvesting techniques, site maintenance, building gardens or structures, driving vehicles, and setting up farmer's markets.

As I stated previously, I had conducted interviews with twenty-seven (urban) agriculture participants, and spoke with several more individuals during my fieldwork. Participants were all recruited through snowballing techniques, after gaining an initial set of interviews at an urban agriculture conference held in Wilmington. My research participants come primarily from Wilmington based groups or sites, with some just outside the city, and a handful from other locations in Delaware. The participants work for NGOs, the State of Delaware, or in school systems. I prioritized those individuals and groups with implicit or explicit social justice goals. The following chart shows my research participants and where they primarily work (if not including their parent organization). In order to protect confidentiality, I elected to use pseudonyms. Confidentiality is required due to the limited number of major urban agriculture – social justice activists in Wilmington and their tightly woven community. One of my earliest contacts suggested I use individuals' favorite fruits or vegetables as their pseudonyms; which worked for a period of time until research participants began sharing their pseudonyms with one another. I thus necessarily had to convert to a system using 'Participant" and then a letter from the Norwegian alphabet; I provide the resulting list in Figure 7. In addition, I obscure the actual sites and groups with numbered pseudonyms based on the organizational structure of the site or group.

Names of Individuals	Urban Agriculture Site or Group
Participant A (PA) Participant B (PB) Participant C (PC)	Peri-Urban Agriculture Site 1 (PUAS1)
Participant D (PD) Participant E (PE)	Urban Agriculture Site 1 (UAS1)
Participant F (PF) Participant G (PG)	Urban Agriculture Site 2 (UAS2)
Participant H (PH) Participant I (PI)	Wider Organization 1 (WDO1)
Participant J (PJ) Participant K (PK) Participant L (PL) Participant M (PM)	Wider Organization 2 (WDO2)
Participant N (PN) Participant O (PO)	Urban Agriculture Site 3 (UAS3)
Participant P (PP) Participant Q (PQ)	Urban Agriculture Site 4 (UAS4)
Participant R (PR) Participant S (PS)	Peri-Urban Agriculture Site 2 (PUAS2)
Participant T (PT)	Rural Agriculture Site 1 (RAS1)
Participant U (PU) Participant V (PV) Participant W (PW) Participant X (PX) Participant Y (PY)	Urban Agriculture Site 5-6 (UAS5-6)
Participant Z (PZ)	Peri-Urban Agriculture Site 3 (PUAS3)
Participant Æ (PÆ)	Urban Agriculture Site 7 (UAS7)

Figure 7   Chart of pseudonyms of research participants and the sites or groups they belonged to

While I spoke with more urban agriculture participants at various meetings or field

sites, I interacted in depth with these twenty-seven research participants. Figure 8

shows their age range, category, and the location of my interviews.

Male: 10
Female: 17

Ages: Approximately 20s to later 60s

White: 17
African American: 9
Other[9]: 1

Wilmington (including peri) based interview: 23

Non-Wilmington based interview: 4

Figure 8   Demographic Profile of Research Participants

Analysis of the data took place in the months following August. The method I

chose was indexing. First, I compiled the field notes and interview transcriptions into a

single document. I read through this record as whole, subjecting the collection to a

"close, intensive reflection and analysis" (Emersen et al. 1995, 142). As this project is

qualitative in nature, I first open-coded to broadly identify themes, issues, ideas, and

common or outlying information. After narrowing these into categories, I subjected

the field notes to a coding system, where I placed categories next to key themes,

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[9] The category other is used to maintain confidentiality with the research participant.

words, and ideas in the collection. For example, 'Affect' was a category, while particular words such as 'calm', 'peaceful', and 'my place of zen' fell under that category. I then created an index of these categories, with the page number they are listed on.

Consistent with fieldwork and research more generally, this project has had several limitations. The main limitation of this project was time. As a Master's program is ideally a two-year process, the majority of fieldwork takes place in the summer months between the first year Spring Semester and second year Fall Semester. This brief window takes place during the height of the farming season. My project's fieldwork component thus suffered from the twin issues of a short timeframe, and taking place during the busiest season for agriculturalists. Many potential interviews were canceled due to urban agriculture participants needing to bring their produce to market, or dedicate days for harvesting. Another limitation of my project was my dependence on primarily two organizations for snowballing interviews. While both organizations are the leading entities in Wilmington's urban agriculture sites and are deeply intertwined with one another and other organizations, in both professional and personal connections, my reliance on only one network marginalized the possibility to meet other urban agriculture participants or networks not affiliated with them.

Conclusion

Wilmington is recognized as the Corporate Capital due to its vast number of businesses especially when compared to its population, and as Murdertown due to

violence in the city. Intersectional inequalities around income, food access, and race, combined with the vibrant yet obscured urban agriculture community in Wilmington drove my interest in studying the intersection of urban agriculture and social justice in the city. Wilmington is a small US city, and is more reflective of the average US city than the larger metropolises that US based social justice-urban agriculture literature is focused on. By studying smaller US cities' urban agriculture phenomenon, more replicable and potentially more effective urban agriculture and social policies can be enacted.

Social justice and urban agriculture are difficult concepts to define and yet are commonly discussed. Social justice can take many forms such as environmental, economic, racial, and food. Urban agriculture in the U.S. has an evolving history: initially temporary fixes to economic or military issues, urban agriculture became radicalized by political movements and later sites of urban greening and sustainability, and today, many urban agriculture sites take on social justice missions informed by the communities they serve. This history is reflected in Wilmington, with an explosion of interest in urban agriculture following Michele Obama's White House Garden in 2009.

Feminist geopolitics, with its methodological focus on intersectionality, the value of everyday perception and emotion, and rejection of hierarchical research, serves as a useful theoretical framework for projects based on social justice which seeks to improve equalities. It is a relatively young field, and has enormous transformative potential for geopolitical analysis, much as urban agriculture has

enormous transformative potential for social justice. As social (in)justice can occur anywhere at any scale, and feminist geopolitics can explore the impacts of statecraft upon a body of any scale and that body's impacts on statecraft, there is a clear synergy between the fields.

In the chapters to follow, I will discuss two major themes I identified from my project. The first relates to intra-and-inter group tensions and conflicts, which are caused by varying perceptions of how to conduct social justice, but also by the everyday experiences of urban agriculture participants. The second paper covers the dual themes of invisibility of and lack of access to urban agriculture sites, despite the plethora of locations in Wilmington. As Reynolds and Cohen caution us, "[u]rban agriculture can be a powerful force to dismantle multiple forms of oppression and advance social justice - but only if we make it so" (2016, 140), and the dilemmas addressed in the next two papers can impede the pursuit of social justice via urban agriculture from within, or strengthen the bonds between participants, networks, and communities.

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Chapter 2

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In order to expand upon my methodological design and the contexts for my research sites, everyday experiences, and participants, I have included this appendix. I will first discuss where each urban agriculture site is situated and describe the immediate community or area around the sites based on my research participants' and my own perceptions. I then review my snowballing process including making my initial contact with urban agriculture participants and research participant recruitment methods. I review my methods next, including what actions or behaviors I engaged while at the site and where interviews occurred. I then review my research sample and discuss each subsample. After this, I discuss the coding process. I then conclude with a summary of this chapter.

Spatial Context

From May to August 2017, I conducted research on urban agriculture sites utilized by social justice groups primarily in Wilmington, Delaware, but also within the broader New Castle County. New Castle County is the northernmost and most populous of Delaware's three counties. I chose to focus on Wilmington and other sites within New Castle County, due to the large number of active urban agriculture sites. The following map, readily available via University of Delaware's Cooperative Extension website, illustrates this high volume of urban agriculture sites in the region and the density within, and just beyond, Wilmington's borders.
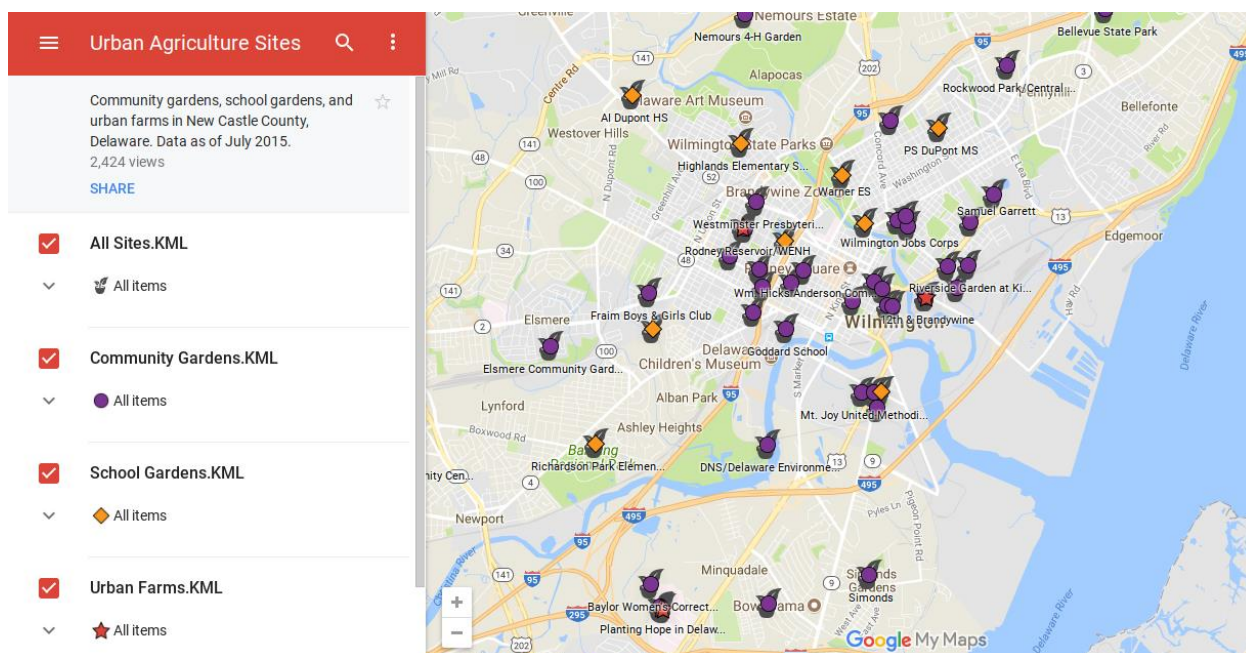
Figure 9   Map of Urban Agriculture Sites in New Castle County, Delaware, zoomed in to the city of Wilmington. This map was produced by University of Delaware's Cooperative Extension and dates from July 2015. (University of Delaware Cooperative Extension 2017)

While this data is from 2015, and I was told by one research participant that not only is the map outdated but also not inclusive, it does capture the number and density of sites within my research area[10]. It should be noted that my research sites are in relatively close proximity to one another, further underscoring the aforementioned density. Urban agriculture sites within the map are categorized into

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[10] This map does not include several sites I visited during my research, and I did not go to every urban agriculture site featured on this map.

community gardens, urban farms, and school gardens; my research is concerned with the former two categories. I conducted my research with twenty-seven participants who worked for at least ten organizations across seven urban agriculture sites, three peri-urban sites, one rural site, and two wider organization headquarters[11]. In the following chart, I present my research participants and these sites, anonymized through pseudonyms.

Participants	Urban Agriculture Site or Group
Participant A (PA) Participant B (PB) Participant C (PC)	Peri-Urban Agriculture Site 1 (PUAS1)
Participant D (PD) Participant E (PE)	Urban Agriculture Site 1 (UAS1)
Participant F (PF) Participant G (PG)	Urban Agriculture Site 2 (UAS2)
Participant H (PH) Participant I (PI)	Wider Organization 1 (WDO1)
Participant J (PJ) Participant K (PK) Participant L (PL) Participant M (PM)	Wider Organization 2 (WDO2)
Participant N (PN) Participant O (PO)	Urban Agriculture Site 3 (UAS3)
Participant P (PP)	Urban Agriculture Site 4 (UAS4)

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[11] I say 'at least' as many individual sites and groups were themselves within entangling and intersecting organizations, which are often geographically disconnected. Participants expressed occasional uncertainty of just who or what belonged to which group, and so I categorize them by the agriculture site(s) their immediate group operates, or the headquarters of the wider group if I visited it.

Participant Q (PQ)	
Participant R (PR) Participant S (PS)	Peri-Urban Agriculture Site 2 (PUAS2)
Participant T (PT)	Rural Agriculture Site 1 (RAS1)
Participant U (PU) Participant V (PV) Participant W (PW) Participant X (PX) Participant Y (PY)	Urban Agriculture Site 5-6 (UAS5-6)
Participant Z (PZ)	Peri-Urban Agriculture Site 3 (PUAS3)
Participant Æ (PÆ)	Urban Agriculture Site 7 (UAS7)

Figure 10   Pseudonyms of Research Participants and Sites
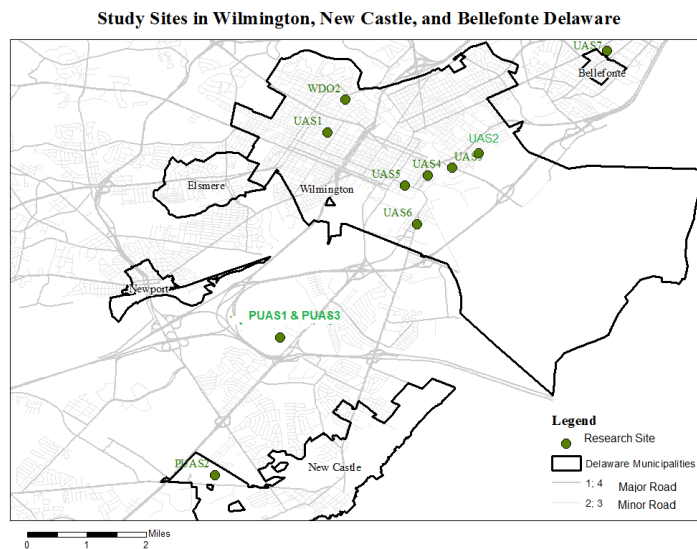
Figure 11   Research Sites in Wilmington and immediate surrounding areas. Source:
Census Tiger Files. Map Credit: Nathan Thayer, Department of
Geography, University of Delaware
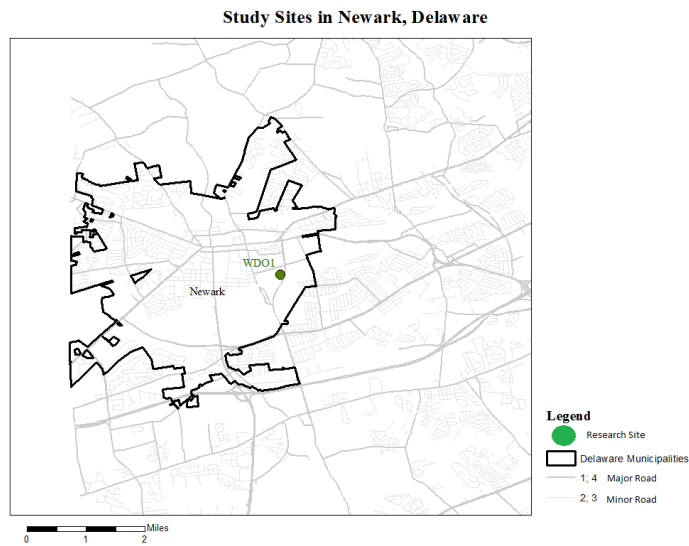
Figure 12   Research Sites in Newark, Delaware. Source: Census Tiger Files. Map
            Credit: Nathan Thayer, Department of Geography, University of
            Delaware
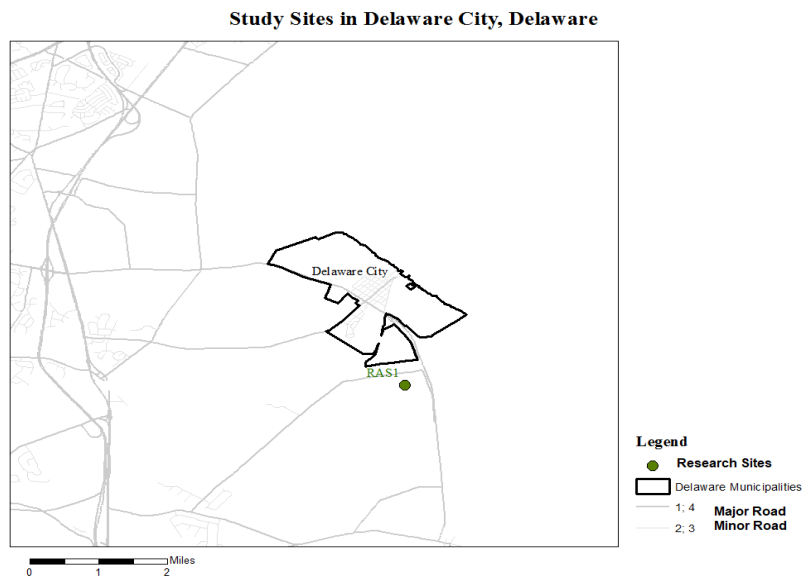
Figure 13   Research Sites in Delaware City, Delaware. Source: Census Tiger Files.
            Map Credit: Nathan Thayer, Department of Geography, University of
            Delaware

I will discuss PUAS1 and PUAS3 together as they are in close proximity to one another. However, I will focus on PUAS1, as I did not actually enter or see PUAS3 during my research. These sites are located on land owned by a Delaware state government department, and the groups rent the spaces they occupy from this department. They are situated off the Delaware Turnpike in a broader area of open land which is owned by either the state government or businesses, and are not near any residential areas. Both locations are approximately ten minutes south of Wilmington. The wider government owned land is surrounded by what PA-C described as a forested area. This forest is sufficient enough to provide habitat for deer, which PA-C describe as a major nuisance at the site. PUAS1 is composed of, at the time of my last field visit, a large greenhouse complex, a large fenced produce-growing area, and a smaller fenced growing area. It has additional installations, such as walk-in refrigerators near the larger growing area and storage spaces for vehicles and equipment.

Both PUAS1 and PUAS3 are structured as (peri-)urban farms. PUAS1 is funded by a grant from a banking group. PUAS1 is operated by a group who in turn is a part of a broader non-profit group (itself part of a community coalition), was designed to provide job education to Wilmington youth, specifically disadvantaged ones but also volunteers of all backgrounds, through different business programs. PUAS1 is the primary element in these education programs. PUAS1's group also prioritizes selling produce and flowers to local farmer's markets and restaurants. One

urban agriculture participant at PUAS1 complained about being unable to 'break even' financially, suggesting this group is for-profit or at least becoming more concerned with generating money than performing social justice. Nearby PUAS3 and the social justice group that operates it are funded as a joint venture between two Delaware state departments. PUAS3 was developed as a space for patients of a disability center ran by one of these state departments located a few yards nearby. Its primary social justice mission is to provide a space for physically and psychiatrically disabled individuals of all ages to relax and learn skills, while also providing foodstuffs for the cafeterias of state facilities in the immediate area. The group that operates PUAS3 also allows state employees and their families to rent garden space for their own purposes.

UAS1, a 'community garden', is situated in western Wilmington in a middle-class community. UAS1 sits atop a hill which used to be vacant land owned by the city government. The garden itself is composed of a large number of community owned plots. UAS1, a square, is immediately surrounded by four streets of both owned and rented apartments or homes, at least some of which have pools or playsets in the backyard. These homes appeared to be occupied and well cared for. The sidewalks of these homes were lined with thin grass yards, trees, flowers and bushes. Within short walking distance are two hospitals, multiple parks of various sizes, restaurants or other businesses, large Italian or Greek churches, and private academies. From my observations, the immediate racial demographics of UAS1 were mixed, with whites being the majority. The only individuals I saw utilizing UAS1 were a white man and

white woman with two children, however I saw mostly African-American individuals in the nearby parks. It should be noted that UAS1's parent group headquarters was within walking distance as well, and closer one was to the headquarters, houses and streets appeared to be in slightly to moderately worse conditions and the predominant observed race was African-American. UAS1 is an element of a social justice group who in turn is a part of a broader non-profit group with diverse social justice goals (itself part of a community coalition), and the garden provides both green space and the ability to grow crops to the community. UAS1 is supported by this network, the local community, University of Delaware departments, and Delaware state government departments.

Nearby UAS1, UAS2 is located between bends of the Brandywine and Shellpot Creeks, close to where the Christiana River meets the Delaware River. UAS2 is an 'urban garden' attached to a community center. The garden itself is fenced in an area behind the community center, and comprises a few raised bed plots owned by the center. Other things in this physical space included two basketball courts, a baseball field, large green grass areas, a playset and swings, a defunct garden site, and a graffiti style mural with African-American students and African-American leaders (including W.E.B. DuBois). The community nearby occupied tightly packed renter-occupied rowhomes or condos. From both census data and my own observations, UAS2's surrounding community is primarily lower income and African-American. I saw many African-American community members engaging in both leisure and labor in

the green spaces between rowhome units, but I only saw a few younger African-American children utilizing the community center's outer spaces. Inside the center, there were dozens of African-Americans of all ages engaged in leisure, and at least one of the classrooms featured signs in Spanish. There were two fairly large fenced vacant lots down the street from the center, overgrown with weeds. There were a few businesses, such as a thrift shop and liquor store, in the area, as well as a church and an Islamic center. The community center operating UAS2 aims to improve the economic and social health of this area of Northeast Wilmington by providing youth education and activity programs, a senior citizen center, and connecting community members with resources (such as government service pamphlets) and knowledge. I was unable to ascertain this group's source of funding, but an urban agriculture participant at UAS2 highlighted his connections to several politicians. UAS2 itself has benefitted from a Delaware state micro-grant this group received among ten others in 2016.

Briefly leaving Wilmington to another city in New Castle County, WDO1 is situated in Newark. WDO1 is within walking distance of University of Delaware. WDO1 is composed of four subgroups with particular focuses, such as youth development, family services, and agricultural concerns, the subgroup germane to my research focuses on lawns and gardens. There is a small horticultural garden in front of WDO1's main building, and a mixed produce-horticultural garden behind this building used for educational purposes as part of a program WDO1 operates at this location.

WDO1 provides information and services such as soil testing to urban agriculture sites, and I did not get a sense that any payment was required. While there is no immediate community, renter-owned apartments composed of University of Delaware students and other Newark residents are nearby, as well similarly occupied houses. WDO1 also hosts a daycare or youth center on site. WDO1 is funded through University of Delaware's status as a land grant institution.

WDO2 is situated just outside of the Conaty and Brandywine Parks within Wilmington, close to the Brandywine Creek and a fire station. Brandywine Park in particular is a major tourist attraction and recreation area for the city, and I saw all manner of people (and dogs) in it. This is within the area known as Trolley Square, a fairly middle and upper-middle class section of the city. The surrounding area is both residential, with owner and renter properties; and commercial, with numerous bars, restaurants, and shops catering to different groups. WDO2 has several horticultural gardens on its premises. WDO2 focuses on three urban greening topics and education regarding these topics. While I saw nor was told of any produce gardens here, I was informed that WDO2 hosts weddings and corporate events at their headquarters. Consistently during my visits to this location, I saw exclusively African-American families utilizing a playground on site, while I saw no person who was not an employee accessing the gardens of WDO2. I was unaware of WDO2's source of funding; however, I perceived that it derives from hosting corporate, academic, and

community conferences and other events based on information from the group's website, research participants' perceptions, and my own participation in events.

UAS3 is an 'urban farm' situated in northeastern Wilmington between Route 495, Governer Printz Boulevard, the Brandywine Creek, and near the Howard R Young Correctional Institution and a charter school. The community around UAS3 seemed lower to middle class, based on several vacant lots juxtaposed with small parks or other green spaces, houses or other buildings that did not seem occupied or well-cared for, and UAS3 itself having a slightly overgrown parking lot. PN tells me that to their knowledge, the immediate community is not populous, but that the population is mostly African-American homeowners, with some white families. PN also points out that the building across the street is utilized as a sort of halfway house or safehouse for exclusively for women with legal issues, who utilize UAS3. There are few, if any, businesses in this area as well. UAS3 is funded by WDO2 in conjunction with other entities, such as government departments and banks, and participants of UAS3 describe its mission as providing food education and agricultural knowledge to the community.

UAS4 is a 'community garden' located in an eastern area of Wilmington. Research participants described the broader area as having few homeowners, high rates of crime of all types, suffering environmental injustices from decaying industrial sites and active industrial facilities, and having a number of vacant lots. UAS4 is situated on a former vacant lot and rests on top of bed of rock due to contamination of

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the soil. PP described the streets in the immediate community being some of Wilmington's most criminal (in regard to drug-dealing) and poorest, with the houses behind UAS4 used for drug deals or by squatters. Both by my observation, census data, and PP's observations, the community is mostly African-Americans who occupy rowhomes. UAS4 itself is cut nearly in two by a renter occupied rowhome. UAS4 is fenced and gated. UAS4 is utilized by a group that prioritizes disadvantaged and troubled youth empowerment. This group is sponsored by entities such as DuPont, banks, and a pharmaceutical company. UAS4 itself is funded in part by a Delaware state micro-grant that this group received in 2017 among seventeen other groups.

PUAS2 is a peri-urban farm located just outside New Castle, about fifteen minutes from Wilmington. I have less information regarding the community around PUAS2, due to PR-S having tight schedules during my interviews and my choice to learn more about the group than the community. Near PUAS2 is a high school, and the site occasionally hosts weddings or other events, which may be a primary source of funds. RAS1 is located in rural area of Middletown, a town in southern New Castle County. Once more, I have little information regarding the surrounding community or funding sources for similar reasons as PUAS2. At UAS7, a titular 'community garden' that PÆ defined as an 'urban farm', is located in northwest Wilmington in the Edgemoor community. The immediate community seemed to me middle class, if not upper class. However, PÆ informed me that UAS7 is accessed primarily by middle class white people, suggesting that this group predominates the community. This

group is a non-profit and is funded by corporate and private donors. The group's social justice platform is built on youth education, recreation services, child care programs, and computer literacy programs orientated towards adults.

UAS5-6, both 'community gardens', are located in Southbridge, Wilmington. They are within walking distance of one another. According to several participants, Southbridge is impacted by environmental injustices, ranging from being prone to sewage overflow to industrial air and soil pollution. It is primarily an African-American and lower income community, based on census data, my own observations, and research participant perceptions. Most of the homes are renter occupied and in disrepair - a key task I participated in during direct participation observation at UAS5 was clearing overgrown weeds or vines from the two abandoned properties flanging the garden. I also cleared debris from the street and in the immediate community the only business I observed was a corner store. The social justice group operating UAS5-6 focused on environmental and economic justice. The sites were funded in part by a PITCH grant and through several corporate and private donors. PU, a younger white woman, described UAS5-6 as being "PR (public relations) stunts" for the Nemours Foundation, a children's healthcare organization.

Snowballing Sample, Recruitment

In January 2017, I attended a community coalition conference in Wilmington hosted by WDO2 that focused on urban agriculture. I made several contacts at this conference, however, PD was the most productive and involved in activities relevant

to my research. After an initial interview held during February 2017 with PD at her social justice group's headquarters in western Wilmington, I was provided several other contacts. Beginning in May 2017, I began conducting research in the field in earnest. PA provided multiple new contacts, including PH. PH more than any other individual served as my community liaison, connecting me to the majority of my research contacts. While this snowballing system led me to a large number of research participants, it did limit me to mostly those who participated in the community coalition conference and their contacts, obscuring those outside of this circle and its members. Outliers to this snowballing system include PT of RAS1 and PF-G of UAS2. I provided transportation for another graduate student who contacted PT, and we decided to conduct a joint interview once on site. One of my professors, Dr. Yasser Payne, was aware of UAS2 and suggested I contact individuals there.

In order to recruit research participants, I followed two guides: one for verbal (in person or over the phone) recruitment and another for email recruitment. Before I interviewed anyone, I made sure to provide and receive a verbal consent statement. The following three images are these guides, respectively. I should note here that my project initially concerned the social justice movement *Black Lives Matter* and its relationship to urban agriculture, however, lack of a community liaison or any connection to the movement required me to jettison the movement from my research. My guides nonetheless mention Black Lives Matter.

Verbal Recruitment Script

Hello (individual/representative), my name is Todd Sundberg. I am a graduate student at the University of Delaware researching the intersection between the social justice movement *Black Lives Matter* and food justice movement via urban agriculture. I am seeking interviews to learn more about on the ground operations, connections, and perceptions of food justice and racial justice. I am wondering if you would have time to sit down and chat with me about your work? We can do an interview in person or by phone and I would only schedule about 30 minutes to an hour of your time.

Here is my contact information.

Todd Sundberg

Phone Number

tsund@udel

Figure 14   Verbal Recruitment Script

Email Recruitment Guide

Hello (individual/representative) –

My name is Todd Sundberg. I am a graduate student at the University of Delaware researching the intersection between the social justice movement *Black Lives Matter* and food justice movement via urban agriculture. I am seeking interviews to learn more about on the ground operations and perceptions of food justice and racial justice. **

*If applicable: I read about your work on *X* in media *Y* OR I spoke with (insert name of individual at xyz) who recommended you as an excellent person to contact about furthering my research. [I] believe your insights will be highly beneficial to my research*

If you would like to participate please let me know your availability to meet for an in-person interview or a phone interview. Interviews should take between 30 minutes to one hour.

You can contact me by phone at ###-###-#### or via email at tsund@udel.edu.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you!

Todd Sundberg

Figure 15   IRB Email Recruitment Script

Verbal Consent Script

Hi I am Todd Sundberg and I am a Master's student at the University of Delaware in the Department of Geography. I am conducting research on the intersection between the social justice movement *Black Lives Matter* and food justice movement via urban agriculture for my MA thesis.

You have been invited to participate in this research because of your involvement in related activities.

There are no foreseen risks or direct benefits associated with your participation in this interview If you choose to participate you will be asked a series of questions relevant to your work as well as various social justice issues.

For the purposes of this research I will be using pseudonyms and no information gained through this interview will be connected to you or your group. I will be holding this data for up to five years - after which it will be destroyed - on my password-protected computer and a USB in my locked office.

Do you have any questions for me before we proceed?
If you have any questions or concerns at any time after the interview you can contact me or my advisor; here is our contact information (see attached contact card).
Do you consent to participate in this research?
Do you consent to be audio recorded?

Figure 16   IRB Verbal Consent Script

Overview of Research Methods

I used the following methods in order to conduct my research: semi-structured interviews, (direct) participant observation, and archival research. While I sought to conduct my interviews at the site of urban agriculture between the morning and afternoons on any day, I remained flexible to accommodate my research participants' preferences and availability. Interviews thus took place in three categories: in the field (urban agriculture site or associated location such as a farmer's market), in an office setting, or in a public setting such as a coffee shop or nature trail. My interviews with PA-C, PE, PG, PM-Y, and PÆ all took place in the field. My interviews with PD, PF, and PH-K all took place in office settings. This subset notably includes the majority of research participants from WDO1-2. My interviews with PL and PZ both occurred in

public settings in Newark; PL occurred at a coffee shop while PZ occurred along a nature trail near WDO1. All interviews were conducted between roughly 9 AM and 5 PM on various days of the week, and I sought no longer than an hour at most per visit unless I was involved in the physical labor at the site. I initially followed the semi-structured interview guide below. With a shift away from Black Lives Matter, I would instead ask research participants how they would define social justice, add individual's history and everyday missions, and discuss race more broadly. I found during my research that I had more productive interviews when I allowed research participants to initiate topics, which often centered on intra-and-inter group tensions or cooperation or issues of access and (in)visibility of urban agriculture sites.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Goals of interview:

- Discuss social justice issues, particularly around race
- To understand how participants view Black Lives Matter
- To discuss food justice
- To discuss the everyday practice of urban agriculture, and the role it may play in local communities

Key questions for all participants:

1. What is the history and mission of your group?
2. How do you define (urban agriculture, Black Lives Matter)?
3. Do you believe there are any parallels between racial justice and food justice nationally?
4. Do you believe urban agriculture is a method to create a more equitable food system?

Figure 17   Semi-Structured Interview Guide

While I conducted participant observation at every site, I participated directly

in agricultural practices or related activities at five sites: PUAS1, UAS3, and UAS5-7.

I attribute this comparatively low level of direct participatory observation compared to

number of research sites to four factors: the simple fact there was no labor for me to

do at the time of my field visit, the interview taking place at location that did not

require any unskilled labor I could provide (such as at WDO1-2), a lack of confidence

in my abilities as perceived by research participants, and that in many cases I had to

prioritize note-taking over manual labor[12]. When I did participate directly in the everyday actions of my research participants, I performed various tasks. I planted, harvested, cleaned, and transported crops for sorting. I built, designed, organized or fixed infrastructures, such as mesh cages, pop-up markets. I placed markers around communities, advertising particular services such as a farmer's market. I even had the privilege of driving a Ford F350 pick-up truck with supplies in it at one site, serving briefly as a sort of ferry between different groups of workers.

I also utilized textual analysis. Using search engines, I looked for magazine articles, blog or social media posts, and government or group documents pertaining to urban agriculture and social justice in Wilmington. I had no organized design behind my searches beyond looking for keywords, initially 'urban agriculture', 'Wilmington', and 'social justice'. There were numerous hits for urban agriculture, but few for social justice. Based on these preliminary results, I then refined my search with combinations of particular forms of urban agriculture such as urban farms or community gardens (including names of sites), the names of groups and individuals, terms such as 'food justice', 'hope', 'food', and names of communities such as East Side or West Side. Archival research was a means to augment community perceptions of urban agriculture. However, in doing archival research I found that common narratives of

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[12] While it seems like a convenient excuse, I visited sites primarily and ultimately as a researcher. Getting too involved in manual labor could have negatively impacted the collection of data.

urban agriculture are that it 'builds hope' and 'provides fresh food' in Wilmington, and that much attention is brought to UAS1, UAS3, and PUAS1; which are incidentally the city's largest community garden, urban farm, and peri-urban site, respectively.

Research Participant Samples

To reiterate, I conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty-seven research participants. These individuals fell into three categories: administrative officials (organizational leaders or other 'desk' positions), those who physically labored at sites, and a miscellaneous group comprising volunteers or individuals indirectly associated with urban agriculture sites and their social justice groups. It should be noted that many individuals transcend these categories. For example, some organizational leaders directly engaged every day in physical labor at sites, while other administrative officials occasionally performed physical tasks such as gardening or harvesting crops on site. Individuals of the miscellaneous group engaged in a broad range of activities, ranging from volunteering to work at pop-up markets to analyzing sites' potential for native pollinator habitation. Physical Laborers often served administrative functions, as another example. I thus base these groups on individual's titles, which may be an extreme disservice to their everyday actions. These subsample groupings are furthermore based on my perceptions and observations, and may not properly capture individuals' functions. I made this choice while organizing Chapter 3,

which discusses group dynamics, and to present *whom* I was speaking with, as peoples' perceptions are informed in part by their roles.

I first chart each subsample with regards to individual's role/function, race and gender as understood in the limited binary of male (M) and female (F) and education level (Bachelor = BA | MA = Master | Ph.D. = Doctorate |? = unknown | ** next to degree means it is in progress). I then discuss each subset regarding race, gender as understood through a male/female binary, and education. Within each subset, I have further anonymized individuals by replacing the P*letter* system with numbers 1-X to protect their identities and sites, as some individuals' demographic profiles and roles are distinct within Wilmington's urban agriculture network.

Individuals	Subsample	Number in sample/Total
PA, PC-F, PH-M, PP, PR-U, PW-X, PZ-Æ	Administrative Officials	20/27
PB, PG, PN, PV	Physical Laborers	4/27
PQ, PT, PY	Miscellaneous	3/27

Figure 18   Categories of Research Participant Samples

Administrative Official	Role/Function	Race	M/F	Education Level

1	Leader	Other[13] | F	BA
2	Education	White | F	MA**
3	Leader	White | F	MA
4	Law/Policy	African-American | M	MA
5	Leader	African-American | M	MA
6	Leader	White | F	MA
7	Other	White | M	MA**
8	Leader	White | F	BA
9	Education	White | F	MA
10	Outreach	African-American | F	BA
11	Outreach	White | F	MA
12	Leader	White | M	Ph.D.
13	Education	White | M	BA
14	Other	White | F	MA
15	Leader	White | M	?

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[13] Other is used for this individual's race category to protect confidentiality

16	Outreach	White | F	?
17	Other	White | F	?
18	Other	White | M	BA**
19	Leader	White | F	?
20	Other	White | F	?

Figure 19   Administrative Official Subsample

Administrative Officials comprise the bulk of my research participants. This
large subsample may be the result of their contact information being more visible
online or that I relied on snowballing interviews with Administrative Officials who
were more likely to be in contact with other Administrative Officials than Field
Laborers or Miscellaneous individuals. As a group, Administrative Officials were
rather heterogeneous. Three out of twenty individuals in the Administrative Official
subsample are African-American, two of whom are male, with only one occupying a
leadership role in a group. However, all three are college educated with both males
holding Master degrees in public administration. A female Administrative Official
holds a bachelor's degree and belongs to a racial category separate from white and
African-American. Otherwise, seventy-five percent of those in the Administrative
Official are white, with mostly MA degrees or higher, with some having education
levels unknown to me. I do not know these individuals' education levels as we focused

on other topics during discussion. Eleven of these individuals are female while five are male. Of those nine research participants I have assigned the role 'Leader', four are educated white women, one is an educated woman of some other race, three are educated white males and one is an educated black male. Thirteen women, predominantly white, and seven men, mostly white, occupy Administrative Official roles. Those whose daily roles placed them away from the garden, such as 6 and 10, hardly discussed urban agriculture, instead focusing on their groups' job creation or other social justice programs. Other than this disconnect with some Administrative Officials, I perceived no consensus based on race, gender, or role on any particular topic.

Physical Laborer	Role/Function	Race	M/F	Education Level
1	Farm Manager	White	M	?
2	Garden Manager	African-American	M	?
3	Farm Manager	African-American	F	?
4	Garden Manager	African-American	M	?

Figure 20   Physical Laborer Subsample

Physical Laborers contrasted with Administrative Officials' demographics. Three out of four Physical Laborers are male, while three out of four individuals in this subsample are African-American. These individuals, to varying degrees, were

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responsible for the maintenance of sites and crops. 1's group shared labor more fairly, however, he was the primary individual responsible for managing the farm and its infrastructure. 2 was the only person in his group maintaining not only the garden but the facilities as well. I perceived that 3 was solely responsible for maintaining the farm, although she claimed to have a steady group of volunteer laborers. While 4 was nominally in charge of UAS5-6s' crops, I did not see him perform any work within the garden during field visits. Rather, he chatted with community members while an Administrative Official performed slightly more physical labor at both UAS5 and UAS6. Physical Laborers tended to focus more on practical matters of managing a site, such as crop harvesting and planting, maintenance of grounds, and connecting the target audience of services or products with the site.

Miscellaneous	Role/Function	Race	M/F	Education Level
1	Volunteer	African-American	F	BA
2	Environmentalist	White	F	Ph.D.
3	Truant Officer	African-American	F	?

Figure 21   Miscellaneous Subsample

The Miscellaneous subsample was fairly diverse. They focused on a broad range of issues, ranging from native pollinator conservation to mitigating criminal behavior in youth. All three individuals in this category are female, two of which are African-American and the other white. These individuals were either volunteer workers, or part of another group and happened to be present at sites when I was. This

is a good point to highlight that I interacted with few adult community members at sites who were not employees or volunteers of groups, and none of these interactions were in depth enough for me to consider them a participant in my research.

Coding Process

I read through my entire collection of field notes thoroughly and created broad themes. I began this process with many of these themes already determined due to a strict policy of reading fieldnotes at least once over after I wrote them and typing themes and keywords. With these themes created, I then added keywords next to them, such as 'peaceful' and 'tranquil' being within the theme 'Affect". Figure 19 is an example from my field notes which highlights my coding process. I created twenty-six broad themes which are captured in Figure 20. I assigned these themes both from the conversations I had with research participants or my own observations and perceptions at sites and within communities. Some themes also come from literature on urban agriculture, social justice, or other topics. These broad themes frequently intersect and may appear messy, but I found that the system I utilized was more effective for my own thought process than other methods of coding

I also ask why she likes gardens and she says
"Gardens are peaceful, they're tranquil. It's a space where I can work hands-on with the ground and get a great start to the day. Nobody and nothing will bother you here".

She comes back over to us and joins the conversation. We talk about the grapes a bit and enjoy some of them. Somehow we got on the subject of how all the different organizations that do urban ag in Wilmington are interconnected. She highlights how this interconnectedness is a strength of Wilmington's urban agriculture social justice.

A:
The organizations are cooperative. None of the groups or organizations alone are that powerful or influential by themselves, but together we can make real change for the city",

Figure 22   Example from my field notes with codes

Main Theme	Subtheme(s)
Access	Walls, locks, gates, hill, lack of, community, who accesses? frequency?
Affect	Tranquil, zen, peaceful, happy, visceral
Aesthetic	Artwork, painting, mural, flowers, rainbows, design, mosaic, impacts
Broader	Goals, organization or group
Coalition	Community, urban agriculture, social justice, struggles
Community	Involvement, awareness, unawareness, appearances, interest in participation, buy-in, behavior, surroundings, engagement, demographics
Crime	Drugs, violence, reduction, murder
Crops	Type of, how were they determined?, status
Everyday	Activities, perceptions

Food	Desert, corner store, fast food, hunger
Funding	Banks, corporations, grants, private
Gender	Female, male, sexism, roles
Groups	Names of, history, structure, hierarchy, roles
Greening	Parks, greenspace
Goals	Organization, personal
Horticulture	Landscaping
Intra-group dynamics	Cooperation, tension
Inter-group dynamics	Cooperation, tension
Neoliberalization	Gentrification, money focus
People	Names of, influential
Place	Names of, participant, location
Poverty	Causes, impacts
Practices	Hugelkultur
Social Justice	Economic, environmental, food, race, definitions of
Urban Agriculture	Definitions of, forms
Visibility	Obscure, response to

Figure 23   Themes and Subthemes used in coding

In my thesis I focus on the themes of intra-group dynamics, inter-group dynamics, gender, visibility, and access. I highlight these five overall themes as the coding process signaled that these were the most prevalent. I base this prevalence on

the connections between the themes, and what research participants emphasized during my interviews. I define intra-group dynamics as the relationships within groups. Participants highlighted cooperation within groups when it came to completing tasks, but also tensions over how to utilize sites which themselves were based on gender or positions within the hierarchies of groups. The data suggest that gender played a key role in some participants' everyday experiences at sites of UA. Female participants identified experiences of sexism at UA sites, and both male and female participants expressed differing perspectives on the mission of their group. I define inter-group dynamics as the relationships between groups, focusing on participation with coalitions. Participants tied their perceptions of tensions or cooperation in inter-group dynamics to the conflict over or sharing of resources. I did not expect visibility of sites to be a major theme, but during the coding process I found that many research participants highlighted a lack of visibility of their projects as a key everyday issue. Many of the daily practices of urban agriculture participants centered on improving the aesthetic appeal of their sites as a response to real or perceived obscurity. Related to visibility, access to sites and services was another major theme. Participants highlighted walls or security measures such as gates or locks as preventing access. One site in particular suffered access issues due to its placement at the top of a hill. Other subthemes of access were questions regarding who in the community was accessing sites, and in what frequency.

For efficiency, I then created an index in Word of each theme and keyword, with page numbers listed for each instance they were written. I found the themes using ctrl+f. Below is an example from this index.

Inter-Group Dynamics
   a. Cooperation
      i.   Pages 14, 38, 41, 86, 103
   b. Tension
      i.   Pages 38, 101

Figure 24   Example from coding index

I then explored these major themes in relation to my three research questions.

1. What are the broader goals of organizations that engage in urban agriculture in Wilmington, Delaware?
2. What are the everyday actions of urban agriculture participants in Wilmington, and what are their perceptions of these activities?
3. Who are the urban agriculture services targeted at in Wilmington, and who primarily accesses these services?

I found that my research participants provided succinct answers that matched my hypotheses, with the exception that middle-class white people were not the dominant group accessing urban agriculture services. Instead, what I learned through my coding process was that the themes of intra-group dynamics including gender, inter-group dynamics, and issues regarding access and visibility of sites were the main topics my research participants focused on.

Individual groups and participants have similar broader social justice goals of assisting communities through providing economic revitalization, improving housing quality, and (youth) education, but held different prioritizations of these goals or different methods of achieving them. Urban agriculture is one method towards group goals, and there was inter-group tension around how to utilize urban agriculture. At

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PUAS1, PB felt that his group should prioritize youth skill-building, while PA and PC wanted the group to concentrate on food education. Participation in coalitions is a goal of some groups, while other groups find coalition participation as unimportant to their wider goals. Participants of WDO2 universally found coalitions of groups beneficial towards achieving their goal, whereas PÆ found coalitions to be ineffectual.

Groups target the 'community' which occurs at a scale ranging from the immediate street to the city of Wilmington as the audience for their services and products. However, various elements hampered peoples' abilities to access sites, and groups deployed aesthetic elements in their sites to enhance visibility in hopes to increase this access. UAS1 is well-known throughout Wilmington's urban agriculture participants for being difficult to access due to its location on top of a hill. Participants of UAS3 found that the deployment of flowers increased the site's visibility and that this practice in turn led to greater community access to UAS3.

Everyday practices of individuals that deployed urban agriculture in their social justice missions were similar in character; these practices involved engaging the community and different processes of agriculture. Participant perceptions of these practices varied on a host of factors including their demographic profile and communities they aimed, their social justice projects towards. For example, PF is a younger African-American male who led the group that operated UAS2. PF perceived that the community was not interested in UAS2 and thus felt that it was not achieving social justice. PG, an older African-American male, was more involved in UAS2 itself. Children told PG that they took food grown at UAS2 home to their families and

thus PG felt that at least food justice, if not other social justices, was being achieved at this site.

Summary

In closing, this chapter adds to my methodological design. The context for the farms, gardens and organizations was provided. With this spatial context, I reviewed my snowballing and recruitment processes to demonstrate how participants were approached and how data was gathered. I then reviewed my research methods, and the subsamples of my research participants. I then discussed my coding process. In the following two chapters, I will discuss my major themes of inter-and-intra group dynamics and the dual issues of access and (in)visibility.

Chapter 3

CULTIVATING GEOPOLITICS: RELATIONSHIPS AND EVERYDAY LIVES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND URBAN AGRICULTURE IN WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

Abstract

Geopolitics can be defined as the intersection of inter-and-intra national politics and space. Recent approaches to geopolitics, such as feminist, situate this intersection at the site of body and examine the reflexive nature of statecraft and space onto individuals. Social justice (SJ) provides ample ground for research informed by feminist geopolitics as it is pursued by, and for, a diverse group of actors with equally diverse lives, bodies, and goals or methods. I argue that the relationships within and between social justice organizations, and of the participants within them, reflect elements of geopolitics, from control of territory and projection of state power, to (dis)agreements over policies, or to the impacts on the direct experiences of those who participate and how they in turn impact the pursuit of social justice. Through data gained via participant observation and interviews with (urban) agriculture participants centered in Wilmington, Delaware, I highlight how the everyday experiences of urban agriculture (UA) participants bear geopolitical elements. This geopolitics of social justice is informed by participants' lived experiences, inscribed gender roles, proximity to field sites, and roles in organizations. Examining the relationships between social justice organizations and their participants through a geopolitical lens may offer more effective avenues of pursuit not only attuned to those directly involved or impacted, but also to strengthen the bonds within networks; however, a failure to do

so may threaten the legitimacy of social justice movements' missions or long-term survival.

Introduction

"What do you mean you don't have any tomatoes? How can you have a vegetable stand without any fucking tomatoes?"

- Tomato Man, Urban Agriculture Site 5

Tomato Man was not one of my research participants, but rather the name I have given a middle age gentleman who was driving by one of my urban agriculture research sites in a lower income African-American neighborhood of southern Wilmington. Something about the garden's pop-up market must have caught his eye, because he double parked in the street. He asked these two questions several times, in an increasingly belligerent tone, over the course of roughly a minute. I was standing under the canopy of the pop-up market, preoccupied with writing field notes about artwork in the garden as seen from the street. I had assumed that one of the leaders of the social justice organization operating the garden - one a middle age African-American man, another a middle age white woman - would respond to these questions. It could have been the fifth time or the tenth time Tomato Man had asked his questions, but eventually I glanced up to the person projecting these questions. His eyes were locked on me, and while I was not sure how long they had been, he was nonetheless now angrily asking *me* why *I* lacked the produce he desired.

I looked towards the garden organization's leaders, who were engaged in other tasks outside the pop-up market. I gained their attention and redirected the man to them, explaining that I 'did not work here'. He shot them a modicum of interest before *again* asking me why I lacked tomatoes, adding that it was Ramadan and that he needed tomatoes for an important cultural dish. Finally, the male organization leader stepped in and told the gentleman that they had run out of tomatoes earlier in the day, and then proceeded to carry on with the task he was previously engaged in. At the time (and presently) I analyzed Tomato Man's focus on me through a race and class lens. I perceived that he had mistaken me as the person in charge because I was younger white guy making notes while female African-American youth volunteers worked the garden market and male African-American and Hispanic youth volunteers performed physical labors in the garden. Following this interaction, I had asked the organization leaders if they felt that Tomato Man targeted me because I was a white guy. I was met with silent shrugs from both leaders, suggesting that they were uncomfortable with the conversation or did not care.

The Tomato Man incident led me to consider the everyday experiences of urban agriculture (UA) participants conducting social justice work (SJ) in Wilmington, Delaware, and how these experiences could differ from participant to participant based upon their differences of bodies, positionality, locations of sites, and other elements. While the leaders of this organization shrugged it off, others may not silently respond towards their leadership role being misattributed to someone else, especially someone

who did not work at the site every day or a community member. I knew from a conference held by a coalition of Delaware UA groups in January 2017 that SJ was a major component in framing their initiatives, especially those focused in Wilmington. As these groups are composed of participants that operate in physical spaces, and as "the personal is political" (Dowler and Sharp 2001, 165), the differences that participants embody could result in very different social or political arrangements that in turn impact their everyday activities and perceptions of activities, in turn impacting the relationships within the wider network of actors.

In this paper, I argue that relationships between social justice networks and the organizations and individuals within them can be viewed as a component of geopolitics of social justice. Applying geopolitical theories onto these networks potentially offers a more effective avenue for understanding how social justice is achieved through urban agriculture, by focusing on participants' everyday perceptions and lives in the relationships formed in the pursuit of social justice. One can write geopolitics onto SJ due to geopolitics examining the role of space and place in consideration of politics between entities, whereas the concept of SJ refers to equitable relations among individuals and wider society across a myriad of intersecting issues. Social injustices occur at spatial scales that range from global concerns to within individual groups of people, and thus provide fertile ground for *geo*political analysis. As geopolitics can refer to intra-national as well as international relationships in space, geopolitics can be viewed at sites of social justice including urban agriculture. In

particular, feminist geopolitics, which situates research at the site of the body and the everyday, can help to more clearly understand the material impacts of the statecraft that is often the cause of injustices on individuals and communities.

While entities can spread awareness and encourage public engagement of issues via social media or the web (e.g. Black Lives Matter; Women's March), SJ is often most effective when it is directly informed by and alleviates injustices at the site where they are suffered – in the everydayness of individuals or the wider community – or who Dowler and Sharp (2001) would call the 'bodies at the sharp end' of inequality[14]. In my research, this inequality is rooted in racialized poverty geographically centered in low income minority communities of Wilmington, Delaware. A failure to incorporate the daily interactions or perceptions of SJ participants in place can undermine the pursuit of SJ just as much as not reaching the audiences organizations wish to aid by reinforcing the inequalities faced by both the participants and audience. Geopolitics of social justice, attuned to feminist geopolitics, can provide the necessary lens in which to include the voices of UA participants from *where* they are generated in our understanding of SJ. However, it is necessary to

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[14] For example, as of February 2018 the picture and video sharing social media application Instagram yielded 379, 306 posts with the 'hashtag' social justice alone, which may not seem extensive. However, hashtags of well- known social justice movements are more numerous: 'Black Lives Matter' yielded 6,799,360 posts; while 'WomensMarch' boasted 1,699,697 posts. These are just two high-profile social justice movements out of an untold number of social justice movements or entities, let alone variations upon the words.

understand the basics of geopolitics and the enactment of SJ in order to contextualize

how what geopolitics of social justice is, and where participants and their relationships

fall into place. Figure 20 show the concepts side by side, and then hybridized.
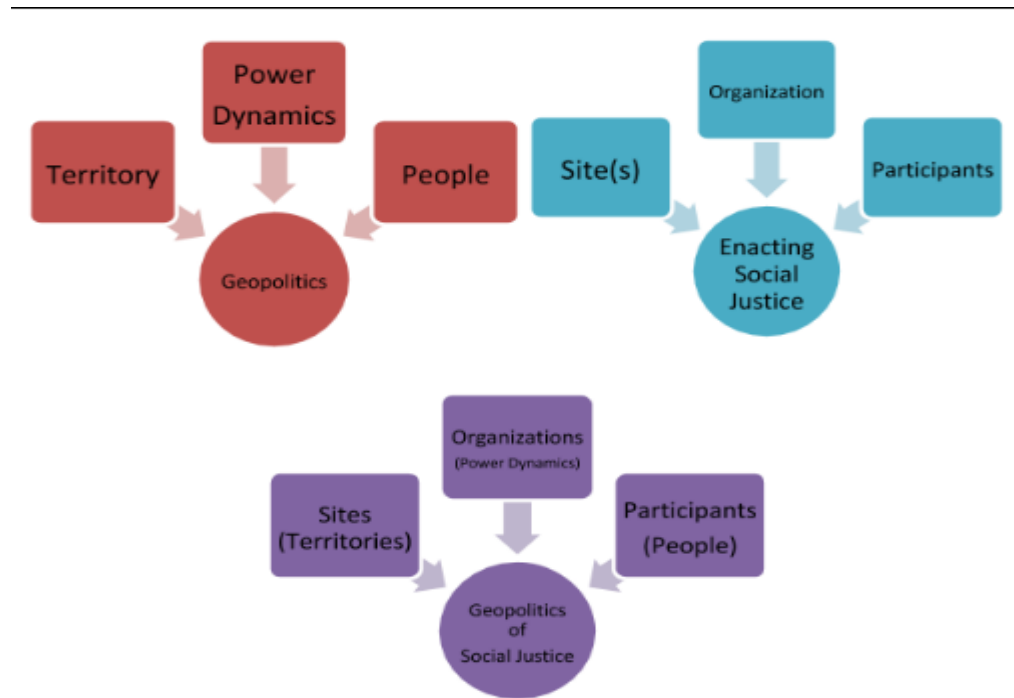
Figure 25   In red, the basic components of geopolitics. In blue, the basic
             components of social justice. In purple, hybridization of the concepts of
             geopolitics and social justice into a geopolitics of social justice.

In geopolitics, power dynamics or the relations between entities, be they a state

or corporation or even individuals, are analyzed in relation to the people they impact

and the territories they control or operate in. In order to enact SJ, SJ participants of

groups must ultimately engage the people suffering injustices in physical spaces, while

forming relationships with the community and one another. In both geopolitics and

enacting SJ, an entity projects power over people in space in order to achieve its goals. These two concepts can be hybridized into a social justice geopolitics, where the relationship within and between organizations (power dynamics) is analyzed in relation to their physical sites (territories) and participants (people). While much has been discussed with geopolitics of social justice at a global scale (see: United Nations 2006; Micheletti and Stolle 2007) or city scale (see: Harvey 2009; Rokem et al. 2016), little has been written at the scale of the organizations or individuals engaged in social justice work itself. Urban agriculture sites can be dynamic spaces where organizations may aim to answer one or several social injustices at once. Participants engage daily in various degrees of sociality with the target audience, the community their site is situated in, and one another, all the while forming diverse social relationships (McLees 2017). UA participants' perceptions of these social connections can thus offer enormous value to understanding geopolitics of social justice, as they experience a web of politics in their everyday activities.

I went into my field work with these ideas of geopolitics, however, I found that I faced struggles connecting theory to practices on-the-ground. My field data did not properly mesh with geopolitical theories in that events that transpired at one site did not have observable impacts on other sites. Within sites, different people experienced the world differently, and these experiences were grounded in-place. However, at both inter-group and intra-group scales, relationships were politically defined; but the data I acquired did not suggest struggles over space. Nonetheless there are geopolitical elements within urban agriculture networks in Wilmington, Delaware. Urban agriculture is, in many cases, deployed by social justice groups as a politicized response to an oppressive capitalist socioeconomic system that impacts individuals

and communities in different ways. However, even as different social groups operate in communities experiencing different injustices, and urban agriculture sites are dynamic spaces where participants shape and re-shape relationships with one another these struggles are tied to place and everyday activities that are informed by intra- and inter-group politics.

I will discuss geopolitics of social justice at the level of the participant and their perceptions, goals, or experiences conducting social work, based on urban agriculture participants in Wilmington, Delaware. UA is frequently described as having an enormous transformative potential for social justice (see: Reynolds and Cohen 2016), and indeed, many organizations orientated towards SJ in Wilmington portray UA as a core element to achieve their broader goals, or at least a contributing element to those. First, I will discuss and social justice and urban agriculture – and its history in the U.S. - separately, and then how UA can be a site of SJ, or reinforce injustices. I will then briefly discuss Wilmington's historical and demographic geographies, and how these lead to injustices for some of the city's population today. The city's history and present demography may inform the practice of UA in Wilmington. Then, I will discuss my methodological design. I will then discuss how geopolitics is reflected in group dynamics; as SJ participants interact with one another and communities to alleviate injustices caused by wider sociopolitical structures, their relationships in these social connections can influence the degree in which they achieve SJ. I will then discuss UA participant relationships regarding the roles they play in organizations and the broader network of SJ organizations in Wilmington and then the relationship dynamics based around gender. Finally, I conclude with how

geopolitics of urban agriculture groups impact their ability to succeed in accomplishing social goals.

Social Justice, Urban Agriculture, Social Justice Through Urban Agriculture?

Urban agriculture is often described as a site of social justice (see: Nordahl 2009; Alkon and Agyeman 2011; McClintock 2014; Broad 2016; Reynolds and Cohen 2016; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2017; Horst et al. 2017; Tornaghi 2017; Stanko and Naylor 2018). To understand why, it is important to contextualize what SJ and UA are separately, as well as the SJ orientated history of UA in order to discuss this nexus. Paradoxically, despite UA being described as having the potential for SJ, there is equal opportunity for injustice as participants engage in daily practices, as is shown in historical and modern examples. In this literature review I will first define SJ and then discuss several forms that it can take, in order to highlight the multiple connections between injustices. UA will be reviewed next, as it is an umbrella concept encompassing a diverse array of forms, with a rich history. Together, I review UA as a site of SJ, or perhaps, injustice.

While social justice has become ingrained in everyday vocabularies, it remains difficult to define (Reisch 2002; Merrett 2004; Turhan 2010), much less perform. For Papageorgiou, "social justice is intimately related to the concept of equality, and that the violation of it is intimately related to the concept of inequality" (1980, 110), and his simple definition I use in my own understanding of social justice. This nexus of (in)justice and (in)equality is experienced differently by different bodies, and

marginalized groups face more oppression than others (Crenshaw 1991; hooks 2000; Valentine 2007). Others reinforce this view, stating that working towards one justice requires addressing several injustices as the structural roots are the same (Billings and Cabbil 2011; Cadieux and Slocum 2015; Wartman 2015; Broad 2016). These interlocking forms of SJ nonetheless maintain distinct forms, such as environmental, economic, racial, and food justice.

Environmental justice can be broadly defined as equal consideration and participation of all people in environmental governance regardless of their race, sex, or other characteristics. Environmental injustice disproportionately affects socially marginalized U.S. populations (Mohai et al. 2009; Grove et al. 2017) that are to varying degrees excluded from environmental policy-making (Schlosberg 2004). Economic justice can be thought of as working towards an equitable financial foundation for all people regardless of *whom* they are. While one of America's many unofficial mottos is 'the land of opportunity', economic opportunities are unevenly distributed based on race, gender, and national origin (McGowan 2012). Holt-Gimenez defines racial justice as "first and foremost the struggle for equitable outcomes for people of color (2017, 162) through various means. Rasheed Salaam Hislop defines food justice as "the [political] struggle against racism, exploitation, and oppression taking place" (2015, 29) regarding and which often afflict marginalized groups more than others (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010). Urban agriculture can serve as a site where organizations seek to remedy these injustices, and others.

Much as social justice is a seemingly all-encompassing term that has become a

common household word, urban agriculture is a common word (and practice) that is

difficult to precisely define, perhaps due to its multiple forms[15]. For example, some

discuss 'community gardens' (see: Draper and Freedman 2010; Gregory et al. 2016),

others use 'urban cultivation' (see: Winklerprins 2017) and others may discuss

'farming' in the city (see: McClintock 2010; Besthorn 2013). The diversity of UA

forms may be a result of its long history. A number of excellent histories of UA in the

U.S. have been written by other scholars (see: Warner et al. 1987; Lawson 2005;

Naylor 2012; Hayden-Smith 2014), and so I will provide a cursory overview here. In

the U.S. context, UA as a widely recognized practice began as a consequence of the

economic depression of 1893-1897 in Detroit, when the city government purchased

land from owners at the city's outer periphery (Warner et al. 1987, Lawson 2005). The

City of Detroit encouraged the urban poor to cultivate potatoes in these lots in order to

survive the winter, and the program was an immense success. The success of this

program inspired other U.S. cities to replicate it, however, sites of UA were viewed as

temporary fixes to poverty, and dismantled or repurposed post-crisis.

Urban agriculture, particularly of the garden variety, would again be prescribed

by the federal government as a response to crisis during the world wars, although the

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[15] For deeper analyses of the many varieties of urban agriculture forms, the scales that
this practice may take place in, and how sites are organized, among other elements,
see: McClintock (2014) and Tornaghi (2014)

federal government used national security (Naylor 2012) as the organizing narrative in lieu of responding to poverty. Notably, the U.S. government actively campaigned for and marketed the practice of war gardens towards women, in no small measure due to the pivotal role women's organizations played in UA initiatives during the early 20th Century (Lawson 2005). After a period of decline, grassroots movements of the wider Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s-1960s utilized UA as sites of resilience in their struggles against oppression, followed by community-driven vacant lot cleanups in the 1970s and 1980s (Maloney 2013). The number of UA sites grew overall, bolstered and yet muddied by 'greening' and 'sustainability' narratives in urban environments during the 1990s (Lawson 2005; Stanko and Naylor 2018), resulting in the diversification of UA programs to include a number of different missions, forms, and modes of organization in the present day, including alleviating social injustices.

Urban agriculture can serve as a site of social justice in a number of ways; however, it can equally reinforce the injustices participants seek to remedy. With regards to environmental justice, authors cite UA's potential to improve the overall quality of urban environments (Mendes et al. 2008), the recycling of solid or fluid wastes (Smit and Nasr 1992), soil revitalization (Beniston and Mercer 2014) and reducing heat islands (Goldman 2017); however, UA can increase habitats for urban pests (Gregory et al. 2016) or exposure to chemicals (Mancebo 2016). In terms of economic justice, UA can perhaps obviously lead to cheap or free food production which alleviates financial struggles for urban poor (Nordahl 2009) and SJ groups often

use UA sites for youth empowerment or job creation for marginalized groups (Hovorka 2006; Weissman 2015; Reynolds and Cohen 2016); although the introduction of UA and uneven access to it can lead to gentrification (McClintock 2018). UA can be implemented by SJ groups as a space for radical racial justice (see: Reynolds and Cohen 2016), however, association with whiteness can discourage other groups from participating in UA (Guthman 2008; Hu et al. 2013). By its very nature, UA can serve as a site of food justice, both as a site of resistance to a globalized industrial food system (Naylor 2012) or more localized food access issues (Horst et al. 2017), but some groups may fear the loss of cultural foods (Hu et al. 2017).

This wider discussion of social justice and urban agriculture grounds my research into the intersection of SJ and UA in the city of Wilmington, Delaware. SJ seeks to remedy various injustices, which are the result of uneven development and relationships among groups. UA is a diverse umbrella of models for growing food in the city, and has historically been used as a response to crises from governments and to achieve various SJ goals. While the potential of SJ through UA is profound, UA can augment existing injustices through processes of gentrification as evidenced by rising property rates near urban agriculture sites (McClintock 2018). Wilmington is a corporate center, but as I discuss in the next section, there exists injustices marked by race and sex, which lead to SJ groups in the city utilizing UA in response.

Historical and Demographic Geographies of Wilmington, Delaware
In this section, I will discuss the historical narrative and demographics of the

city of Wilmington. I will briefly cover Wilmington's history, including pre- and

initial European settlement, industrialization, and more contemporary times. Historical

processes lead to contemporary demographics of Wilmington, and the injustices faced

by some of the population. It is important to look at the location of Wilmington as it is

situated between larger (and more researched) cities such as NYC, Philadelphia,

Baltimore, and DC. As a corporate center, Wilmington has long influenced the region

despite its smaller population comparative to other cities and serves as a key factor in

regional economics of the Delaware Valley. Wilmington's social justice activities may

in turn influence the wider region, especially as many Wilmington UA participants

explicitly stated that they wanted their projects to serve as regional models.

The area that would eventually become Wilmington was originally inhabited

by the Lenni Lenape Native American nation, who were colonized first by the Swedes

in 1638, and then a successive wave of Europeans, finally turning to British and

ultimately American hands by the 1700s (Munroe 1993). The violence of the

American Civil War brought much wealth to some of those in Wilmington, to be

replicated by the violence of both world wars (City of Wilmington) alongside a

corporation friendly tax code (Munroe 1993). Post-war labor shortages permitted new

opportunities for African-Americans and other marginalized groups, who had

previously been excluded from the labor market. The African-American population

grew steadily to over half of the city's total, even as the overall Wilmington

population declined, although African-American poverty increased rapidly (Curtis 1997). A combination of white flight (and flight of wealth associated with whites), uneven impacts of development schemes purposely designed to target low income minority populations, and race riots associated with the wider Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s serve as basis for the social injustices faced by Wilmington's low-income community of color today. Wilmington suffers from poverty marked by both race and sex (Curtis 1997), as indicated in Figures 23-25.
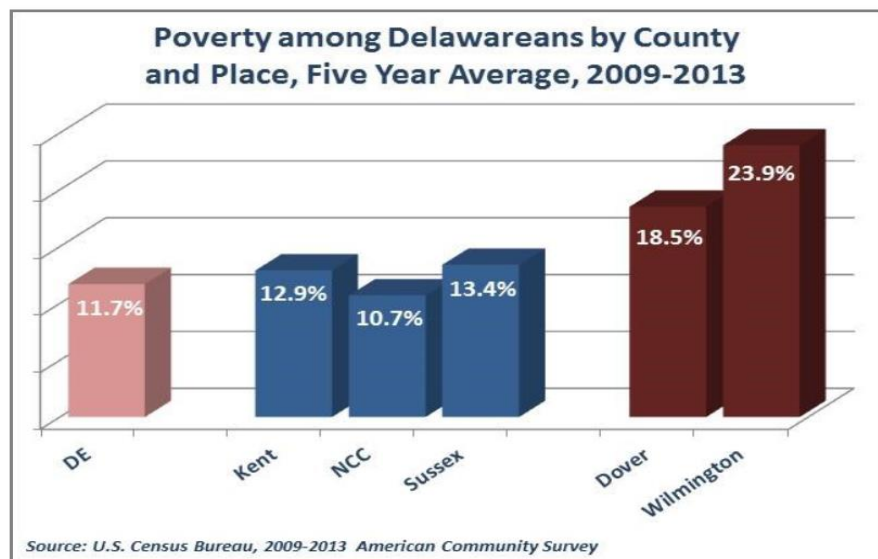
Figure 26   Poverty among Delawareans by County and Place, Five Year Average, 2009-2013. Adapted from (From Peuquet et al 2015, 2)

Percent of population by race, 2010

1%

8%

33%

58%

- White
- Black
- Asian
- Other*
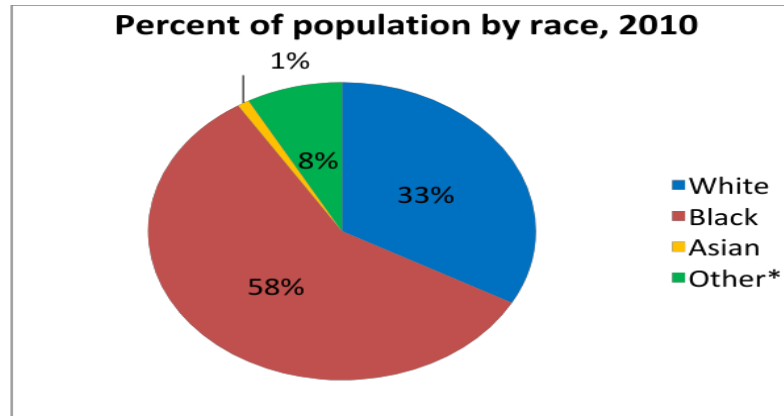
Figure 27   Percent of Population by Race in Wilmington. Data from City of Wilmington. (2010). Analysis Areas

BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: (2006-2010 Estimate)

	WHITE		BLACK		ASIAN		OTHER*		TOTAL		HISPANIC**	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Families	670	21.7%	2,209	71.4%	22	0.7%	193	6.2%	3,094	100.0%	437	14.1%
Married Couple	202	6.5%	250	8.1%	22	0.7%	125	4.0%	599	19.4%	192	6.2%
Male-headed	82	2.7%	251	8.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	333	10.8%	63	2.0%
Female-headed	386	12.5%	1,708	55.2%	0	0.0%	68	2.2%	2,162	69.9%	182	5.9%
Total	670	21.7%	2,209	71.4%	22	0.7%	193	6.2%	3,094	100.0%	437	14.1%

Figure 28   Percent of families below poverty level (2006-2010 estimate). Emphasis added. Data from City of Wilmington (2010, 7). Analysis Areas

Poverty – in which a family or individual lack the income to purchase basic food and household needs - is a major issue in Wilmington, especially among racial

lines[16]. Approximately one quarter of Wilmington's population is considered in poverty, with one study finding "40% and 69%" (Peuquet et al. 2015, 3) of the population in some census tracts are below the poverty line. Poverty thus affects nearly 20,000 people in the city, out of a population of roughly 71,000. Critically, this economic marginalization takes on a racial dimension; while African-Americans are approximately three-fifths of Wilmington's population, over seventy percent of African-Americans families are under the poverty line. This racialized economic disparity reflects a nationally overwhelming intersection of poverty and food insecurity in communities of color, especially among African Americans (Gundersen et al. 2016), and perhaps African-Americans would thus benefit more than any other racial group from UA initiatives, which can aim to reduce food injustice among other injustices.

Parallel to - and intersecting - this racialized poverty is the poverty of female-headed households in Wilmington. Among all racial and ethnic groups except Asian, female-headed households had significantly higher rates of poverty than male-headed ones, and female headed households comprised seventy percent of those below poverty. While measuring this feminization of poverty through only income levels obscures other forms of poverty such as the lack of choice or opportunity and unpaid work (see: Fukuda-Parr 1999), it nonetheless exemplifies the intersections of poverty, race, and gender or sex. In Wilmington, African-Americans comprise seventy one percent of the families below poverty, fifty-five percent of the total families below

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[16] The source data defines 'Other' as including American Indian/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, Some Other Race Alone and Others of Two or More Races. Hispanic/Latino is not included as Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race.

poverty are African-American female-headed, and this fact is made all the more alarming by sixty percent of Wilmington's total population being African-American (City of Wilmington 2010). As African-American women suffer from multiple layers of oppression from both sexism and racism (Crenshaw 1991) and are often placed at the bottom of social hierarchy due to this intersection (hooks 2000). Women, as a group, may benefit the most out of any demographic group from SJ work.

Understanding the historical and demographic geographies of Wilmington allows one to see how Wilmington 'came to be'. This grounding in geography provides a basis for understanding why urban agriculture has arisen as an avenue in the pursuit of alleviating social injustices within the city, which has synergy to national trends.

Urban Agriculture in Wilmington, Delaware

Wilmington UA participants know little of the city's urban agriculture history, and there few historical records. While the UA participants I interacted with usually knew at least their organization's immediate history, Wilmington's earlier UA histories are scarce. The earliest entry is a brief newspaper article from 1898, describing how a gardening program was started at a Wilmington industrial school presumably for the boys to learn farming skills (The News Journal 1898). During the First World War, Delawareans, likely including those in Wilmington, planted victory gardens (Delaware's Role in WW1). In 1977, the Delaware Center for Horticulture (DCH), was founded in the wave of greening initiatives in the 1970s, and became an UA leader in Wilmington over the next few decades. Together with University of

Delaware's Cooperative Extension, DCH has been monumental in founding or aiding in the establishment of the numerous UA sites in Wilmington.

DCH, alongside other organizations, critically including the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension and its vast network of resources and connections, recognized the need for greater cooperation amongst UA groups and co-founded the Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition (DEUFFC) in 2008, centered in Wilmington. However, it was Michelle Obama's breaking ground on the White House lawn for a vegetable garden galvanized public interest in gardening, among other forms of agriculture (Naylor 2012). DCH alongside other entities, created the 12th and Brandywine Urban Farm in response to this public interest, and began outright establishing or aiding other Wilmington based social justice groups in creating other sites of UA. While the efforts of these groups were pivotal in Wilmington's current state of UA, the city government became involved in the wake of the infamous 2014 Newsweek article 'Murdertown USA' (see: Jones 2014).

The city government, then under Mayor Dennis William responded to the "Murdertown" article by attempting to create a different image for the city by working with or aiding different groups to create various cultural and greening programs, including those of urban agriculture. Mayor Williams is quoted regarding the potential of UA "[u]rban farms have been a proven factor in bringing the crime rate down" (in Malgiero 2016), a statement backed by some authors (see: Saldivar-Tanaka and Marianne 2004; Kondo et al. 2016). Delaware's state government has provided

monetary support to social justice organizations that engage in urban agriculture,

awarding grants totaling $10,000 across eleven groups 2016 and $27,671.74 across

eighteen groups in 2017, throughout the state but concentrated in Wilmington (State of

Delaware News 2016; State of Delaware News 2017)[17]. Former Delaware governor

Jack Markell and former Dept. of Agriculture Secretary Ed Kee also participated

through visiting urban agriculture sites in the city (Natoli 2013). Many organizations

rent the land on which they operate their urban agriculture sites from the state or city

government for extremely low prices, although this land was often previously vacant

lots, brownfields, or other undesirable areas [18]. As the pursuit of SJ through UA occurs

between relationships of participants in potentially socially diverse places, a

methodological and theoretical designed attuned to the individual's everyday

experiences can provide critical insights informed by on-the-ground practices.

Methodology and Methods

Agriculture is a rough job that requires hard work in order to succeed, whether

that agriculture occurs in rural or urban environments. Participants bleed, sweat, and

muddy their clothes and bodies as they plant and harvest crops, rotate compost,

maintain the grounds, and so on. It is this everyday visceral nature of practicing urban

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[17] Delaware's state government itself provided $17,671.74, while the New Castle
Conservation District provided an additional $10,000 for New Castle County sites,
concentrated in Wilmington
[18] Whether an exaggeration or a literal value, the participants of one peri-urban farm
stated that the state's price for them to operate the site was $1 annually.

agriculture, in addition to my theoretical framework, that helped shape my research methodology. In this section, I will discuss this methodology – my theoretical framework, positionality, methods and data collection, and research participants. I lead with a review of feminist geopolitics and feminist approaches to fieldwork, and then my positionality as a white male academic. These elements informed my methods of data collection amongst my diverse array of participants.

In this research I examine urban agriculture as a potential site for social justice activism by analyzing the different ways in which urban agriculture participants perceive and practice their work. In order to understand how geopolitics can be reflected in UA centered SJ activism, it necessary to review geopolitics. As stated earlier geopolitics; a field within political geography, can be conceptualized as the role of space in inter-and-intra state relations. While classical geopolitics is chiefly concerned with a state's ability to project power to hold (or gain) territorial and economic positions, other geopolitical theories have emerged. For example, feminist geopolitics constitutes diverse trajectories of exploring power dynamics in everyday lives of people. Feminist geopolitics comes out of feminist work in anarchist/radical political geography during the late 1990s and early 2000s and has greatly contributed to these subfields with regards to rethinking gender and race (Kofman, 2005). Dixon writes, "Feminist inquiry is arguably an approach that feels for the borders of thought and practice" (2015, 1), which opens feminist geopolitics to methodological

approaches that encourage the researcher to co-create knowledge alongside their research participants.

Feminist geopolitical approaches are distinct within geography precisely because their methodologies render 'bodies at the sharp end visible' (Dowler and Sharp 2001), exploring the web of relationships between structure and agency and how individuals respond to statecraft and how statecraft in turn affects individuals[19]. Similar to other modes of geographic inquiry and feminist theorizing, feminist geopolitics is concerned with understanding *difference.* These differences can include, but are not limited to: race, sex, and class; and as *geo-* implies, can be investigated at any scale and *anywhere*. Through de-centering the state as the subject and object of study (see: Hyndman 2004) and instead drawing upon daily experiences of people, feminist geopolitics provides new and creative ways to understand the links between space and people. A feminist geopolitical lens meshes well with my research, as social justice is enacted by diverse peoples with a myriad of goals, and can occur across multiple scales and locations. As stated in my introduction, a geopolitics of social justice is comprised of organizations mobilizing participants at sites in response to neoliberal and state structural oppressions that happen in place. My research concerns the interactions of participants within their everyday activities and political struggles at urban agriculture sites.

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[19] A phrasing I attribute to Dr. Lindsay Naylor

Regarding reflexivity, my positionality as a white male academic played a key role in how I framed my research and conducted fieldwork. This is a necessary conversation as reflexivity in one's research is a crucial way to promote greater researcher accountability to research participant (Galam 2015). My physical body: relatively young, tall, thin, white, masculine, bearded, tattooed, able-bodied, embodies a particular assemblage of privilege, power, and social conceptualizations that my research participants, other academics, and the individuals of the communities I visited do not experience the world in the same way I do. That said, at no point during my fieldwork did I feel threatened, which contrasts with experiences of some other, female graduate students in my department based on stories they shared with me. However, I do think my positionality was a detriment at times. With few brief exceptions, mostly from white female participants of all ages, my research participants remained silent on the issue of race. I still grapple with interpreting this silence, but discussions outside my research site, led me to consider that my research participants' may have been reluctant to share their perceptions of race issues with a privileged white man. An additional explanation may also be understood in the tensions in conversations about race in the United States more broadly.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty-six urban agriculture participants, and one rural agriculture participant, primarily from May to August 2017, working in thirteen different sites. I discuss my research sample and methodology in-depth in Chapter 2. I use 'sites' for this scale of analysis instead of organization, as

many sites were ultimately operated by a small number of occasionally inter-locking organizations. Research participants that performed physical labor had different everyday experiences than those who performed administrative functions at organization headquarters. My interviews were semi-structured in order for participants to 'speak for themselves', which allowed them to express how they perceived and experienced things. This is important as I draw from feminist geopolitics; which is concerned with intersectional experiences, the value of everyday lived experiences and feelings as data, and a rejection of hierarchical systems placing one person over another or others. Though interviews had a habit of becoming unstructured when multiple research participants were engaged in conversation with each other and myself; this augmented discussion by allowing for topics that may have not been mentioned had it been more structured. Most interviews were held either in the field or in private office settings, with a handful occurring in other locations such as coffee shops or at organizational meetings and events.

While semi-structured interviews allowed individuals to speak for themselves, direct participant observation allowed me to attach meaning to everyday practices. Participant observation can be defined as the process in which a researcher learns about the daily activities of research participants through observation and participation in those actions. It allowed me to gain understanding through everyday immersion into urban agriculture. This, in turn, provided me a working knowledge of practices and labor of urban agriculture across sites and people. While I prioritized recording notes

over directly engaging in activities, I nonetheless 'got my hands dirty' whenever possible. This included directly assisting urban agriculture participants in various planting and harvesting techniques, site maintenance, building gardens or structures, driving vehicles, and setting up farmer's markets.

Participants were all recruited through snowballing techniques, after gaining an initial set of interviews at an urban agriculture conference held in Wilmington. My research participants come primarily from Wilmington based groups or sites, with some just outside the city, and a handful from other locations in Delaware. The participants work for NGOs, the State of Delaware, or in school systems. Slightly over half of my research participants were educated white women between their 20s and 60s, one quarter were white or black men in similar age brackets with varying education levels, and the remaining comprised of women of color who also reflected this age range and mixed education. I prioritized those individuals and groups with implicit or explicit social justice goals. The following chart shows my research participants and where they primarily work (if not including their parent organization). In order to protect confidentiality, I elected to use pseudonyms. Confidentiality is required due to the limited number of major urban agriculture – social justice activists in Wilmington and their tightly woven community. Research participants are labeled Participant (P) and then provided a letter from the Norwegian alphabet. Agriculture sites or groups are listed as urban agriculture site (UAS), peri-urban agriculture site (PUAS), rural agriculture site (RAS), and wider organization (WDO); and are then numbered. I show this list in Figure 26.

Participant	Urban Agriculture Site or Group
Participant A (PA) Participant B (PB) Participant C (PC)	Peri-Urban Agriculture Site 1 (PUAS1)
Participant D (PD) Participant E (PE)	Urban Agriculture Site 1 (UAS1)
Participant F (PF) Participant G (PG)	Urban Agriculture Site 2 (UAS2)
Participant H (PH) Participant I (PI)	Wider Organization 1 (WDO1)
Participant J (PJ) Participant K (PK) Participant L (PL) Participant M (PM)	Wider Organization 2 (WDO2)
Participant N (PN) Participant O (PO)	Urban Agriculture Site 3 (UAS3)
Participant P (PP) Participant Q (PQ)	Urban Agriculture Site 4 (UAS4)
Participant R (PR) Participant S (PS)	Peri-Urban Agriculture Site 2 (PUAS2)
Participant T (PT)	Rural Agriculture Site 1 (RAS1)
Participant U (PU) Participant V (PV) Participant W (PW) Participant X (PX) Participant Y (PY)	Urban Agriculture Site 5-6 (UAS5-6)
Participant Z (PZ)	Peri-Urban Agriculture Site 3 (PUAS3)

| Participant Æ (PÆ) | Urban Agriculture Site 7 (UAS7) |

Figure 29   Chart of pseudonyms of research participants and the sites or groups they belonged to

Social justice groups are composed of participants who work directly with the communities or people the groups seek to aid (people), those who direct the group's direction but may not experience those spaces in the same way (power/organization), and the physical sites in which they operate (territory). Urban agriculture sites are social spaces and the character of social justice is often predicated on building relationships and coalitions for change. Social dynamics - the behaviors or perceptions of individuals in group settings based on the relationships between the individuals – can cause conflict or cooperation in groups organizing around social justice issues. Differences in opinion or intention can exacerbate group tensions, while closer dialogue between individuals can create consensus or bridge ideas (Blum 2018) – both of which impact the ability of the group to function, and in SJ groups, to affect SJ. This is not dissimilar to geopolitics; tensions between states or other entities can ignite due to competing interests or understandings, while communication and friendly engagement can lead to cooperative ventures – both of which have multi-scalar impacts. As the 'personal is political', the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals within groups differ based on their roles within the groups. Analyzing this personalized aspect of SJ may offer transformative potential for more cooperative groups and networks of groups.

In Wilmington, Delaware's urban agricultural network, I found that the most prominent areas of difference in everyday experiences and relationships centered on

inter-group tensions, intra-group tensions based on the roles of members in the wider organizations, or the daily experiences based on sex and gender roles. Below, I discuss these findings in more depth, drawing on interviews and observation at UA sites. Understanding participant experiences and perceptions of the relationships within urban agriculture networks may provide greater insight into how these dynamics take shape in the everyday practice of social justice, which in turn can lead to groups creating more positive relationships that can potentially achieve greater degrees of social justice.

Inter-Group Dynamics

Berkowitz states that the most challenging aspect of coalition building "take place inside the mind of the coalition group member" (n.d.) , underscoring how coalitions are first and foremost informed by individual's perceptions. In this section, and the ones to follow, I use data comprising quotes or field notes to discuss dynamics. As noted above, several urban agriculture groups in Delaware banded together to form the Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition (DEUFFC) in 2008, centered in Wilmington, amid increasing public interest in UA and the need to share knowledge or resources. Coalitions can be assemblages of countries, organizations, and individuals that unite for a common purpose but often build connections that last (Ensley 2017, 3). DEUFFC is an example of a 'community coalition', which Wolff states as:

"is composed of community members; it focuses mainly on local issues rather than national issues; it addresses community needs, building on community assets; it helps

resolve community problems through collaboration; it is community-wide and has

representatives from multiple sectors; it works on multiple issues; it is citizen

influenced if not necessarily citizen driven; and it is a long term, not ad hoc,

coalition."

(Wolff 2001, 166)

Both Wolff (2001) and Ensley (2017) identify community coalitions as having

transformative potential for achieving community social justice aims, successfully

impacting positive change at a variety of scales. The dynamic nature of community

coalitions is potentially an asset, as group members communicate ideas and share

resources amongst one another. In Wilmington, Delaware, some urban agriculture

participants perceive participation in community coalitions as essential to the pursuit

of social justice. PN, an older African-American woman, manages UAS3 which is

located in a lower-middle class community in northeastern Wilmington. UAS3 itself is

operated by members WDO2 primarily as a site for food education, but also to provide

a source of nutritious food in a community that lacks access to supermarkets. PN

states:

> "The organizations are cooperative. None of the groups or
>
> organizations alone are that powerful or influential by
>
> themselves, but together we can make real change for the city"

In PN's perception, cooperation among groups can spark transformation of Wilmington into a more socially just city. She highlights how social justice groups do not wield much power as individual entities, limited to their own immediate communities. However, PN feels that by working together as a coalition, groups across the geographic space of Wilmington can deploy more effective means of performing social justice. However, PN does not tie her belief in the power of coalitions to one activity or practice, but to an ideal set of relationships. PH, a younger white woman who works at WDO1, also perceives participation in coalitions as beneficial, especially in regards to securing resources for marginalized groups. During my interview, PH was discussing DEUFFC's various committees. These committees focus on different issues, such as water access. She stated DEUFFC found that different individuals were receiving different answers from state departments and corporate water companies. PH speculated that these difference were based on participants' race, gender, or the communities that their sites were located in, initially saying just that people were getting different answers To counter these conflicting responses, PH states,

"Everybody was getting different answers and it just wasn't

real clear, so that group is working on making the system

more user friendly and providing more equitable water access

for projects across the city."

DEUFFC's water committee as well as its other committees thus successfully perform several of the functions that Wolff (2001) writes are essential to community coalitions. Focusing on multiple localized issues, such as uneven resource access, DEUFFC resolves these issues through collaboration between different groups. The coalition addresses different groups', and by extension communities', need for more equitable resource sharing by building group assets such as water access.

However, maintaining a community coalition can be challenging. Such difficulties include disagreements over power dynamics related to control over decision-making and communities or sites of operations, uneven access to funding or other resources, and planning unclear goals (Cohen et al. 2002). PÆ is a younger white woman who works at UAS7. She defines her daily social justice mission as supporting the children and other individuals who utilize the community center that operates UAS7 through food education, youth skill-building, and providing a source of food. On participation in a community coalition, PÆ perceives that their meetings as just people talking about their individual projects and not accomplishing anything as a group. She tells me that she sees little value in a bunch of little organizations competing for the same resources.

According to PÆ, coalitions create more tensions amongst groups than cooperation. She feels that opportunities for planning and executing change are wasted, as groups focus not on city-wide (or for that matter, neighborhood-wide) collaboration but rather on situations at their particular sites. This speaks to the point

that setting unclear goals hampers community coalition's long-term viability (Cohen et. al 2002). If community coalition meetings are not used to set goals for the coalition as a whole, but instead serve as spaces for people to share information about their particular sites, the potential for community coalitions to enact social justice is truncated. PÆ's second perception that "little" organizations compete against one another over the same resources also resonates with the challenges of conflict over resources and perhaps territory. For example, two social justice groups may aim to acquire the same vacant lot to convert into an urban agriculture site to expand their social justice reach, but neither group is willing to share the space. PÆ felt disappointment that her group was unable to secure funds for UAS7, and that WDO2 dominated control of resources and manipulated urban agriculture sites to its own agenda.

WDO2 is particularly criticized across Wilmington's urban agriculture network as jeopardizing community coalitions. WDO2 is one of two (the other being WDO1) groups that lead urban agriculture social justice programs in Wilmington, and whose members largely determine the course that community coalitions take. PÆ perceives that WDO2 holds greater access to funding than other groups. PJ, an older white woman who works at WDO2, confirms that WDO2's political and corporate connections do provide the group an advantage over others in securing resources to achieve its social justice goals. These connections lead PS, a younger white woman who works for PUAS2, to confide in me her feelings that WDO2 has been 'growing'

neoliberal, and that its leadership would rather hold cocktail parties for the wealthier members of Wilmington than do social justice, delegitimizing their mission.

PS's feelings about the organization point to concerns that if the leading organization of a community coalition does not appear to be working toward the coalition's mission then the community coalition's legitimacy is weakened. As a result, other groups in the alliance may question these leaders, or their own involvement in the coalition. Members may feel that they should prioritize accumulation of wealth, influenced by WDO2's perceived neoliberalization. PS herself later stated that she sought to emulate WDO2's method of securing funds to achieve her social justice goals at PUAS2, underscoring the influence leaders can have on others in the group. Should groups or entire coalitions switch their mission objectives from performing social justice to the acquisition of funds or group members' own financial gain in the manner that PS perceives is occurring within WDO2, the results can be negative. Coalitions can fracture, and processes associated with neoliberalization can augment existing inequalities in the communities that social justice groups operate in. For example, greater financial investment in an area can result in (accelerated) gentrification, pushing out the very communities that social justice groups seek to aid. PW, an older white woman administrative official at UAS6, highlighted that several development projects in Southbridge, Wilmington may force out lower-income individuals of this community that are unable to purchase expected increased rent.

These examples show the complexity of perceptions of inter-group relationships at the coalition level in Wilmington, Delaware. Some individuals support coalition involvement and others are opposed to it, made all the more complicated by the reasons people provide for their stance. Such complexity is neither good nor bad, but navigating disparate perceptions may present a challenge to entities that seek to build or maintain coalitions. Those who are in favor of urban agriculture coalitions highlight their potential for pooling resources and collaborative strength, but do not go much further into how that unity takes shape or its direction. Such murkiness of goals muddies the viability of community coalitions (Cohen et al. 2002). Those who are opposed to participation in coalitions see these alliances as ineffectual due to group meetings not serving as collaborative spaces, or find that gaining control of finite resources outweighs the possible benefits of working together. Some urban agriculture participants may feel that the leadership of coalitions do not exercise the alliance's social justice goal in their everyday activities, and this disconnect can have myriad ramifications. Others may feel that they need to follow the leader, or challenge the leader, which could result in the coalition splintering into individual groups.

The prior four examples are presented through a dichotomy of for/against coalition participation. While this shows the range of perceptions across different individuals, individuals themselves may be divided on the issue. As the most difficult element of building coalitions tend to be participants' own perceptions of them (Berkowitz n.d.), tensions within individual perceptions over participation form a key

aspect of inter-group dynamics. PF, a younger African-American male working within the community center that operates UAS2, analyzed his contradicting feelings towards coalitions during an interview (emphasis added):

"It becomes kind of **counterproductive**. Everybody is **trying to do the same thing but not do it together**, people are doing things that other people have already done, **makes it difficult.** The other thing is, we're used to having the **same people in positions of power and influence**, and the **same people do the same things**… We have to be **more willing to step outside our comfort zone**, be willing to allow others or newcomers that may be different than what we did in the past. **Just be willing to give it a chance**."

PF's assessment of coalitions underscores the c tensions in coalition-building. He says that they are counterproductive, reflecting PÆ's belief that there are few benefits to groups who are competing for the same resources to work together. PF highlights that a lack of communication amongst groups makes the pursuit of social justice challenging. Thinking further, he talks about participants' being comfortable with certain individuals staying in leadership roles, but then pauses before saying that groups must be willing to new strains of thoughts or to new voices in order to continue to work toward social justice.

As coalitions have been proven as powerful drivers of social change (Wolff 2001; Ensley 2017), it is important to understand the feelings or perceptions of the

individual members of groups within these coalitions whose everyday activities are

ultimately the drivers of social justice with regards to cooperation or coalition

members to avoid potential dissolutions. Otherwise competition or disagreement

between members, disinterest in participation from present or potential members, and

contradictory or unclear goals can lead to unstable political relationships within

networks of social justice which can harm overall viability of justice pursuits.

Intra-Group Dynamics: Roles within Hierarchy

If the inter-group dynamics of community coalitions can influence an entire

area's potential for social (in)justice, can relationships between individuals within

constituent member organizations impact SJ activism? To recall, a geopolitics of

social justice is the relationships between an organizing body (power/hierarchy) made

up of participants (people) who act in physical and ultimately social sites (territory).

These politics are generated from the spaces of urban agriculture and in the offices of

the organizations pursuing social justice, moreover they are attentive to everyday

injustices experienced in place by people living in the communities they serve. While

community coalitions (power/hierarchy) comprise groups (people) that operate in

physical sites (territory), individual groups comprise formal or informal ranks of

positions (power/hierarchy) occupied by participants (people) who themselves act in

physical sites (territories) and can be exposed differently to on-the-ground daily

experiences of social justice. In this section, I focus on positions within urban

agriculture social justice groups to discuss geopolitics of social justice at the level of

an individual group. I begin with a review of hierarchies and leadership in social

justice organizations. I then discuss how different scales of power within social justice

groups impact goals and perceptions of social justice work. This will lead into the

following section on gender roles within UA groups.

An organization is a group of individuals who gather to complete specific

tasks. Organizations can be as complex the entire staff of a multi-national corporation

or as simple as a preschool class line-up. Diefenbach and Sillince find that most

"human societies and other complex social systems such as organizations are

structured as group-based social hierarchies" (2011, 1512) where individuals are given

positions and tasks within that position, often visualized as a pyramid. A leader

presides over (or beside) her group, which can include her immediate subordinates and

their immediate subordinates and so on. Turhan argues that leaders of social justice

groups, which seek to subvert various injustices, to maintain her group's and her own

commitment to the mission, and to fight against inequalities (2010). While leaders

certainly influence an organization, especially in response to negative events (Pirola-

Merlo et al. 2002), one must also consider other actors and their influence as well.

Wilmington, Delaware's UA groups are generally arranged within broader

groups themselves, in a hierarchy of: Wider Organization (WDO), often led by a white

person with a master's degree or higher, who is in charge of several UA and non-UA

services or sites, and generally led by community members with or without bachelor's

degrees or higher. As people with degrees tend to enjoy greater negotiating power in

the job market, these individuals tend to occupy higher positions within hierarchies than those with less or no educations. Society values college degrees as a sign of ability, but college degrees do not necessarily equate to on-the-ground experience. I found during my research that how often participants' roles required attendance in urban agriculture sites determined their perceptions of the spaces' effectiveness in achieving social justice, or what activities should be prioritized within sites.

UAS2 is located in one of Wilmington's poorest areas of the RiverSide neighborhoods whose community members do not have convenient access to a supermarket. I spoke with PF and PG, both are whom are African-American men. PF is younger, holds a master's degree in public administration and is in charge of UAS2's wider group. PG is older and in charge of the day-to-day operations of UAS2 itself, and also occupies several other roles such as maintenance and security. PF's leadership role focuses his daily tasks in his office. When PF escorted me to the garden, he did not pay much attention to any detail of it, and I perceived that he did not want to be present at the garden at all. During an hour long interview, he hardly discussed UAS2 at all, instead focusing on housing development plans and various art projects. He does state how he thinks UAS2's parent group can "*do a better job of involving them* (community members)*, they can actually be the ones pulling the crops out of the garden"* underscoring some level of awareness of who is and who is not accessing this site, specifically that community members are not involved in at least

the harvesting process. PF also perceives that the community does not care about

UAS2, saying:

"Uhm you know what, they're not that interested. I can count on one hand how

many people come to the center and say 'hey I need some vegetables, what's going on

back there with the farm'… It's an afterthought."[20]

PF, who is in charge of the group operating UAS2, does not perceive the site as

accomplishing social justice. PF explains this belief by pointing the finger to the

community that, in his perception, does not engage in urban agriculture and is not

interested in the site. Although communities are made up of families, PF focuses

solely on the adults in the community who he interacts with more often through the

everyday activities of his role, which obscures the children of the community. Social

justice can occur at any scale, and can be enacted by any individual, including youth.

UAS2 is designed to provide food education and a source of nutritious food for the

Riverside community. PG's role places him in UAS2, which he described as "his

world", and finds that one of the best things UAS2's parent group does is allow

children to bring food grown in UAS2 home to their families. PG's awareness of the

children bringing home food contrasts with PF, who found that the community as a

whole is not utilizing UAS2. Social, particularly food, justice may be achieved

through UAS2, as adult individuals in the community indirectly access its services via

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[20] The lack of adult community member interest in UAS2 was also backed by PG

the children, although knowledge of this chain may be unknown or obscured in the minds of those higher up the hierarchy.

Despite being one of the pre-eminent organizations in Wilmington's urban agriculture network, directly operating in or assisting at least forty UA sites including UAS3 and a number of other horticultural sites, WDO2's members have varying social justice interests. Those who work at the WDO2's headquarters are more interested in fundraising – ostensibly to return to its programs or sites, spreading community awareness of WDO2's programs, or discussing agro-forestry and horticultural programs. WDO2 is an example which shows that organizations have multi-faceted avenues of countering injustices within the city. Urban agriculture is one such avenue, and not at all groups or individuals make urban agriculture the center-point of achieving social justice. For example, PJ and PK are both educated white women in administrative positions at WDO2. During a ninety-minute interview, they hardly spoke to WDO2's urban agriculture services or sites. They instead focused primarily on WDO2's various greening programs that create paid jobs in Wilmington, repeatedly expressing these jobs were solely reserved for marginalized individuals such as low-income, women, minority, undereducated, the elderly, and the formerly incarcerated. PN, an individual that embodies all these categories, is an example of the success of WDO2's programs. She is a community member in charge of UAS3 which is located in a lower-middle class area of northeast Wilmington. UAS3 is one of the most celebrated UA sites controlled by WDO2. PO is an educated, older African-

American volunteer that works at UAS3. During my field visits to UAS3, both women discussed numerous aspects of social justice in this community and across Wilmington. PN and PO highlighted the efforts of UAS3 and of other groups in their sites of urban agriculture. It is not surprising that people who work higher-valued administrative positions in WDO2's offices know less about on-the-ground occurrences than people on the ground at UAS3.

During the period of research, e the social justice group operating UAS5 and UAS6 was seemingly being torn apart by the irreconcilable and disparate opinions of two members on the use of urban agriculture sites. UAS5-6 are located in a primarily African-American, low-income community of southern Wilmington. PU, who is a white female, and PV, who is an African-American male, are the leaders of the social justice group in control of UA5 and UA6. PU seemed to have more influence in the wider organization while PV had more control of the UA sites themselves. One aspect of their tension results from classic insider-outside narratives: PU is an outsider to the community in which UAS5-6 are located, while PV is very much an insider to the community and is known as its "unofficial mayor". This group had received grant money which was supposed to be used to generate 'community crops' at the gardens in order be sold at the community center. During the grant's three-year period, PV stated that not a single crop that was grown at either UAS5 or UAS6 was sold at the community center. PV feels that community justice is not being served by UAS5-6, and that their social justice mission is failing because PU 'only sees things her way'.

When I asked what happens to the crops grown at UAS5-6, PV responded *"Nothing, they just sit there"* unless community members purchase, steal, or are otherwise provided access to crops, such as by participants donating them. PV also points out that UAS6 is effectively defunct and overgrown with weeds, and perceives that PU does not seem interested in UAS6 at all. PU used the grant to purchase mesh fences to prevent pests from destroying crops, wood and other materials to build raised bed and enclosures, and various gardening tools. Additionally, PU sold produce acquired from other sources and disseminated information on healthy food to the community as part of her role. Nonetheless, PX, another employee of the group operating UAS5-6, informed me that the conflict between PV and PU was well known, resulting in the community avoiding UAS5-6 and causing political rifts within group. This conflict, according to PV, will result in PU being removed either from her administrative position, or at least from involvement in urban agriculture.

Politics can be generated in spaces of urban agriculture through the interactions of urban agriculture participants and intended recipients of social justice organizing. Participants whose roles require more frequent attendance in urban agriculture sites may be more aware of social justice as appears on-the-ground than those in higher positions in hierarchies whose roles require less attendance. Conflicts can occur between individuals over the utilization of space or allotment of funding for the space. If the sharp end of geopolitics of social justice is the interactions between participants and community members in the spaces of UA, and different participants have different

everyday experiences with participants based on their roles within a group, then this too can create a potentially volatile political environment where every day on-the-ground knowledge is obscured by processes initiated by and perceptions of people within group. Potential conflicts can also arise from power struggles between UA participants, discouraging civic engagement with sites and heightening tensions within the wider network of social justice groups. Conflicts between members in geopolitics of social justice may also stem from gender roles.

Intra-Group Dynamics: Gender Roles

The everyday acts of urban agriculture and social justice can be performed by a diverse range of peoples. Neither urban agriculture nor social justice is the domain of any specific demographic. Nonetheless, the practice of urban agriculture is gendered like most other spaces. Gender identity is fluid and like social justice and urban agriculture, is an everyday term that may be difficult to define. Gender is not bound to the binaries of male and female; however, in this section I analyze the gender roles of UA performed in the context of this binary. I will first ground this section in a brief gendered history of (urban) agriculture roles and how the relationships of gender take shape in the daily practice of Wilmington's urban agriculture. With this historical basis, I briefly examine the benefits – and challenges – of UA for women. I then discuss gendered microaggressions in the form of sexism in UA work. Finally, I discuss the prevalence of women in UA, and possible reasons for why women dominate UA.

Some theories point to gender roles originating in agriculture (Boserup 1970 in Alesina et al. 2013; Holt-Gimenez 2017) and while this does not tell the whole story of how gender roles are socially constructed and assigned to particular bodies, it provides a foundation for discussing how long-standing ideas about labor in agricultural production still exist. While hunter-gatherer tribes had a high degree of equal power among men and women, shifts in divisions of labor began to occur as agriculture became the leading element of communities, with women shifting to domestic labor and men shifting towards manual labor (Alesina et al. 2013; Holt-Gimenez 2017). As men came to control the larger share of agricultural production, patriarchal systems were reinforced or began to take shape (Holt-Gimenz 2017, 147). Such a view of gender roles persists to this day into so-called 'traditional' masculinity and 'traditional' femininity (Kachel et al. 2016), long after many societies have shifted from agriculture as their economic base. Women nonetheless continued to be active in food systems, through indirect agro-economic activities, giving birth to larger numbers of children to work the fields, food preparation, and care for children. However, the work of women in agriculture and other economic sectors continued to be marginalized by patriarchal forces (Hovorka et al. 2009; Holt-Gimenez 2017) in an economic system that positioned women's roles in the home while men were privileged as the 'breadwinner' (Hovorka et al. 2009, 2). Although made less-visible, women's contributions to agriculture were and continue to be enormously valuable as they are the primary producers of agricultural products globally (Holt-Gimenez 2017).

Gender may also inform how urban agriculture participants prioritize everyday goals at their sites. My interviews demonstrate that male UA participants focused on how much food they could produce, how much profit they could generate, or how they could make youth job training more efficient at sites while women focused on education. All seventeen women I interviewed stated that education was their top daily priority, which took the form of healthy eating and cooking, skill development and resume building especially for youth, or agricultural production and processes. While all ten men spoke more of the need to focus on food production and preparation for 'real-world' jobs, they all also described education as a primary element of their daily missions. PR, a white male, of PUAS2 characterized education as "passing on his [farming] knowledge, in order to protect future generations" from an industrialized and unsustainable food system. These differing priorities, divided along gender lines, may be the result of wider ingrained gender roles which situate women in education or domestic roles and men in more labor intensive or 'practical' roles. Gendered dynamics between group members was not stated by any participant nor did I observe it as an aid cooperation or a sit of conflict in most groups.

There is much literature on the experiences of women in urban agriculture, covering topics that range from rural to urban migration to gender roles in practice (see: Hovorka 2006; Hovorka et al. 2009; Hovorka 2013; Winklerprins 2017; White and Hamm 2017). As the consumption of food is a mundane and everyday act, gendered performances and power relationships in food systems may be not be

thoroughly examined (White and Hamm 2017). However, Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy state, "eating – due to its sensual, visceral nature – is a strategic place from which to begin to understand identity, difference and power" (2008, 462), and food can be used a lens to discover gendered aspects of power dynamics. Urban agriculture has many benefits for women, and an excellent review can be found in Hovorka et al. (2009). UA can serve as a site of an alternative economic system for women who have limited freedom of mobility or lack of education or training, requires comparatively smaller financial investment than other forms of agriculture, is often close to home and informally organized and thus synergizes well with household tasks, can reduce or even re-define gender inequities as well as racial inequities and potentially lucrative income generation (Hovorka et al. 2009, 15-16). Hovorka also notes how UA allows for marginalized groups such as female migrants to resist further marginalization and even begin challenging structural oppression through sociopolitical empowerment (2006). However, there are challenges for women in urban agriculture, such as barriers to accessing land or resources due to various processes of marginalization (Hovorka 2009), or UA not being emancipatory agenda and thus reproduces the various oppressions UA groups targeting women may seek to remedy (White and Hamm 2017), moreover, sites of UA may be places where sexism is reinforced rather than being addressed.

Sexism continues to be an everyday threat to women participating in in urban agriculture (and in agricultural production more broadly). For the purposes of this

chapter I identify sexism as the discrimination of a person or people based on gender or sex. Sexism can manifest as microaggressions, such as unwanted sexual advances or insults. At PUAS1, located south of Wilmington, sexism is experienced by female participants. While PUAS1 is operated by a private social justice group, it is located on land owned by Delaware state government department and frequently requests aid in the form of vehicular power or raw resources from its maintenance staff. While PB and I were hammering some stakes into the ground, PA, PC, and some female volunteers were working a distance away on planting some cucumbers. I witnessed one older white male state employee drive around in a work vehicle and harass the women for some period of time, commenting on their attire or the way their bodies looked with sexual innuendo. In private, I asked PA about this incident. She summarized:

"There's a lot of sexism here, every day. A lot of comments about my body, the other girls' bodies, what we can and cannot do (in regard to physical labor). Women have to prove that we are just as if not more capable at farming or any manual labor than men, it's easier for men to be respected or not stigmatized in the same space. A lot of comments about our bodies or that we do this work. That sexist vibe you picked up on definitely exists."

While I believe that PA's observation speaks volumes on its own, it does underscore the sexism that women can experience from individuals outside of the group. At another visit to PUAS1, this same gentleman refused to allow PA to tell

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him where she should place infrastructure in *her* facility, stating that he knew more about site design than she did. This gentleman's behavior provides just one example of the sexism that women can experience in agriculture (Trauger 2004, Trauger et al. 2009; Holt-Gimenez 2017, 152-153). Another woman who worked at PUAS1, PC, was an avid weightlifter, and she informed me that after she told the state employees this fact, they began to treat her "more like a man" as weightlifting is often perceived as a masculine activity. However, these men still purposely gave her lighter weight objects to move, leading PC to rhetorically ask "Like, do you want me to be a woman, or a man?". Although I did not perceive that these conflicting behaviors of the state employees actually caused PC stress, they did nonetheless result in PC questioning how others viewed her body. A geopolitics of social justice, attuned to gender and micro-aggressions, focuses on interactions based on bodies' appearances. This is not dissimilar to intimate geopolitics, in which argues that "bodies not only are territory but also make territory" (Smith 2012, 1511), and interactions between these body-produced territories can hinge on what restrictions are placed on particular groups of people. The sexism encountered by the women of PUAS1 is not physically violent, but violence does not need to be *physical* to harm. Emotional and psychological harm plays a role in the "oppression and insecurities that disproportionately affect socially, economically and politically marginalized people and places" (Pain and Staeheli 2014, 334), which includes women in agriculture (Trauger 2004, Trauger et al. 2009; Holt-Gimenez 152-153).

Women performing urban agriculture can also face sexism from within their groups. Despite best efforts to avoid replicating the oppressions I was researching, being an active member in everyday UA practice positioned me into gender role stereotypes. At my first visit to PUAS1, I offered to help PA carry a heavy metal pipe (recall that I would later talk to her about sexism at PUAS1). PA replied by rolling her eyes and hoisting the pipe herself and carrying it across the field alone. PB, a man, told me "*all the power to them, the women [here] don't concede anything, all 90 lbs of them will do it [heavy labor]*". While PB indicated that he was complimenting his female coworkers, he and I were nonetheless perpetuating the gender stereotypes that PA would later address.

While PUAS1 was the most visible site of sexism in urban agriculture, it was not the only one. At UAS5-6, male and female community members disregarded the group's female leader and would defer to one of the male staff or me. Additionally, this same leader organized juvenile volunteer workers at UAS5 along gender lines, with the boys performing manual labor in the garden and the girls largely left alone to their cellular devices at the pop-up market on the street. At UAS3, inscribed gender roles personally came into play when two female participants more or less forced me to hammer wooden stakes into the ground due to my perceived "man-power", which I must lack as they took over the task shortly thereafter. While these examples take place in field settings, gender dynamics can also be analyzed through other aspects of

urban agriculture, such as participation in meetings or the positions one occupies within hierarchies.

The jumping-off point for my research in Wilmington was attendance at an urban agriculture community coalition meeting in January 2017. The meeting appeared to have a gender imbalance, with a greater proportion of attendees being women. I also, throughout the course of my research, observed that women occupied leadership positions more often than men, especially in those social justice groups more 'privileged' (able to access economic or political resources more easily) than others. I admit that I was somewhat surprised by the dominant presence of women in positions of power in this industry as my own perceptions were informed by inscribed gender roles. I had imagined the gendered division of agricultural labor skewed heavily to males due to men being featured more often in the agricultural media I consumed up to this point. Out of the twelve groups or sub-groups I worked alongside of, eight were led by women – nine if you include the community coalition DEUFFC. WDO1 and WDO2, which are able to wield vast influence over UA in Wilmington and Delaware more broadly, were spearheaded by women. Based on my observations of groups and statements of research participants, I found that women worked at all scales of UA, from the act of cultivation and harvest to coordinating organizations, and often the lines of hierarchy were diminished in the day-to-day functions of groups when women were the group leaders.

Across all groups, however, all twenty-seven research participants noted that their various sites, services, or programs were accessed by either an even mix of men and women or primarily women. Despite this, PH of WDO1 stated that in the initial stages of a gardening certification program, her organization *"had very little diversity when I first started, and that's been one of my goals to try to get more women"*. PH's observation suggests that in Wilmington, women's dominant presence is a relatively recent phenomenon. At PUAS1, I asked PA-PC if they think urban agriculture is a woman-dominated space. Both PA and PC say yes, with the latter further adding that she is personally aware that urban agriculture in nearby Baltimore is also primarily led by, labored by, and accessed by women. PA later says that she perceives urban agriculture as a white, female-dominated space, and that the *"new-wave or new-age of urban agriculture that seems so concerned with social justice is seemingly led by people not of that community"*, further adding that since she belongs to neither the 'white' nor 'black' groups, she feels further marginalized. PA speaks to concerns that women's movements, which may include social justice groups, reinforce white privilege. Groups led by white women can undermine social justice as voices within, or similar to, the marginalized communities that social justice groups seek to assist are pushed into lower positions of power.

The prevalence of women in Wilmington's urban agriculture could stem from any number of factors. Some direction can be gleaned from academic literature, in which authors state that women form the majority of urban agriculture participants

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world-wide (Hovorka 2009; Robertson 2013). UA can be beneficial to women as it is often close to home and household labor (Hovorka et al. 2009), and while "childcare is virtually never an employment benefit of agricultural work (Holt-Gimenez 2017, 153), that is not always the case. PÆ cited the proximity of the site of her group's urban agriculture, UAS7, to her home as the main reason she worked there. She stated that as a *"full-time mother and part-time farmer"*, it was nice to be able to leave her job to tend to her child and return to work whenever she pleased, and that the services her organization provided effectively amount to free daycare during (and beyond) her shifts. Women account for around thirty percent of US farm operators (Helmer 2016), mirrored in Delaware (USDA 2017 n.d.).

One component of the geopolitics of social justice is the relationship between and within groups in relation to their physical sites and participants. Intra-group dynamics are a key part of this discussion, as the next highest scale of geopolitics after the individual. Prescribed gender roles and sexism are a critical aspect of intra-group dynamics, as these elements of individual interactions impact how people experience their pursuit of social justice. If the people that are performing social justice through urban agriculture or leading groups that do so are predominantly (but not entirely) women, and if these women themselves suffer from pervasive sexism, social justice pursuits may be compromised. How can social justice be achieved in marginalized communities, when the individuals who are trying to achieve it are being oppressed themselves? People may harass or threaten women participants through verbal or

physical means, may mislabel their role or disregard their contributions entirely, or have their bodies' capabilities defined for them. Sexism can occur not only from community members or members of other groups, but also from within. Male employees can belittle female counterpoints, even when they intend sexist statements as compliments. These intra-group gender dynamics can be compounded by racial bias as well. If social justice groups in Wilmington are primarily led and labored by white women, this silences voices and contributions from other women or marginalized individuals that suffer other prejudices.

Conclusion

Geopolitics is the school of political geography which analyzes the role of space-place in relations between entities. Geopolitics can occur at multiple scales: state-state, corporation-state, and individual-individual. Although I have been informed by geopolitical theories in this paper, I found that geopolitics does not quite match the relationships formed in inter-and-intra group dynamics within social justice groups that deploy urban agriculture in Wilmington, Delaware. While geopolitics considers multiple scales, I found that the relationships in my research were more political and perhaps less geopolitical, even though such politics were generated from these specific UA spaces. My research participants had differing perceptions on working together based on factors such as competition or cooperation over resources or conceptualizations of influence. Participants held different perceptions of how effective their sites are or what their sites should do based on the everyday actions of

their role within an organization. Participants also experienced urban agriculture differently due to preconceived gender roles and the appearance of their bodies.

Their social justice aims are nonetheless responses to unequal impacts of injustices caused by capitalist socioeconomic systems, which affect different communities that occupy different spaces in disparate ways. Social justice is the pursuit of societal equality among all groups. As social injustices can occur at any scale geopolitics can, there is much synergy between the two concepts. This synergy is useful at smaller scales, as social justice is enacted by groups of individuals at particular physical sites. In particular, feminist geopolitics, which explores the everyday impacts of statecraft and political processes on individuals at multiple scales and how they in turn influence geopolitical processes, is an excellent lens with which to study social justice. Socioeconomic structures at the level of the state impact different communities in uneven ways. Social justice groups aim to alleviate the lived experiences of these unequal impacts on marginalized individuals through political interventions in communities, which take place at physical sites. As social justice occurs at any scale and anywhere, but ultimately requires a group of individuals to operate in a site in order to aid the 'bodies at the sharp end' of poverty in resisting to structural oppressions, it can be studied as in geopolitics of social justice. A geopolitics of social justice study of urban agriculture, attuned to individuals' perceptions of the political relationships between groups, within groups, and in the everyday experiences of individual participants; can further highlight the enormous

transformative potential of UA for SJ. However, this geopolitics of social justice can also underscore UA's shortcomings in attaining SJ as individual participants may view community coalitions negatively, be disconnected from the daily happenings at sites, or suffer injustices or oppression. In the following paper, I discuss the dual issues of access and (in)visibility of UA sites in Wilmington, Delaware, which may not necessarily be geopolitically driven, but nonetheless are influenced by ramifications of politics and geography.

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Chapter 4

DUAL ISSUES OF ACCESS AND (IN)VISIBILITY IN WILMINGTON, DELAWARE'S URBAN AGRICULTURE

Abstract

Urban agriculture (UA) is utilized by social justice (SJ) groups in Wilmington, as a component of their diverse goals. However, are spaces of urban agriculture observable to and accessed by the marginalized communities who social justice groups aim to aid? UA, as a physical space, must be observable and approachable by the individuals who SJ groups aim to aid in order for them to serve intended social justice purposes. UA, despite its enormous transformative potential for SJ, has limitations. Through semi-structured interviews and participant observation with twenty-seven (urban) agriculture participants over the course of Summer 2017, research participants highlight the issues of access and visibility of sites as their primary limitations. Access issues range from the topography and location of the UA site to SJ groups' intended audiences being disinterested in UA or unaware of its existence in the cityscape to the ramifications of SJ groups' securitization of UA sites. (In)visibility issues build from physical barriers to access, however, SJ groups have implemented several strategies to enhance visibility of UA sites and attract people to them. I argue that access and visibility are dual issues, and that these intersecting dilemmas can impede a group's ability to perform SJ.

Keywords: Social justice, urban agriculture, access, visibility

Introduction

One of, if not *the,* most well-known sites of urban agriculture (UA) in Wilmington, Delaware, may be the hardest to locate and access. It sits atop a hill and is obscured by overgrown grasses, flanged by two perimeters of tall black metal bar fences, and is overshadowed by both another hill (with its own set of barriers) and a telephone tower among other structures. The site is only accessible by two sets of seventeen concrete steps indented into the hill's slopes. At the pinnacle of the stairs, the gates to the site were padlocked, and at the time I visited, the garden was abandoned. Furthermore, the garden itself was located a few yards away from one entrance and farther from the other. While I am outsider to this community, I wondered if community members also had challenges accessing the garden let alone finding it.
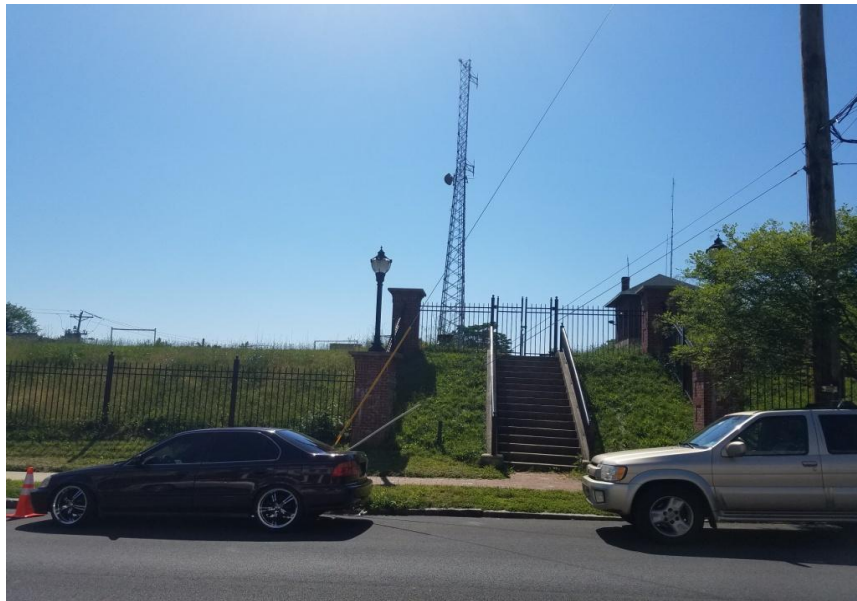

Figure 30   Wilmington's most prominent site of urban agriculture (?)

Were these dual issues of access and (in)visibility only a problem experienced at this particular site, or was this site emblematic of a broader problem for UA sites in Wilmington in general? First, I define visibility as whether or not people can actually see the urban agriculture site on the landscape and access, as to whether or not there are physical barriers to entering the space. Second, I consider visibility in terms of being able to find a site, once people are made aware of its presence and if information is made available so that people can access the site. In any scenario, were the social justice (SJ) groups who operated UA sites aware or attempting to do something to remedy the problem? My experiences with the dual issues of access and visibility of UA sites led me to ask: 1) How did urban agriculture participants aim to reduce the impact of these dual issues? and; 2) What audience do social justice groups that engage in urban agriculture target, and who actually visits urban agriculture sites and accesses these services? I ask these questions because UA is commonly described as having enormous transformative SJ potential and benefits (see: Nordahl 2009; Broad 2016; Reynolds and Cohen 2016; Stanko and Naylor 2018). However, the people who SJ groups aim to help must ultimately access the services or products at physical sites in order for this potential to be realized. In the prior paper, I discussed how the everydayness of SJ work through UA in Wilmington involves political relationships informed by participants' daily experiences of inter-and-intra group dynamics. A lack of understanding of participants' perceptions these politicized interactions can harm SJ pursuits in the city. Another element that requires more attention in Wilmington's UA network are the parallel yet intertwined issues of (in)visibility and access, and how participants' responses to these issues occupy a significant portion of their everyday lives and perceptions of their work.

I argue that UA sites throughout Wilmington, Delaware and peri-urban sites throughout the wider New Castle County suffer from the dual issues of access and invisibility, and that these dual issues can reinforce the social inequalities that UA participants aim to address in pursuit of SJ. First, I briefly explore Wilmington's historical and demographic geographies, and then the history of UA in the U.S. more broadly. This history is followed by a history of urban agriculture in Wilmington, which situates why organizations, individuals, and the city utilize it as a part of SJ activism. With this historical and demographic grounding, I then discuss place in the city in order to identify the possible roots of the dual issues of visibility and access in Wilmington. After this literature review, I describe my methodology and methods. The results of my research, based on research participants' own analyses and my own participant observations and discussion of them follow, finally concluding with a summary and future considerations.

Wilmington, Delaware: Historical and Demographic Geographies

It is important to look at the location of Wilmington as it is situated between larger (and more researched) cities such as NYC, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and D.C. As a renowned corporate center, Wilmington has long influenced the Mid-Atlantic region despite its smaller population comparative to nearby cities and serves as a key factor in regional economics. However, Wilmington is also perhaps unjustly infamous for racialized poverty and (violent) crime, and which may also impact the wider region. As an example from my field work, a research participant operating a garden site in Wilmington's East Side neighborhood stated that drug traffickers were using abandoned row homes in the community as a base of operations between Philadelphia

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and BaltimoreIn this section, I will review Wilmington's history and contemporary

demographic profile in order to contextualize why UA may be deployed as part of a SJ

strategy.
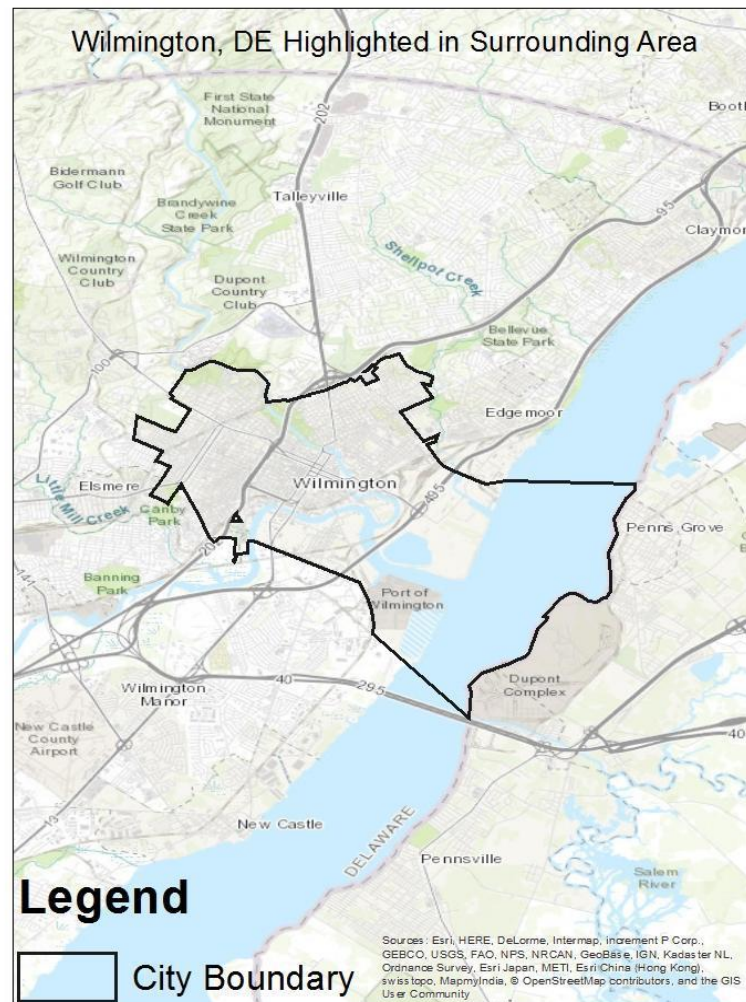
Figure 31   The City of Wilmington, Delaware

Post world-war labor shortages permitted new economic opportunities for Wilmington's African-American population, who had previously been excluded from the labor market (Munroe 1993). The African-American population grew in number and percentage of total population; however, this growth was punctuated by increasing rates of poverty (Curtis 1997). White flight and wealth associated with whites as well as development schemes that intentionally displaced low-income minority populations, coupled with race riots that were part of broader movements of the 1960s formed the basis of social injustices faced by minority and low-income residents in Wilmington today. Despite being a key pivot point for the Mid-Atlantic region's economy due to its status as a corporate capital, Wilmington suffers from racialized poverty (Curtis 1997) as indicated in Figures 32-34.

Figure 32   Poverty among Delawareans by County and Place, Five Year Average, 2009-2013. Adapted from (From Peuquet et al 2015, 2)

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Figure 33   Percent of Population by Race in Wilmington. Data from City of Wilmington. (2010). Analysis Areas

Figure 34   Percent of families per race below poverty level in Wilmington. Data from City of Wilmington. (2010). Analysis Areas

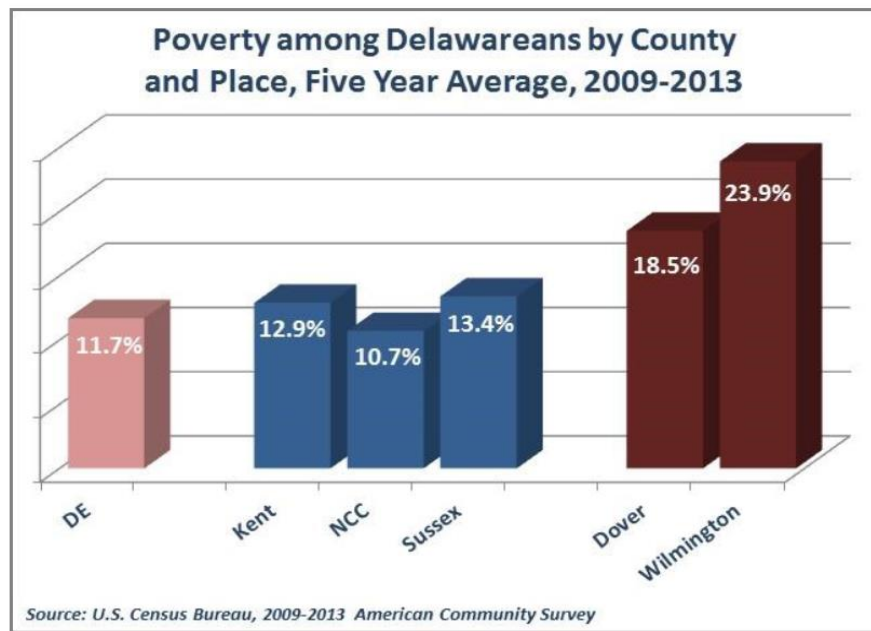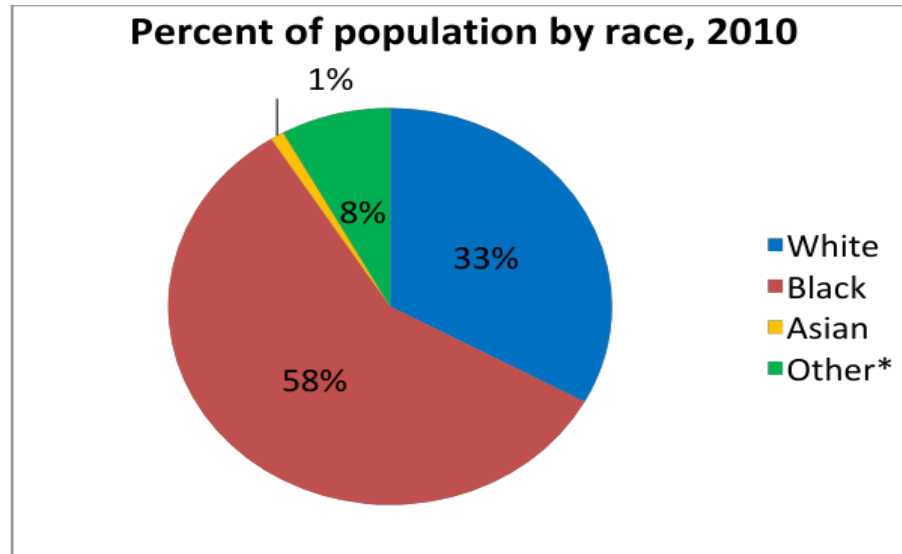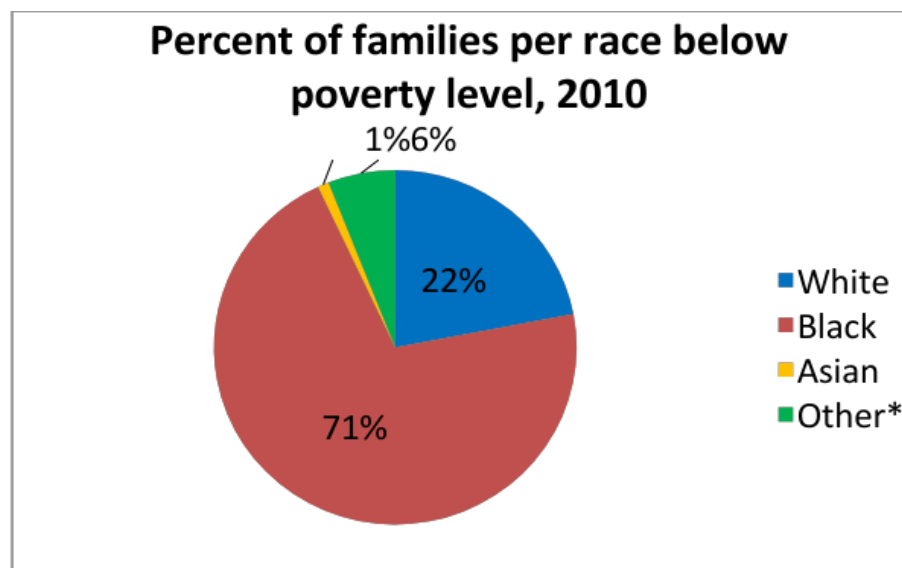As Figures 32 through 34 indicate, poverty – in which a family or individual lack the income to purchase basic food and household needs - is a major issue in Wilmington[21]. Slightly around a quarter of Wilmington's population is considered in poverty, with one study finding, "[p]overty rates for individuals are particularly high within census tracts in Wilmington and range between 40% and 69%" (Peuquet et al. 2015, 3). This statistic indicates that poverty is unevenly distributed geographically in the city. Poverty overall affects nearly 20,000 people in the city. Critically, this economic marginalization takes on a racial dimension; while African-Americans are approximately three-fifths of Wilmington's population, over seventy percent of African-Americans families live below the poverty line. This racialized economic disparity reflects a nationally overwhelming intersection of poverty and food insecurity in communities of color, especially among African Americans (Gundersen et al. 2016). Understanding the historical and demographic geographies of Wilmington provides a basis for understanding why UA has arisen as an avenue in the pursuit of alleviating social injustices within the city, which has synergy with national trends.

The Roots of Urban Agriculture in U.S. and Wilmington, Delaware
A number of excellent histories of UA in the U.S. have been written by other scholars (see: Hayden-Smith 2014; Lawson 2005; Moore 2006; Naylor 2012; Pudup 2008; Warner et al. 1987). UA in the U.S. context began during the economic depression of 1893-1897 in Detroit (Lawson 2005, 23). City officials asked

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[21] The source data defines 'Other' as including American Indian/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, Some Other Race Alone and Others of Two or More Races. Hispanic/Latino is not included as Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race.

landowners in Detroit's fringe to lend their land to the government, in order for it to

create a gardening program in vacant lots for those in poverty facing starvation. The

success of this program inspired other US cities to replicate it, however, UA sites were

viewed as quick fixes to the threat of starvation, and dismantled or repurposed post-

crisis (Lawson 2005). Community gardens were again prescribed by the federal

government as a response to crisis during the world wars, although the federal

government used national security as the organizing narrative in lieu of responding to

the root causes of poverty (Naylor 2012). Once more, these sites were largely

dismantled post-crisis and repurposed for economic development.

In the 1950s-1960s, UA initiatives were fueled by grassroots efforts of

politicized social movements, such as the African-American civil rights movement, as

sites of resilience or resistance to wider sociopolitical marginalization. Nonetheless,

vacant lots continued to decay, and in the 1970s various cities and groups utilized UA

in broader attempts to clean up urban communities. These community renewal

projects gradually incorporated more community involvement in planning and

organization of UA sites, as well as taking on new roles during the 1980s (Lawson

2005). The number of UA sites grew overall in 'greening' and 'sustainability'

narratives in urban environments during the 1990s (Stanko and Naylor 2018),

resulting in the diversification of urban agriculture programs to include a number of

different missions, forms, and modes of organization.

Today, the number of UA sites is growing due to increased availability of

unused public land and supermarket flight from or non-investment in low income

areas, amongst increased economic, government, and social interests (Colasanti et al. 2012; Palmer 2018; 5-7). Some UA sites are used as economic or cultural preservation activities for immigrants or other groups, or are parts of wider social justice missions, or assist in community food security, or to 're-wild' cities, and more. The recent attention placed on the practice of UA in the U.S. is perhaps most directly related to increased attention to long-standing food movements including alternative food networks, sustainable food movement, and local food movements. Alternative food networks, or AFNs, can be defined as "efforts to respatialize and resocialize food production, distribution and consumption" (Kontothanasis 2017, 667) by considering the sociocultural elements of the local community and promoting an alternative capitalism. AFNs arose from a desire to challenge the economic dominance of mainstream agri-food systems, which have inherent injustices at every part of the conventional network. Sustainable food movements are related to AFNs, but focus more on ecological concerns: a food system in sync with natural systems and living organisms. Local food movements are yet another permutation of these strands of thought, focusing on the political 'place of food' as an everyday act of resistance to globalization (Feagan 2007). In all these movements, UA can play a key role in their objectives: all of which seek to aid in achieving various SJs. In Wilmington, many SJ groups have incorporated UA into achieving their broader SJ aims.

Between 1985 and 2014, at least sixteen UA sites were established in Wilmington that still exist today. The Delaware Center for Horticulture, founded in the 1970s during a wave of greening initiatives, alongside other organizations,

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critically including the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension and its vast

network of resources and connections, recognized the need for greater cooperation

between UA groups and co-founded the Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition

(DEUFFC) in 2008. DEUFFC's formation suggests that there was a thriving

environment of UA in the state if not Wilmington before its establishment. However,

it was Michelle Obama's breaking ground on the White House lawn for her vegetable

garden in 2009 that galvanized public interest in UA in the U.S. more broadly (Naylor

2012, 484) and in Wilmington. DCH created the 12th and Brandywine Urban Farm in

response to this public interest, and began outright establishing or aiding other

Wilmington SJ groups in creating other sites of UA. While the efforts of these groups

were pivotal in Wilmington's current state of UA, the city government became

involved in the wake of the infamous 2014 Newsweek article 'Murdertown USA'

(see: Jones 2014).

City government, then under Mayor Dennis William responded to the

"Murdertown" article by attempting to create a different image for the city by working

with or aiding different groups to create various cultural and greening programs,

including those of UA. Mayor Williams stated, "[u]rban farms have been a proven

factor in bringing the crime rate down" (in Malgiero 2016), which may suggest that

the present government investment in UA is a temporary fix to crime. Delaware's state

government provided monetary support to SJ organizations that engage in UA,

awarding grants totaling $10,000 across eleven groups in 2016 and $27,671.74 across

eighteen groups in 2017, throughout the state but concentrated in Wilmington (State of

Delaware News 2016; State of Delaware News 2017)[22]. Governor Jack Markell and former Dept. of Agriculture Secretary Ed Kee also participated in visiting UA sites in the city (Natoli 2013). Many organizations rent the land on which they operate their sites from state or city government for extremely low prices, however, this land can often be previously vacant lots or brownfields located throughout the city[23]. These empty and occasionally polluted places are viewed by community members and government officials alike as blighted areas as their non-or-under usage decreases productivity (and revenue) in communities and make them appear unattractive (Tharp and Guehlstorf 2018, 2). UA in some cases is considered a way to improve and beautify these spaces (McClintock 2018).

In summary, public and government interest in urban agriculture across the US has gone through several iterations and levels of popularity. For a long period of its history, UA (at least from a government or socioeconomic elite viewpoint) was treated as a temporary method of alleviating a crisis located in fringe areas of the city, to be repurposed following the end of that crisis. Later, UA became politicized by radical movements. Following that, UA became an aspect of greening and sustainability initiatives, with an increasing amount of attention brought to UA's potential for SJ and community engagement. The number of UA sites, and participants that engage in it,

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[22] Delaware's state government itself provided $17,671.74, while the New Castle Conservation District provided an additional $10,000 for New Castle County sites, concentrated in Wilmington

[23] Whether an exaggeration or a literal value, the participants of one peri-urban farm stated that the state's price for them to operate the site was $1 annually.

vastly grew in the 2000s. In Wilmington, Delaware, the resurgence (recognition) of UA is connected to SJ efforts and state investment due to potential crime mitigation. While UA sites are physical spaces, their placement may be uneven (McClintock 2018; Stanko and Naylor 2018). To understand why this placement is uneven, it is important to consider what 'place' is.

Place

Place is an essential concept in geography, and occupies a critical interdisciplinary space between various fields (Cresswell 2015, 1). Cresswell identifies place as a set of inscribed personal meanings to a particular 'space', which can occur at any scale (2015). Place is thus intimately tied to perception, which itself is defined by our realities and experiences. Urban agriculture sites within cities are dynamic places that help us understand different aspects of communities, from individuals' conceptualization of what belongs on the landscape to group identities to relationships between people at the site. For example, an urban farm is a space, but one UA participant may describe it as her 'place' of zen, while a customer may see it as a place he can buy tomatoes, and yet another individual may perceive the farm as a nest for pests. How has UA come to be produced as a place, and how is it consumed? Heynen et al. discuss how places of urban green spaces are unevenly distributed not only in terms of where they are located, but also in how they are perceived by the residents around the space (2006). In more affluent neighborhoods, green spaces can be seen as beautifying elements, whereas in low-income neighborhoods green spaces could be seen as dangerous places where criminals could hide. Tying Heynen et al.'s conceptualization of green space to UA, perception change occurred as society shifted

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from separate notions of 'nature' and 'built environment' to the potential of nature being part of the built environment (2006). While this urban greening resulted in a healthier city as green spaces provided a litany of health benefits, such as serving as sites of exercise to salubrious environmental functions, the distribution of green spaces was not and still is not equally distributed (Heynen et al. 2006; Wolch et al. 2014). Green spaces tend to be concentrated in white, middle to upper-class areas of cities or suburbs (Wolch et al. 2014), perhaps due to their relative concentration of wealth compared to other socioeconomic groups.

UA sites may be out of sight compared to other green areas of the city, shielded by barriers or otherwise hidden due to contestation over whether or not the practice of UA is acceptable on the landscape. Urban agriculture is, in some cases, seen as 'out of place' by community members or city officials despite its increased presence, Naylor notes:

"[…] there are some places – and times – where gardens are acceptable on the landscape and others where they are less so. Community gardens are established where the government or other supportive groups deem them appropriate and removed from that space when they are viewed as no longer socially necessary or as an impediment to economic development" (2012, 488)

If community gardens, among other forms of UA, are only considered 'acceptable' at certain times and certain areas, then long-term survivability must be questioned. These conditions may make SJ groups and governments hesitant to invest more resources into UA sites if they are deemed inefficient, and the place they occupy may be left to decay or repurposed for other developments.

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On the other hand, UA may be viewed as a positive addition to a community and can pave the way for other development that can result in rising property rates and gentrification. In low income and minority communities where the population may not be able to afford visual barriers or where vacant land may be more available, places of urban agriculture may be more observable to individuals and may actually be considered an amenity. This visibility may be deleterious to SJ groups operating UA sites in these areas – urban agriculture can augment the process of gentrification (DeLind 2015; McClintock 2018) and other neoliberal forces. For example, a SJ group comprised of outsiders may begin an urban agriculture project with justice-orientated goals in a low-income community. However, as participants may appear as 'others' to community members, the very people the group seeks to aid feel that this site is not 'their' place, and thus avoid accessing the site. As an example, Massey (2017) discusses how urban farms that aim to perform social justice in Washington, D.C. are being coopted by gentrifying forces that push out marginalized communities from the neighborhoods UA sites reside in. Massey argues that SJ participants must incorporate various measures, such as ensuring affordable housing, in the communities they operate in to maintain their SJ mission (2017).

If UA is distributed unevenly, attention must be brought to how this distribution is determined (Colasanit et al. 2012; Marche 2015). This may be explained as UA being perceived as a messy or (short-term) survival tactic in some areas, and a beautifying aesthetic element in others. While UA has long served as a survival strategy for low income communities; especially those of color (Lawson 2005; Hayden-Smith 2014), the association and misconceptions or statistics of these communities with high rates of crime or pollution may help explain why UA is more

obscured or harder to access in these areas (Colasanti et al 2012; Meenar and Hoover 2012). In contrast to this, community gardens in particular among other forms of UA are seen as enhancements on the beauty of communities (Lindemann-Matthies and Brieger 2016) and may be placed in more open areas with more open access or receive more media attention. Lindemann-Matthies and Brieger, in the context of German UA, found that UA sites with more organized arrangements and vibrant aesthetic elements are perceived by the public as more attractive, and draw greater public interest to accessing the sites, while messier and less vibrant UA sites saw less interest (2016). However, it should be questioned as to *who* is accessing these sites. If individuals with privilege are accessing UA sites that are intended to perform SJ, then the site only serves as replication of the oppressions groups aim to counter. If sites are not known to or utilized by the intended audience, measures should be taken to expand them. To learn how UA participants understand the dual issues of access and (in)visibility of their sites, it may be most efficient for a researcher to gain participants' personal insights and to find sites themselves.

Methodology and Methods

My research for this paper considers the dual issues of access and invisibility of UA sites in Wilmington, the questions guiding this component of the project were 1) How do urban agriculture participants aim to reduce the impact of these dual issues? and; 2) What audience do social justice groups that engage in urban agriculture target, and who actually visits urban agriculture sites and accesses these services? In my research, I used two ethnographically-informed research methods: semi-structured interviews with twenty-seven research participants and (direct) participant observation.

As stated previously, I conducted interviews with twenty-seven (urban) agriculture participants, and visited their sites. Participants were recruited through snowballing techniques, after gaining an initial set of interviews at an UA conference held in Wilmington. My research participants come primarily from Wilmington based groups or sites, with some just outside the city, and a handful from other locations in Delaware. I prioritized those individuals and groups with implicit or explicit SJ goals. In order to protect confidentiality, I elected to use pseudonyms. Confidentiality is required due to the limited number of SJ activists that utilize UA in Wilmington. One of my earliest contacts suggested I use individuals' favorite fruits or vegetables as their pseudonyms, while sites are numbered and identified as peri-urban site (PUAS) urban agriculture site (UAS) or a facility base for a wider organization (WDO).

Results and Discussion

The concept of 'place' and how place is produced and consumed plays a role in how UA sites are positioned, and how effective they can be in attracting people to visit them. Regarding access, if people cannot access the sites or services of UA sites, then SJ cannot be achieved through them as the very individuals who SJ groups aim to help are denied entry. Access issues can also deny particular groups, such as those with physical disabilities and lack of vehicular transportation, entrance to sites. This prevention of access limits the SJ potential of sites. Visibility may directly connect to the same causes of access issues, and SJ groups may try to make their sites more acceptable on the landscape through various means that enhance sites' attractiveness. While SJ groups may take steps to make their UA sites more visible or accessible, these efforts may not attract the group's intended audience, especially as UA is portrayed by media as a white practice (Smith 1991; Stein 2010). These elements can

discourage other demographic groups from accessing sites, who may feel that spaces of UA are not a place for them, but rather for other or different people. My findings contribute Wilmington UA participants' perceptions and observations of the dual issues of access and (in)visibility of sites - and their solutions to these problems - to the overall UA and SJ literature. In the following two sections, I use field data to guide through discussion of access and (in)visibility of UA sites in Wilmington, Delaware.

<div align="center">Access</div>

Every UA participant mentioned the 'immediate' or 'local' neighborhood as their target audience for social justice services. Yet, nearly all of my research participants mentioned access to either their sites of UA or group headquarters as a key issue, tying access to physical barriers that prevented access or made it more difficult. Accessibility included physical barriers, security measures and lack of awareness of UA sites. As discussed in chapter two, the goals of most organizations operating UA sites were based on a variety of social justice efforts. Some groups such as at PUAS1 focused on youth skill training and education at their site. Groups such as the one utilizing UAS1 were less interested in UA but more community redevelopment through means such as making housing affordable or connecting local businesses to resources. Other groups such as WDO2 were concerned about urban greening and (green) job creation. As a result, this raised questions about why UA sites were considered inaccessible by users.

UAS1, which I discussed in the introduction is an example of a site with physical access issues. I use UAS1 as the primary context for understanding access and visibility as it is among Wilmington's most prominent urban agriculture sites and that its visibility and access issues are well-known amongst Wilmington UA

participants. UAS1 rests on top of a hill that is only accessible by two series of stairs and is padlocked. UAS1 perhaps more than any other site captures all the (in)access themes I identified in Wilmington's UA network, which are physical accessibility including barriers and public disinterest or unawareness of UA. Participants particularly highlighted the topography of UAS1 as the greatest obstruction to accessing it. PE, an administrative official of UAS1, states:

> "For one, if you can't get up on top of the hill you can't know
> what's on top of the hill. I know that until I got my key I
> thought this was just empty space, like I realize that there's a
> reservoir up there and a lot more but um?"

According to PE, people moving along the streets or sidewalks of the middle-class community UAS1 is situated in can only discover the site exists if they are able to scale the hill that UAS1 is situated on. PE had worked for the SJ group that operates UAS1 for some period of time before the group provided him access to the site. Despite desire to operate a UA site on the hill, PE did not feel compelled to climb the hill and observe the site until he was given access. PE believed that space on top of the hill was "empty space". If PE, who worked for the SJ group that runs UAS1, was unaware of what rested at the top of the hill, community members may also be unaware of the site.

Additionally, because UAS1 is located on elevated terrain, it can be challenging to access the site for residents with physical disabilities or limitations. While PE ties UAS1's elevation to knowledge of the site's existence, other research participants speak more to the issues that the hill can present to physical access to the

site. PD, who also is an administrative official for the SJ group in control of UAS1, discusses how the hill can prevent certain bodies from accessing the site. She states:

"Um, it is up on a hill. Like you have to bring the dirt (and other

materials) way up the stairs so it is not accessible by everybody."

Although PD does not specify what she means by everybody, she does point out that there will be residents who are excluded from UAS1 due to its placement. PD highlights how carrying dirt from the street up the stairs into the garden itself requires a degree of physical fitness that not everyone will have, which complicates access to UAS1. One may be able to get up the stairs, but they might need assistance with the transportation of materials and products in and out of the garden as well as up and down the stairs. Individuals with ambulatory challenges or other health issues can also be physically excluded from the garden due to the requisite exertion to simply get to its gated entrance. Participants of other SJ groups are also aware of the limitations presented by the hill. PH, an administrative official at WDO1, says;" That site [UAS1] is unusual because of its location - you have to be able to get up the hill, which is interesting from an access standpoint because that can be hard."

PH's knowledge of UAS1's access issues adds another dimension to the issue of access. In Chapter 3, I discuss how SJ groups may compete with one another over their own access to potential UA sites or to communities in order to achieve their SJ goals. Other SJ groups can exploit UAS1's hill to their advantage by acquiring or creating UA sites in this same community on flatter, more accessible land. As residents decide to go to these more accessible sites, access to UAS1 may diminish and may ultimately result in UAS1 being abandoned. Although UAS1 was built in

2011 with the volunteer labor of dozens of community members, I did not perceive in Summer 2017 that community members continued to access the site based on many unused or poorly managed raised beds throughout it.

Physical accessibility, or "users' ability to reach – or put their hands on – and make use of available materials" (Lee and Burnett 2015) or spaces, can be foiled by various elements. While UAS1 may be an outlier, other sites have barriers to access due to security concerns. Groups may elect to install security measures such as locks, walls, or cameras, which can limit access by physically denying entry or discouraging people from wanting to access sites. UA participants are placed in a position where they must protect their sites but paradoxically attempt to support the most vulnerable populations. Higher rates of crime disproportionately afflict low-income and minority populations (Harris and Kearney 2014), who are frequently the target of SJ activism. SJ groups may aim to protect their sites with security measures as preemptive measures due to Wilmington's real and perceived crime rates, or as responses to past theft, vandalism, or other unwanted crimes in UA sites and this may in turn limit their ability to achieve SJ goals.

PN, who manages UAS3, discusses the complicated negotiation of simultaneously securitizing UA sites and attempting to promote access to them. While we were harvesting sun gold tomatoes, I noticed that the equipment shed had several locks on it. Earlier, I noticed several locks on the gates at the entrances of UAS3. When I asked PN about the locks, she told me that UAS3 had issues in previous years with 'neighborhood delinquents' stealing farming tools, damaging or otherwise disrupting the site, and stealing crops. The security measures were a response to these criminal acts, and PN found them to be effective. However, she noted that criminals

were not the only ones deterred from accessing UAS3. Earlier in the day of that field visit, community members informed PN that a group of people had wanted to enter the garden but could not due to the locks told PN. The community members did not get the contact information of these people, and PN felt that she might have missed a chance to talk with people about healthy food preparation and production, which is one of the broader SJ goals of her organization. Security systems are thus double-edged swords. SJ groups can protect their sites from criminals through utilization of barriers, but prevent others from accessing sites by these same measures.

While urban agriculture - and urban greenspace more broadly - can reduce crime in communities (McCabe 2014; Bogar and Beyer 2016) as community members create a safe space to communicate with one another (Hanna and Oh 2000; Firth et al. 2011), SJ groups can also enlist community members themselves as a security force to potentially deleterious effects. PG is a participant of UAS2, located behind a community center in a low-income minority community in Wilmington's RiverSide neighborhood. In a broader discussion about his perception that youth engage in more petty crime today than his generation had, I asked him if vandalism occurs at UAS2. He tells me that they used to have problems with younger children climbing over the roof of the community center and destroying garden plots, and in response became the self-entitled authoritarian of the community center. When I asked him how he acted as an authoritarian, he stated that he would scold children for various things like littering or fighting. He also persuaded local teenagers to keep an eye out on the garden, although PG feels that he may have permanently scared off children.

Although physical accessibility regarding both landscape features and security measures presented barriers to access, community members' own disinterest in and

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unawareness of UA sites were also contributing factors[24]. These two elements can be

considered as 'anti-access', as residents actively avoid sites, or passively do not know

where sites are. Many UA participants highlighted how lower-income people may not

have the time needed to grow their own food. PD and PF are participants of UAS1 and

UAS2, respectively. UAS1 is located in a middle-class community while UAS2 is

located in a lower-class community; both of these participants expressed how the

community simply just did not care about UA, or were unaware of UA's presence. PD

states;

> "….the community didn't want to take care of it [a former UA site
>
> built on a vacant lot that was operated by the group now operating
>
> UAS1] so we just had this overrun lot. So that's something we
>
> always think about, the community buy-in."

In the community, an unattractive vacant place was converted in to an

unattractive overgrown place, effectively supplanting one problem with another. A

lack of community interest in accessing UA sites is not necessarily a negative thing for

SJ, as groups such as this one take a step back and consider what the community

values rather than what the group values. However, some SJ participants may

themselves be disinterested in UA. During an interview with PF, he scarcely

mentioned his community center's garden, UAS2, at all. In fact, he seemed to want to

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[24] Ongoing research conducted at University of Delaware by Dr. Yasser Payne
suggests that community members in Wilmington neighborhoods, such as the East
Side, are interested in UA. Coincidentally, at a community coalition conference I
attended in July 2017, SJ participants discussed plans to expand UA in East Side.

avoid it as much as possible. When he did mention the garden in relation to community (dis)interest, he stated,

> "Uhm you know what, they're not that interested. I can count on one hand how many people come to the center and say 'hey I need some vegetables, what's going on back there with the farm'… It's an afterthought. They just haven't been educated in that."

PF perceives that UA is an "afterthought" to the community, that UAS2 is a wasted place. He perceives that the local community members do not care about UAS2. During the interview PF constantly connected his valuation of services provided by his community center to resident engagement. For example, during my field visit a massive community party was being held in the dining hall, arguable masterpieces on chalkboards indicated that children used the classrooms, and I observed several elderly citizens hanging out in and around the center. PF seemed to only value conversations that residents had with him, which may not reflect lived experiences of the entire group's participants. This presents an access issue not of a lack of community awareness of UA sites, but of participant unawareness of what occurs in UA sites and why they might be valuable vis-à-vis other activities. After this statement, PF focuses on his plans to convert the place of the garden into something more economically productive for the center. If SJ groups do not perceive sites as viable or useful due to community disinterest, they may abandon UA projects.

PF's perception that the community has not been educated in (urban) agriculture also speaks to awareness as an access issue. Community members may be

unaware of what is being produced in UA spaces, or there may not be enough awareness raising to allow for access to the sites. For example, I approach the topic of awareness with PY. PY is a community member of the neighborhood that UAS5-6 are situated in. While she was not a regular urban agriculture participant, she was the truant officer in charge of a group of youth volunteers performing community service during one of my field visits to UAS5. During a conversation about her work, I asked about her perceptions of UA. I was surprised that she did not connect it with truancy work, but rather to community awareness of UA throughout Wilmington. PY expressed; "People are unaware of UA despite it being right in their community, and it is happening all across Wilmington!" PY feels that Wilmington's population as a whole is not cognizant of the city-wide practice of UA, let alone within individuals' neighborhoods. She goes on to talk about barriers such as fences or walls that limit visibility of UA sites and can block entrance. She highlights how UA sites are scalar, mentioning that it is possible to grow vegetables on a windowsill or in places like UAS5. I ask if she feels that city residents should access UA sites more, and she responds that people should access SJ sites more generally and that UA is just one form of SJ occurring in Wilmington. SJ participants may be as unaware of UA sites as some community members. In response to me asking access issues at UAS1, PE states,

> "Not a lot of people have access up here and not too many
> people, I think, know,… If I wasn't working for UAS1, I
> wouldn't even know that this was here, or how to get a plot up
> here. I wouldn't know how to participate."

PE's observations underscore several issues related to access. He highlights how there are a limited number of people with access to the site. He thinks through his perception of the site, concluding that he only knows about UAS1 and how to participate in it. Beyond awareness of where UA sites are located, some UA participants feel that community members may be unaware of the perceived benefits of UA. At UAS5, I witnessed and even participated in a conversation between PU, a white female UA participant, and a community member I have labeled "Tofu" for confidentiality. PU was attempting to persuade Tofu to purchase a plot at UAS5, to which Tofu asked why he should bother growing his own food when he can buy some quickly at the nearby corner store. This conversation went on for a few minutes before Tofu left, saying that he would 'consider it'. Afterwards, PU expressed that Tofu was representative of other people in this community, who were unaware of the importance of healthy food and sustainability - two benefits commonly ascribed to UA.

The issue of access is a broad and critical one. In terms of physical access, UA participants felt that landscape features and physical barriers prevented community members from accessing sites. While landscape features are fixed, and participants focused on a singular UA site, other UA sites may suffer from these issues in Wilmington. Additional barriers to access include security measures, UA participants may install security systems or position sentries in response to actual or perceived potential criminal acts in their sites, although these measures can and do result in the intended beneficiaries of SJ being denied access as well. Research participants also blamed access issues on community disinterest or awareness of UA sites. Without community buy-in, SJ groups may leave UA sites to decay to focus on other platforms, which may reinforce existing issues in communities as groups with

privilege may move in and take advantage of UA sites. Community members may be unaware of the scale of UA in the city, or their communities, or how to access services provided. Some UA participants, as demonstrated by PU, feel that residents are unaware of the potential benefits of UA, and attempts to inform them may discourage community members from accessing sites depending on who is making the argument and how. Access is a major umbrella issue of UA in Wilmington, but related to and potentially more critical than access is the mundane visibility of UA sites. Potential beneficiaries of SJ through UA sites need to know where sites actually are in order to access them in the first place. In the next section, I discuss visibility of UA sites in Wilmington, and participants' attempts to improve visibility.

<div align="center">Visibility</div>

UA sites can be challenging to find, at least in Wilmington. As one example, UAS1's invisibility due to its placement on top of a hill is well-known to, and discussed amongst UA participants, and they often mentioned the access issues in tandem with visibility. While the hill may be unique to UAS1, the visibility of other sites relates to placement and surrounding structures. While these issues stem from observations made during the course of research, the most important basis for discussing visibility, was not the invisibility of UA, but the desire to make UA sites more visually pleasing.

At UAS4 I participated in clearing debris and vines or weeds which covered the fence that surrounded the site and made it difficult to see. PUAS1-2 were within a wider Delaware state owned area and were placed at the rear of the property, while PUAS3 had a singular narrow access/exit point along the highway flanged otherwise by trees or buildings; all three were some distance away from the city center, and

therefore less-visible to residents of the city who might not travel to the state-owned property. PN notes this issue, stating:

> "We are a small farm in an obscure location. It is not exactly
> easy for peeps to find UAS3 if you aren't from around here,
> there's the fence and probably because people are coming
> here for other reasons."

PN raises concerns about how people may overlook UAS3 because of its small size. Simultaneously, she underscores how its obscurity might not lead people to see the space as an urban farm. My observation of UAS3 aligns with PN's concerns as the fenced in area appears to be a private yard or other green space to passerby. She states that people have other priorities in this relatively obscure area of Wilmington, pointing out nearby areas of interest, such as a police station, parks, and a bend of the Brandywine Creek.

While the topography, location, and other barriers to UA sites present challenges to visibility, many SJ groups have implemented various aesthetic, or beautification, elements to their UA sites in order to attract more people. Aesthetics may not immediately impact an UA site's productivity or a SJ group's ability to achieve aims, appearances can influence people's accessing of the site by enhancing visibility (Lindemann-Matthies and Brieger 2016). UA sites are noted as sparking greater community unity and identity, which are in turn reflected in the sites (Hanna and Oh 2000; Kurtz 2001; Kingsley and Townsend 2006; Lang 2014). The community center running UAS2 is utilizes murals to attract people to its services, including the garden.

All research participants mentioned that artwork or landscape design assisted in drawing in community members, with rainbows being a common motif. UAS4 was the most proactive in incorporating art and other aesthetic elements into their site. I include here photographs in addition to quotes or field notes in order to best illustrate participants' attempts to improve visibility of their sites. While making things more visible or aesthetically pleasing can lead to increased community awareness of sites, and consequentially increased access to them, deploying these elements can be ineffective or worse, counter-productive. An example of the use of aesthetics can be found at the community center UAS2 is situated in. PF highlighted the murals on the center's walls when I visited, stating of the process and reasoning for their creation,

> 'So the project, the goal started with "ok we're going to
> make a mural, but then it became us totally transforming
> the outer space so that people feel compelled to come here
> and take advantage of the center[25]."

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[25] This mural depicts African-American locals and students, with UAS2 located a few yards away. In the distance, a mural featuring several African-American historical figures occupies a building owned by this SJ group.

Figure 35   Murals at the community center UAS2 is situated in

Neither PF nor PG stated that these murals were successful in drawing neighborhood residents to the community center or UAS2. The murals were noticeable from different angles and distances within the area, suggesting that they are consistently visible to residents. Art is also deployed at UAS4. The SJ group operating UAS4 seeks to provide activities for children with truancy issues. This group was having trouble getting the youth interested in UAS4, until they incorporated a mosaic project into the garden program. The main draw for the children was that they were incorporated into the design process for the mosaic.

Figure 36   PP says the teens don't really seem to have an interest in the garden but loved the art piece, making note that a few more troubled students really engaged the project. Note Bugs Bunny and characters from the Simpsons.

Figure 37   The raised beds had mosaics as well, littered with pop culture references. Among them are Twitter, cartoon characters, a stylized Black Panther Party logo reading "BLACK PANTHER PARTY: ALL POWER TO THE PPL", there are also religious (Christian) symbols, inspirational quotes, outdoor icons, as well as advertisements for a barber with many years of service. PP adds that the community is quite responsive to the art.

As indicated in the figures, the youth of UAS4 responded positively to the mosaic project. These young, primarily African-American youth were able to express their identities via the art. PP stated that he did not know the details of the youths' pasts, but found that while engaging in an activity that increased visibility for UAS4, the children became significantly more engaged in activities and happier because they had a positive medium to express their thoughts. The combined artwork and participation of community members may serve to make UA locations more inclusive (Sharp et al. 2005), drawing people into the area. I personally observed this at UAS4. UAS4 is situated in a lower-income, African-American majority community in Wilmington's East Side, described by PP (an older, affluent, and well-educated white man) as being one of Wilmington's most violent and criminal areas. Based on my observations and interpretation of PP's analysis, the artwork - and flowers - of UAS4 stood out in this community.

Figure 38   "The rainbow themed flowers are arranged in a figure 8 formation. This part of the garden faces the more troubled streets of the community."[26]

A woman approached PP, PQ, and I and asked about the garden, specifically mentioning the flowers as the reason she stopped. This woman asked PP how to purchase a plot, and she returned later to do so.

Art allows expression of ideas, and can reach new audiences at UA sites. At UAS6, I participated in a marketing campaign, placing artsy signs around the immediate community advertising its services, which at least one community member cited as piquing his interest. Similarly, research on UA suggests that the planting of flowers can improve a UA site's perceived beauty, which can also draw more people to see and access the site (Lindemann-Matthies and Brieger 2016; Haedicke 2017).

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[26] Photo is from Kalmbach, Michael. "Public Art like Mosiacs at Duffy's Garden Unite Community." delawareonline, July 20, 2017. https://www.delawareonline.com/story/life/2017/07/20/public-art-like-mosiacs-duffys-garden-unite-community/486483001/.

Figure 39   "The flowers make the farm more visible to people in the street or
               driving by, I started getting more people in here when I planted more
               flowers." PN, UAS3[27]

Earlier, I discussed how PN perceived UAS3 as being hard to see and obscure.

As she deployed more flowers in UAS3, PN found that there was increased interest

from the community at the site. However, this increased access came at a cost. One of

UAS3's primary intended goals is to provide fruit and vegetables to the local

neighborhood, as well as businesses with their own SJ aims. In a move that deeply

troubled her, PN had to replace several beds of crops within UAS3 with flowers. This

in turn led to decreased productivity of food products within the site. Where before PN

had a lax policy towards people not paying for crops the group itself grew, PN now

had to be more selective in giving away food for free. The place of UAS3 and

[27] This site had large number of flowers throughout its space besides those captured in
my photo.

performance of SJ were transformed in this process of enhancing visibility; PN traded a higher yield of food for increased community member access to the site. This example shows that aesthetic elements that increase a site's visibility can harm the pursuit of SJ, or at least transform how SJ manifests at the site. Other groups also utilized flowers to attract more people to their UA sites, however, not all were necessarily connected to making the site more visible. One of the primary sources of funds for PUAS1 were flowers grown in the greenhouse.

Figure 40   The greenhouse has an extensive inventory of flowers in addition to the
             crops they grow. I am told that the flowers are an important part of
             revenue and public interest. Field note about PUAS1[28]

However, PUAS1's SJ mission is underprivileged youth job training and education.
The flowers tended to be purchased by middle- to upper-class individuals. Despite the
successful sale of flowers by underprivileged youth to relatively affluent customers,
PB expressed that many people drop out as they question what the point of agriculture
is, highlighting among other things African-American male students' frustrations at
selling flowers.

Clearly, UA participants are aware of the dual issues of access and
(in)visibility of their sites as well as of other groups' sites, and perceive them as
problems in accomplishing their SJ aims. Regarding access, Some SJ groups must deal
with physical access issues, while others deal with awareness raising, as community

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[28] PUAS1's flowers do not necessarily increase visibility as they are within a
greenhouse that is a component of the site, but participants expressed that 'customers'
appreciated the aesthetic appeal of the flowers and that they were a key source of
revenue

members themselves may be uninterested in, confused by, or be unaware of UA sites in their community or how to access them. Access is also hampered as SJ groups aim to protect their UA sites with security measures that keep people out, or by UA sites being located in areas people cannot see or too far away for intended audiences to reach. Regarding (in)visibility, these same physical places are obscured by topography, distance, or being located in hidden or hard-to-find areas. To both improve visibility and garner greater community access, UA participants utilize several beautification and marketing strategies such as installation of artwork or planting flowers. According to UA participants, these tactics result in generally favorable outcomes, however, these devices can be ineffective or create more tension in communities.

Conclusion

UA as a practice in Wilmington, Delaware is used a component in diverse SJ goals of multiple organizations. These SJ goals are a response to historical and contemporary marginalization of minority (African-American) populations, who make up the bulk of the city's population and yet overwhelmingly represent Wilmington's lower-income population. The last two decades have spurred (renewed) public interest in agriculture in Wilmington as a means of addressing inequalities, while the city government supports it as a potentially disposable element to rebranding initiatives and crime reduction. In any case, Wilmington is being altered through UA.

In terms of access, UA sites' SJ potential suffer from the physical barriers, distance from intended audience, or being located in obscure areas. This physical inaccessibility is underscored by potential public disinterest in UA or unawareness of

how to access the site, or why they should. Visibility issues for UA are tied to, 'out of sight, out of mind' of public eye. SJ groups have benefited from implementing aesthetic components, such as art, landscaping design, or flowers into their UA sites, creating an affective environment that attracts audiences. The dual issues of access and visibility, coupled with the everyday experiences of UA and potential disinvestment of city/state funding, threaten the longevity of SJ through UA in Wilmington, Delaware. However, efforts to mitigate the dual issues of access and visibility might attract individuals with more privilege to these sites, and to the communities they are situated in. As these new individuals displace original residents or transform the landscape to something more to their tastes, SJ groups struggles against (in)visibility and lack of access can directly counter the potential as well. For UA as a SJ practice to thrive in Wilmington, groups must increase public access to and visibility of UA sites, but in a way attuned to the communities in which social justice groups aim to help, or else accomplish little at best and reinforcement of the inequalities they aim to address at worst.

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Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Urban agriculture (UA) can be utilized by social justice (SJ) groups in accomplishing their various goals. Many SJ groups in Wilmington, Delaware have adopted UA into their strategies, ostensibly in attempts to alleviate social injustices suffered in the city. Wilmington is a city often defined by a high concentration of corporate power, poverty marked by race (and biological sex), and a high degree of violence. UA is used to address SJ issues as UA sites are dynamic spaces that address several injustices at once while mobilizing local communities to work together towards justice solutions. While UA is utilized by SJ groups, UA can also reinforce the very inequalities SJ groups aim to subvert. This reinforcement can come as SJ groups decline, or are unable, to gain residents' input into sites, or lose track of their SJ mission. Through my research I argue that an understanding of SJ orientated UA, and SJ more broadly, attuned to participants' everyday experiences and perceptions of their work creates a more effective platform for scholars and activists to analyze, plan, and ultimately affect SJ.

It is important to study Wilmington, as UA literature on the global core focuses more on larger cities, however, the average American city is closer in population to Wilmington than the more commonly researched cities. Furthermore, as large cities (and small ones, for that matter) are usually informally or formally subdivided into neighborhoods, smaller scales of analysis may approximate Wilmington. Further adding weight to the importance of studying Wilmington's SJ and UA is that it rests at a critical mid-point within the Northeast Megalopolis between New York City and

Washington, D.C., and has had much influence in the region despite its small population due to economic power.

When I began this research, I hypothesized that the broader goals of organizations which utilize UA have broader goals of changing the local communities in which they operate; including improving housing conditions, cleaning up streets, and reducing crime. I hypothesized that the everyday actions of UA participants in Wilmington are largely the same amongst one another, which includes the cultivation of crops and conducting various social outreach programs. Participants would have diverse perceptions of their activities based on their everyday experiences, which would differ due to their gender and sex, race, and the demographics of the area they work in. UA services would be targeted at low income minority populations, but middle class white people will primarily access these services. In testing my hypotheses, I conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty-seven agriculture participants; twenty-six of which are urban or peri-urban and one operating in a rural area, and participant observation, which often involved direct engagement in the activities of the SJ group I worked with.

With regards to my hypotheses, I have mixed results. SJ groups and the participants indeed have a broad array of wider goals, with UA being the focal point in achieving these aims or an element with varying degrees of attention. Organizations' broader goals range from improvement of particular communities (for example: West Side, East Side) or Wilmington in general, youth skill-building, educating people on healthy eating and sustainability, to job creation or other economic developments. UA participants, regardless of the size or framework of their sites, followed very similar everyday practices which included: the planting, cultivating, and harvesting of crops,

attempting to or succeeding in spreading awareness of their services to the public, engaging in SJ, selling produce at pop-up markets, farmer markets, and restaurants, and maintenance of sites. Participant perceptions of these activities are discussed in the following paragraph and my thesis's two constituent papers, but in overview are defined by the relationships they form amongst one another and the community or community involvement in their services. SJ groups market their products and services to 'the community', which has several geographic scales from the street an UA site is located on to Wilmington and even the wider region. While specific demographics were not explicitly targeted by SJ groups, the consensus was the population of the immediate area. In terms of who accesses UA sites, different sites brought in different people, but in my observations women of any race were the pre-dominant group utilizing UA sites. Through the course of my research, my questions became less focused on the communities and more on the participants themselves and their perceptions and everyday lives in the pursuit of SJ, with participants frequently highlighting geopolitical relationships amongst one another and the dual issues of access and (in)visibility.

In Chapter 3, I discussed geopolitics of social justice drawing from feminist geopolitics, and found that UA participants have diverse sociopolitical relationships within the broader network of UA in Wilmington. These relationships are formed by disparate participant perceptions of the effectiveness and value of coalition participation, position within the hierarchy of the group or disputes (or agreements) between members, and also by different everyday experiences around gender as understood in the binary of male/female. Viewing UA through geopolitics of social justice which is informed by feminist geopolitics can provide for deeper analyses of

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why SJ networks can succeed or fail, and how the relationships between members and groups play out in everyday perceptions of participants. In Chapter 4, I discussed the dual issues of access and (in)visibility of UA in Wilmington as perceived by UA participants. Participants highlighted topography and placement of UA sites as an element of both access and visibility and community disinterest and security as harming peoples' access. While access, at least during my research, was not quite addressed by SJ groups, they did have a myriad of tactics to enhancing visibility which ultimately may and does attract people to access the sites.

My research propels UA and SJ literature forward as I in part fill in a gap of small cities in general and Wilmington more particularly in the literature. As the global and U.S. population becomes more urban, more towns and cities might be more relatable to Wilmington than the larger cities commonly researched in UA literature. I additionally augment the existing literature regarding participant perceptions and everyday lives in the pursuit of SJ, particularly through UA but more broadly other sites and services or movements. Of course; my research as discussed in my thesis has limitations. I operated in a small window of time during peak agricultural season, which in turn limited time to observe and work alongside of my research participants. Another limit was a potential over-reliance on snowballing through a few people and their contacts, which obscures potential from those UA participants who operate outside this (these?) circles. Connected to this, I spoke with only a few individuals who were not employees or volunteer workers at field sites or the organizations that owned them.

Future research opportunities based on my research are numerous. A future scholar or activist or combination of the two can expand upon my network with more

UA participants and community members, especially those who are not connected to the organizations I worked with. The issues of geopolitical interactions and aspirations of SJ groups can be built upon, perhaps to the wider Philadelphia region, as well as greater attention to the lived daily experiences of UA participants and their perceptions of their work. I analyzed gender dynamics of UA through the problematic binary of male/female and future researchers can placed greater attention on these gender dynamics both within and outside that binary. While I did not personally observe significant attempts to enhance access to UA sites, another individual or individuals may be able to follow that avenue, and can explore the latest attempts of SJ groups to enhance visibility. During my research, UA participants expressed that they had various plans in the works for their UA sites and associated products and services or would be going through leadership change, which provides a rich environment for follow-up research.

UA, as a practice in pursuit of SJ in the City of Wilmington, Delaware, has enormous transformative potential. However, UA participants and the SJ groups they work for may replicate or fade due to inter and intra group dynamics and the issues of access and (in)visibility of UA, which can prevent SJ groups from helping those 'at the sharp end' of injustices. By incorporating urban agriculture participants' perceptions, everyday lives and responses to various everyday issues, one may be able to create a more affective and effective pursuit of social justice that is informed from subjective practice rather than a top-down, objective approach.

Appendix

LETTER OF EXEMPTION FROM IRB REVIEW

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hullihen Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551
Ph: 302/831-2136
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: April 27, 2017

TO: Todd Sundberg
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [1021504-1] At the Intersection of #BlackLivesMatter and Urban Agriculture

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: April 27, 2017

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # *(2)*

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB (HUMANS) has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office. Please remember to notify us if you make any substantial changes to the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Famese-McFarlane at (302) 831-1119 or nicolefm@udel.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.