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Separate Tables: Segregation, Gentrification, and the Commons in Birmingham,

Alabama's Alternative Food and Agriculture Movement

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Environmental Science, Policy, and Management

in the

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of the

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Professor Carolyn Finney, Chair
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Abstract

Separate Tables

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Doctor of Philosophy, Environmental Science, Policy, and Management

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Carolyn Finney, Chair

Birmingham, Alabama has a long history of racial conflict and segregation. This dissertation investigates that how that history has shaped space in the region and the consequences of that spatial production on the current alternative food and agriculture movement. Specifically, I analyze three processes that produce Birmingham's racialized space – capital accumulation, racialization, and commoning. I first look at how Birmingham's segregated space shapes the initiatives of the alternative food and agriculture movement. I find that there are two institutional structures that come from and animate spaces in Birmingham, one black and one white, and because the organizations creating a food policy council come almost exclusively from white space, the process for creating the council is almost wholly white. Next, I investigate gentrification in downtown Birmingham, and the alternative food and agriculture movement's role. I argue that gentrification is in fact happening in downtown neighborhoods evidenced by census data that shows neighborhoods in transition and the loss of low-income housing in the area. I show that the food movement lends cultural legitimacy to the trendy lifestyle emerging in the central city. Eating at fine dining that supports local food, shopping at farmers' markets, and patronizing local foods grocery stores are practices that create a foodie culture that supports neighborhood transformation. Finally, I look at what black and diverse organizations are doing in the food movement. Those organizations are focused using urban agriculture as a means of community development, and the gardens are a part of a comprehensive strategy by these organizations to produce a community space, a commons to meet the needs of those in their respective communities.

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The South and Other forms of Brutality

The 2010 Food Summit was held at the Avon Theatre in the Lakeview District of Birmingham, Alabama. A turn of the 20th century drama theatre, the recently renovated Avon felt more like a church (the renovations were done by Red Mountain Church) than a theatre of any kind. The Food Summit was a conference put on by Birmingham Food Group to celebrate and promote the local food system. And the events of the Food Summit felt more like evangelism than social movement, reflecting the segregated nature of Sunday mornings in the South.

To wit, the Food Summit 2010 was billed as "bringing everyone to the table" to engage with the communities, especially the business community, that had been thus far excluded from the inner sanctum of Birmingham's alternative agriculture movement. The notable deacons and elders of this sanctum were (all names and organizations are pseudonyms) Jason Reynolds, co-chair of Birmingham Food Group (BFG) and executive director of Reynolds's Urban Farm, Barbara Schlesinger, co-chair of BFG and executive director of Harvest for the Poor, Elly Nason, community organizer for BFG, Margaret Whitely of Helping Hands, Inc., Meredith Marconi of Eastside Redevelopment, and Deb Calhoun of Southern Community Garden. Of these, only one was a person of color, Deb Calhoun – striking in a city that is 73 percent black.

In attendance at the Food Summit was Shirley Wilson, president of the neighborhood associations. Birmingham is a city of 99 neighborhoods, each electing a president to sit on the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB). The CAB in turn advises the mayor and council on policy and community issues giving a robust democratic voice to regular folks from "the community" (meaning black community) as it is euphemistically referred to in local parlance. Wilson, who is black, approached Nason, who is white during the meeting and said, "You need me if you want to get anything done in Birmingham." It was an opening for collaboration that should have been utilized, especially during a meeting ostensibly designed to foster networking and cooperation. Instead, Nason shut Wilson ignored the opening, and told her friends that Wilson was "crazy."

Birmingham is a highly segregated city, and the consequence of this segregation is that inequality reigns, and collaboration to address these inequalities finds barriers in the non- or partly conscious biases forged in segregated spaces. These biases manifest in a myriad of ways in metro Birmingham. One needs to look no further than the promotion by black leaders of certain types of mass transit for the region. While white leadership in the suburbs explicitly reject mass transit, or promote mass transit that only benefits the white suburbs, they fight against state funding for mass transit that benefits blacks on the grounds that it is too expensive. Public schools struggle in Birmingham, yet they excel in Mountain Brook and Vestavia Hills, lily-white and wealthy suburban communities to Birmingham's South. While all of these social agents, regional governments, the non-profit sector, universities, newspapers, and the business community among others, believe that collaboration is necessary for the region to move forward, non- or unconscious biases prevent this collaboration from happening. While these biases may be less than conscious, it does not absolve holders of these biases from responsibility for addressing them. These biases are inculcated by white supremacy, a way of organizing institutions, culture and society in a way the advantages whites and disadvantages people

of color, in an automatic way. Because of this, colorblindness is not the default position for individuals, racism is.

I am concerned about race, class, and the commons, in part, as a personal exploration. I'm from Birmingham, Alabama and spent many years here being shaped by many of the processes I now investigate – racialization, capital accumulation, and commoning. I want to tell a few stories from my life that provide a window into how these processes operate on the ground and give a view of my positionality in a region noted for its xenophobia and for parochialism. The stories are written in a diary style, with insights about what happened to me and during my life. I do it for two reasons. The first and most important is that it situates me and the dissertation within a social context. It provides windows into why I approach social puzzles in Birmingham in the manner that I do – it shows why I chose these three processes to tell the story of Birmingham's agriculture and food movement.

I was born in Birmingham on August 31, 1978 a year before the first black man became the mayor of the city. My earliest memories were from a working class suburb of Birmingham called Fairfield. When I lived there, the city was becoming known as "dangerous" not so much because of increases in crime, though crime was increasing, but because blacks were supplanting whites not only in the suburb, but also in Birmingham proper. During my childhood, many of my friends were black, but I understood that my family lived in a dangerous neighborhood. Yet, I wasn't privy to exactly what that meant. I never personally experienced any crime or malfeasance in my home community, but I knew, because of the implicit racism of my parents and family.

Owing to the danger inherent in the community, my parents placed me in an all white private kindergarten a couple of miles from our home. I did not find it strange that I attended a different school than my neighborhood pals, the first inculcation of white privilege. Blacks went to the "bad" public school while whites went to the "good" private school. Undoubtedly my parents, with their meager income, sacrificed greatly to ensure that my white privilege became naturalized at a young age, though my parents would certainly not have framed it this way.

To be fair to my parents, they routinely shielded me from the worst of individual racism, preventing me from hearing racial epithets, never using them themselves, and always treating black family friends with dignity and respect. What they did during my early childhood was what they as caring white parents were expected to do by friends and family.

My father was a hard working, if brutal parent. His legendary temper was common among southern men and he often took out his aggressions on me. I was more than a precocious youngster, and any challenge to male authority in our household was seen as something between a threat and a dare. My mother, a reformed hippie who embraced the structure of conservative religion, mostly stood back and watched, submitting to religion-inspired subservience. She was also a stay-at-home mom.

My favorite television show during my early years was the Dukes of Hazzard. My younger brother and I would often pretend to be Bo and Luke Duke, heroes of the series and constant foil to Roscoe P. Coaltrain. As Luke, I was the brains of the operation, while my brother, Bo, the brawn owing to the socialization that our parents gave us. I was always the smart one, while my brother the athletic one. As a result of the show, I became enamored with the Confederate Flag emblazoned on the roof of the

General Lee, the orange 1971 Dodge Charger famed in the series. Being the smart one, I set out to learn as much as I could about the Confederacy, Robert E. Lee, and later automobiles.

I learned a lot about the Confederacy. I learned that they fought the unjust invasion by the North. I learned that Lee was recruited to lead the union army, but declined in favor of his home state. I learned that slavery, though abominable, was not the real cause of the Civil War and that the Confederate Flag was a symbol of Southern pride. All of this can be quite convincing to a child of less than ten, who dearly wants to have heroes who are like him and to believe in something. I knew nothing of how white Southern identity was being instilled in me and the consequences this would have throughout my life.

The use of the Confederate flag as a symbol for Southern pride, and its more or less widespread interpretation as a symbol of racism and hate embodies the difficulties with race in the South. My uncle, a fairly progressive Methodist minister, and someone whom I love dearly, displays a Confederate flag in his living room, a family heirloom from the Civil War. The difference between race in the North and the West and the South is that the Civil War happened in the South, and in a very real way it is our history. This is not to justify the flying of the Confederate flag or the absurd arguments about the causes of the Civil War, but to point out that no other place has to deal with that history in as visceral a way.

Now, the way that white Southerners deal with that history is simply inexcusable. The South should look to Germany to understand how to grapple with a painful and difficult history in ways that preserve and create a functioning regional white identity that doesn't perpetuate racist myths about the Confederacy and slavery. Other, less violent representations should be used, symbols other than Nathaniel Bedford Forrest, founder of the Klan (he has a statue commemorating him in Selma that was recently stolen. The Sons of Confederate Veterans has offered a $20,000 reward for the perpetrator) and the Confederate flag.

Well-meaning liberals from the North and the West do not help the situation. They have created a sort of internal orient in the South, using accusations of racism not so much to try to combat racism, but to absolve themselves of their own biases. The South acts as a foil for all other racism throughout the country. Consider the accusations leveled by non-Southerners, that the place is backward, stupid, violent, racist, overly sexualized and deviant (Jansson, 2003; 2003; 2009). One can think of popular representations of the South like "Deliverance" and "Hee Haw." Now imagine that these same accusations are leveled at a country of the Global South, like Uganda or Honduras. The same well-meaning liberals who attack the South would be, rightfully, up in arms about those accusations leveled at a developing country. This isn't to suggest that Alabama is like a country of the Global South, but to point out how stereotypes work.

When I talk about the South, I mean something very specific. Geographically, it is the region of the former Confederate States. This area, though varied, shares a culture and history that to a very great extent revolves around race, racism, and brutal oppression. The way that that history and culture is handled by whites in the South ranges from outright romanticism, continuing to promote racist ideology, to sadness and guilt about their role in the slave trade, Jim Crow, and others, neither of which are very productive. Blacks, on the other hand, celebrate what they have accomplished through

struggle. This complexity among people who share many aspects of culture presents untenable problems in dealing with what the South is and what it is supposed to be. For instance, many whites act like they lost the Civil Rights Movement and that any celebration of the movement is rubbing salt in an open wound. Whites have never figured out how to reinterpret their whiteness in ways that are anti-racist or to celebrate the accomplishments of the past. There is an unfortunate quality in the South of an us versus them mentality, especially on the part of whites, and because of this, these tensions are resolved (or left unresolved) by an unspoken agreement not to talk about race in mixed company. In my experience, blacks have been much more willing to talk with me honestly, when I showed an interest and understanding of what blacks had to go through to get to where they are today. Yet, many whites fail to approach race from this perspective for fear that they will be made to feel guilty or defeated about the past. Much of this is self-ethnography. Growing up, I completely felt like the Civil Rights Movement was a loss and that all the talk of the brutality of slavery masked the invasion by the North. Through experience and education I unlearned much, and am still unlearning my mis-education in the South, of this.

This is not to say that life in the South is anything less than brutal. A persistent, everyday racism continues in Birmingham and pervades the region. Even the liberals fall prey to this everyday racism as they try to craft a message that can somehow reach conservatives and moderates. Discussions of anything as radical as white privilege are completely absent. For the most part, blacks are a non-entity politically. Though they are enfranchised, the utter dominance of racist, conservative politicians means that black leaders find themselves mostly in a defensive position, trying to prevent the most egregious of legislation. Alabama was one of 26 states to argue in front of the Supreme Court that any expansion of Medicaid was coercion (Liptak, 2012). Black belt counties lack even the most basic infrastructure such as water and have been the subject of a United Nations inquiry (Equal Justice Initiative, 2011). Alabama is worst in infant mortality (The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2007), ninth worst in poverty (Statemaster.com, 2004), and Alabama ranked 47th in the U.S. in math and science education (The Huffington Post, 2011). All of this is to say that social and economic conditions and general quality of life are bad in Alabama and there does not look to be much relief. But, characterizing everyone as racist and backward, as is done routinely by the American left, is counter-productive. Most importantly, the best way to characterize the South is brutal, and I recognize that in some way I am contradicting myself, but my criticism of the South comes from the perspective of a nominal insider, and this is quite important.

When I say brutal it is to point out, that while the education system whitewashes history elsewhere, and institutional racism is prevalent everywhere in the United States, in the South, the closeness to the history of slavery and Jim Crow, in the sense that our ancestors lived that history in an immediate way, make that whitewashing all the more painful upon it's realization. Furthermore, while the white working class is given privileges over people of color throughout the country, the white working class in the South holds to its privileges in spite of the fact that that is all they have. It is common in Alabama to see a dilapidated mobile home in a mostly white trailer park flying the Confederate flag. The brutality of the South lies in the fact that white culture, especially working class white culture, is so wedded to the most virulent of white supremacy that

any working class whites who choose, for whatever reason, to adopt a less racist stance feel alienated from their own culture. The question that I always ask myself is "how can I be a Southerner from the working class, how can that be my identity, and not be wedded to white supremacy?" Thematically, this dissertation is an exploration of that question.

I want to get back to my childhood because my socialization as a child reflects both the brutality of the South, and the seemingly irrational pride associated with that brutality. After going to private kindergarten, my parents moved us to a white rural community outside Birmingham, Alabama, and later to a white suburb of Huntsville, Alabama. As with most whites in the South, my experience with blacks happened almost exclusively within the realm of sport, and since I did not get involved in sports until my adolescence, my experience with race was articulated with my brother's experience in basketball and baseball. On my brother's coach pitch (the coach pitches to the batter) team was a black kid named Del Rico Ray, who was clearly a superior athlete to everyone on the team. However, my brother was given the privileged position on the team, pitcher. While it is impossible to tell why exactly this happened, most certainly unacknowledged privilege played some role, given Del Rico's prowess.

Later, when I began playing sports as an adolescent, football specifically, certain positions, such as quarterback were reserved for whites, while other positions that were not as intellectual were reserved for blacks. I distinctly remember one practice in which our running back, Jerome Randall was allowed to lead the team at quarterback. He was brilliant – making all the throws, eluding tacklers, and creating plays for himself and everyone. It was obvious that he was the man for the job, but I distinctly remember overhearing my coach tell another coach, "we don't play nigger ball here." The story was striking in that, apparently, winning was to be subservient to racism. To this day, black quarterbacks throughout the sport face obstacles because they are percieved to be less intelligent than their white counterparts.

My early childhood in Birmingham was a working class existence. We hopped from house to house seeking the best deal, and settling on a house owned by the church for which my dad was the preacher. His day job, grocery salesperson, paid little, and religious beliefs kept my mom in the house as a stay-at-home wife and mother. We scraped by on very little, but we were always happy as children, blissfully unaware of our parent's financial struggles. Then the day of our big break came. My dad secured a higher paying sales job in Huntsville, Alabama. As celebration, my dad purchased a very expensive ring for my mother. We were achieving the American Dream.

However, when movers came to move the family, the expensive ring disappeared, and I learned about race. I never really understood race. I had overheard my aunt and grandfather saying "nigger" at the dinner table, and I asked my mother what it meant. She told me that we were never to say it, that it was a dirty word for black people. But after the ring disappeared, assumed to be stolen by the black movers, "nigger" was no longer a swear word in our household. I learned that blacks were shiftless, thieving, and non-to-be trusted from my newly racist parents, and this was reinforced by many who said "if four black men had come to move me, I would have told them to keep on going down the road." Friends and neighbors, who basically insinuated that we deserved to be robbed for trusting black folk, treated my parent's previous anti-racism as quaint naïveté.

I would like to say that the sort of virulent, personal racism that emerged from this experience was somehow unique to the victims of a crime, but in fact, the crime was

made meaningful by the interpretations provided by friends, family, and neighbors, all of whom attributed the crime to blackness. The symbolism of the ring was, however, was a symbolism that went unnoticed by my parents, and only later came to my attention as I learned about class. The ring symbolized our transcendence of the working class. We moved from a house in a working class neighborhood, adjacent to a mobile home park to the smallest house in the suburbs outside Huntsville. Years of struggle and poverty infused the expensive ring with meaning, and that meaning had been stolen, all of this crystallized in the purported blackness of the thieves. In retrospect, the blame for this ordeal, that nearly ripped my family apart, fell on the already existing framework of race, reinforced it and made it more durable. We were racists.

Some of this could be seen years later when I called the Sean Hannity Radio Show (it started in Huntsville, Alabama) to comment on the recent stance taken by the Black Coaches Association. The NCAA or some other governing body had decided to limit athletic scholarships, and the BCA responded by saying that it disproportionately affected blacks negatively. I called Hannity to impart my 12 year old wisdom, namely that if athletic scholarships disproportionately affect blacks, wouldn't a reduction in academic scholarships disproportionately affect whites, the implication of my statement was that whites are smarter than blacks, showing how well I knew how to use racial code even at the ripe old age of 12. I won caller of the day and a free sub sandwich from a local sub shop.

The main point of this story that introduces my dissertation is to show how rooted in culture racist attitudes are, and how that enculturation begins at a very young age. I did not have the intellectual development or the critical capacity to recognize that I was being sold a bill of goods. It is also to say, that on a certain level, this is still my culture, and that I'm not entirely sure how to extract the very brutal racism from the culture that I reluctantly recognize as my own. The thing about culture is that it is sort of like DNA; you don't really get to choose it, and if you are enculturated in a certain way, you will likely carry it with you, in some way, forever.

Another form of brutality is the church, particularly Southern evangelicals. My family was highly religious growing up and very dedicated to the success of the children, be it in academics or sports. My disciplinarian parents would not allow for grades below an A or entertain any thoughts of abandoning our conservative evangelical roots. So, I made good grades and went to church, faithfully. All this came to a screeching halt and changed my life dramatically when I was 16 when I applied to become a member at the local church.

The process to be confirmed as a member of the church involved a meeting with elders. I assumed this meeting to be a mere formality, but I was gravely mistaken. The elders grilled me for two hours about doctrinal issues, pointing out my flaws and misconceptions. They even went so far as to suggest that I was a danger to the youth group because of my beliefs, specifically the belief that Christians from different denominations could work together on common issues. To them, it was more important to insulate their flock from any divergent views than it was to address pressing issues of the day. I left the meeting shaken and discouraged, eventually abandoning my faith and my goals for post-secondary education.

Faith and school gave me a firm basis to understand the world, a theory backed by institution. When that theory and those institutions were shaken, my world came

crumbling down, and I began to question everything that I held dear. I gave up a scholarship to a religious school in Nashville, Tennessee in favor of a career as an auto mechanic. There, I learned that the world was more diverse and confusing than I had been taught by the conservative Christianity that so permeates the South and its culture. In my experience, evangelical religion creates a narrow range of what is considered normal, and relegates anyone outside of that band to the realm of deviants. It is a form of othering that cuts across the racial divide in the South, and underpins all forms of legitimacy. While this dissertation does not directly address religion, it will be a constant theme, weighing heavily on all the stories.

Finally, I want to talk about my experience as an auto mechanic and blue-collar worker in the 1990s. I worked for about five years as a mechanic and about two years loading trucks after high school and before attending college. The work was difficult, painful and exploitative.

I began working as an auto mechanic after high school. My parents, who did not support my choice, asked me to move out of the house, and I moved to a low-income neighborhood in Huntsville. I was generally happy. Though I often heard gunfire, my neighbors were pleasant and I felt safe in the environment. I even left my doors unlocked. At this point, my racist racial theory began to come apart. I was in a similar position to many of the blacks in my neighborhood, struggling to survive, making it on next to nothing. Moreover, many of my co-workers were black, and all my pre-conceived notions began to come apart. But, I really did not understand this was happening as it was happening – my reeducation was mostly non-conscious.

The work was hard. Most of my employers disallowed breaks and cooked the books. The standard method of pay in auto mechanics is piece wage, or by the job, and the industry standard for each job is determined by the Chilton's manual. However, the discount shops for which I worked devised their own books with lower pay for each job. In other words, the brunt of the cost of the discount is born by individual auto mechanics, not by the shop itself. Often I heard that I was an independent contractor, which basically meant that shop managers felt no need to concern themselves with the working conditions of the individual techs. I worked 60 to 70 hour weeks in brutal heat, unbearable cold, and sometimes in the rain. I never made more than $25,000 in the late nineties, and even then that was only one year. Understanding the struggles and being able to speak the language of the oppressed greatly enhanced my ability to connect with people on the low end of the hierarchy. One moment that stands out was my ability to help the Southern Community Garden farm manager by repairing a broken battery cable. He and I are good friends to this day; we take in the latest movies and sometimes share a cold drink.

Being an insider has greatly enhanced my work. Understanding the ins-and-outs of racial politics in the South, especially the personal nature of race, has given me access to people and organizations that would have been difficult for outsiders. Alabama has a long and troubling history of fear or outright exclusion of outsiders. In the 1950s, Governor John Patterson passed a law designed to exclude the NAACP from political processes on the grounds that they were an out-of-state organization (McWhorter, 2001). Out-of-state corporations were taxed at a higher rate than in-state businesses until the U.S. Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional at the end of the 20th century (Flynt, 2004). Activists of all stripes, from communists to black liberation to environmentalists,

were and continue to be branded as "outside agitators." Alabama's new immigration law is considered the meanest and most xenophobic in the nation (Gomez, 2011).

My position as insider removes a great deal of suspicion about my motives and gives me a measure of capital to move within social life in north central Alabama. However, the long tradition of anti-intellectualism and fear of outsiders means that I am often relegated to the role of fancy volunteer with nothing substantial to add to my community partners. While being an insider opened numerous doors for me, my status as an intellectual from Berkeley often prevented me from being able to take full advantage of those opportunities. Not being on the payroll with particular organizations means that I am a potential threat who could steer organizations in destructive directions with no consequences. Ultimately, my ability to engage in projects with community partners was substantially limited by both the length of the research and my status as a sort of outside-insider.

I am also a white guy working in mostly black neighborhoods in a highly segregated city with lingering racial animosity. The most vivid example of white privilege happened when I was working at a garden in West End, a 99% black neighborhood in Birmingham. The garden manager told me to go down the street and borrow a weed eater from the shop that was repairing the garden's weed eater, to get it by "us(ing) (my) white power." The black owner of the small engine shop loaned me a weed eater without question, to which the farm manager replied, "(I'm black) that old man would have told me anything," meaning that the garden manager wanted me to use my white privilege to manipulate the black owner of the small engine repair shop. I've found that, more than my education or expertise, my whiteness opens the most doors. While this is quite disturbing, and I wish that it was not the case, I have come to the conclusion that I have to use my "white power" to forward the anti-racist cause, to use the legitimacy that comes with being white to undermine that very legitimacy. When I returned from the small engine shop, weed eater in hand, I said to the farm manager "white power!" His response – "at least it was used for something good for once." Of course, using white privilege to borrow weed eaters is not liberatory and reinforces white privilege, but the experience was instructive both of how privilege works, even in black communities, and how privilege could possibly be used for good.

Ultimately what I have learned from my positionality and participation in Birmingham's alternative agriculture movement is that there is a need for social theory that can be the foundation of the movement, that can highlight barriers, traps and pitfalls, and that can guide action that is truly transformative. Many of the leaders of the movement have great hearts, funding, and passion, but because they lack a coherent and effective social theory of race, class, and social change, they tend to produce projects that have little or no impact. My task, from my position as an insider, and with this dissertation, is to create social theory that the movement can use to guide action into the future.

Methodology: Community-Based Participatory Research

My experiences in Alabama have profoundly shaped both my research interests and my method for undertaking that research. I believe whole-heartedly in the participation of local communities in research because I recognize that often those people's perspectives are ignored or marginalized. My experience with race and class has shaped the questions that inform my research process, and my belief in practical

problem solving shapes the knowledge that this research produces. I attempt to construct a thoroughly democratized method for intellectual investigation, a method that includes the interests of those who would normally be called research "subjects." However, I make no bones about this being a difficult task; I failed more than I succeeded in this endeavor, often because my "community partners" saw no real value in research in general (not just research for an academic setting). To this, I can only say to those mulling over the community-based participatory research (CBPR) process, take your time and choose your community partners wisely. Researchers need to be able to provide something that community partners know they need; otherwise the relationship becomes one-sided and the partnership disintegrates.

Andrew Sayer argues that method "suggests a carefully considered way of approaching the world so that we may understand it better" (Sayer, 2010, p. 32). He goes on to argue that the considered way that we understand the world is related to the theories that we deploy in apprehending it, an argument similar to that of Bourdieu who states that social facts are "won, constructed, and confirmed" (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991). Ultimately, method is a question of how we make knowledge, does it break with common sense, and is it "practically adequate" to the material practices that it is to inform (Sayer, 2010). In order for theory to be practically adequate it must be able to present questions that when asked construct the social object of study in a way that can be confirmed and critically analyzed. In this sense, social facts and the theories that construct them are in a dialectical relationship, the social facts are created through theory-laden observation and the constructed object of study then confirms the theory. To those that would argue that this is circular, I would say that the practice of science intervenes in the process of research ensuring that the theory is practically adequate to the object of study. The research is not merely doing thought experiments, but participating and observing social reality as it happens, objectifying pieces of that reality, that is, using theory to isolate parts of social reality relevant to the question, in order to "understand it better." What method is really about is the construction of dispositions within the researcher that allow that researcher to observe critically and consciously the flow of social reality. The inculcation of a social scientific practice is the purpose of method. I now turn to an outline of my scientific habitus (Habitus will be discussed in detail in Chapters 3, 4, and 5).

My scientific habitus began to be formed, oddly enough, during my years as an auto mechanic. It was there that I learned by doing. The elder statesmen (and they were all men) of the shop always derided using the manual to repair vehicles, stating, "you can't learn how to fix cars from a book." "The book" was only good for the technical aspects like torque specifications or coolant capacity. What they were saying was not a derision of book learning, but an argument that only the experience of repair or trying to repair vehicles could teach an aspiring mechanic the lessons to be successful. They would say other things like "you're not holding your mouth right" to poke fun at younger mechanic's physical inability to accomplish a task. This meant that "knowing" how to accomplish a task meant much more than just knowing what the faulty part was and where the bolts were to remove it. It means that physically embodied knowledge was necessary. To reinforce this, senior mechanics would say "if I put a penny in a jar for every mistake you make your first year, and remove a penny for every mistake thereafter, I will never empty the jar." Physical, embodied knowledge can only be learned by doing.

The task of participant observation, then, is to take the physical, embodied knowledge learned by participating in the field and abstract from that knowledge to create the social object of study. This can only be accomplished through what Bourdieu termed theory-laden participant observation.

> Why, for example, is the non-directive interview so frequently exalted at the expense, for example, of ethnographic observation – which, when armed with the constraining rules of its tradition, more fully achieves the ideal of a systematic inventory performed in a real situation – if not because it presents itself as a paradigmatic realization of neutrality in observation (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991).

Auto repair is similarly theory-laden. Consider for example a mechanic working on an electrical problem in the headlight circuit. First, that mechanic must understand how electricity works – that electrons flow from the battery through the electrical components and back to the battery, allowing the components to operate. She then uses tools such as an electrical circuit tester to experiment with the circuit narrowing down the faulty component. The mechanic experiments to refine the theory. By experiment, I mean creating a situation in which questions can be asked that lead to a more clear understanding of the object.

In this sense, participant observation is very similar to learning as an auto mechanic. The fieldworker comes to the field armed with theories about the flow of social reality, theories such as race, gender, and capital. During the process of fieldwork, that fieldworker creates situations in which the questions relevant to the theory can be asked and explored. This, in turn refines, clarifies, and situates the theory and the object it constructs in a particular social context.

Some might object to this approach that people are not cars. This is true, and it points out two issues. First, people are not being studied directly. The object of study is an abstraction from the beliefs and practices of the people in the field. Second, the real dilemma here is that social research entails the objectification of individuals in some way, shape or form, removing their agency. No matter what techniques are used to try to mitigate this, the individual researcher has the final say on what knowledge is produced, and therefore, has the god-like power of representing the beliefs and practices of people from the field. Most community-based participatory research democratizes data-collection or elicits input on what should be studied (Israel et al, 2005), but the choices of theoretical foundation and research questions are solely that of the researcher or research team. The only way to escape this dilemma is to democratize theory construction through community-based participatory research.

In order to develop a process that democratizes theory construction, I turn to the teachings of Paulo Freire and Myles Horton (Freire, 2010; Freire, 1998; Horton & Freire, 1990). Freire argues that traditional teaching methods in which the students are treated as passive receptacles receiving knowledge imparted by teachers dehumanizes both the teacher and the student, it is oppressive. This is founded on the understanding that the relationship between the teacher and student in this context is a relationship between a knowing-subject and receiver of knowledge. The receiver of knowledge is objectified. This is similar to the relationship between the researcher and the researched in which the researcher is the knowing-subject and the researched is the object of that knowledge. Following the a research version of the popular education models of Freire and Horton,

the task of CBPR should be to transform the relationship between the researcher and the researched into a relationship between researcher and researcher, knowing-subject and knowing-subject. In order to do this, the researcher's main task is to construct and/or participate in a community of practice in the community that the researcher is studying.

Knowledge is made by doing and thinking about doing and, in the traditional practice of research, learning happens through the abstraction and objectification of the practice of that research in the field context. This sets up a relationship between the researcher and the researched in which the ideas and beliefs of those being researched are objectified to enable the creation of the social object of study. This relationship is fundamentally oppressive since the objects of study are constructed by the researcher and not by the researched. In order to combat this dilemma, the researched must participate in the process of objectification and abstraction through which social objects are created. In this since, the process of objectification becomes a process of collective self-objectification of all participants in a particular community of practice (Bourdieu, 2003; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

The research questions for this research were shaped and informed by the communities of practice created as a part of CBPR. While there was no formal process, my daily interaction with community partners led to my interest in these particular questions, which follow.

Q1: How do processes of racialization produce the space of Birmingham and what are the consequences of this spatial production? What is the effect of this racialization on the alternative agriculture movement?

Q2: What role does the alternative agriculture movement serve in Birmingham? How are class processes implicated in this role?

Q3: What can be done about the conditions uncovered in Q1 and Q2? Can community development and urban agriculture combine to address racial and class inequalities? What would this look like?

The research questions are designed to unearth the profound effects of segregation in the region, showing how segregation prevents effective collaboration within the food movement. This is important because it is the major barrier to movement building in the region - in essence, there are two food movements stemming from two separate spaces. The questions are also designed to address a second process, gentrification, looking at how questions of racialization and economic accumulation converge. The final process that the questions are designed to investigate is the process of commoning through community development. Racialization will be dealt with in depth in chapters 2-4, while economic accumulation will be addressed primarily in chapter 4, though it is implied throughout. Commoning is the subject of chapter 5. These processes are selected from a range of processes that could include heteronormativity, religion, gender, ethnicity, and others. Like all research, this is a process of simplification for the sake of analysis, of objectifying a particular portion of the infinitely complex flow of social reality. Importantly, the following work is concerned with processes in operation within, broadly, the space of the Birmingham metro area and not with external influences.

The key to this process of learning is creating and/or participating in a particular community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Creating these communities requires community development, which is accomplished through three techniques – the self-help approach (Littrell & Hobbs, 1989), the technical assistance approach (Fear, Gamm, &

Hobbs, 1989), and the conflict approach (Robinson Jr., 1989). In order to implement these approaches, one must first gain entrée to the field, which I did during the spring of 2009.

Fieldwork: Creating Communities of Practice

During my recuperation from a serious illness, I began working at a community garden in the West End neighborhood of Birmingham. I was able to connect with the garden because my brother went to college with the pastor of the church tied to the garden. I began developing relationships with garden employees and with people at the associated non-profit. The non-profit with which the garden is associated is one of the few border organizations between the black and white communities. The organization, Metropolitan Mission, has an integrated staff and hires many from the surrounding community, which is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Alabama. However, the board of directors at the time was drawn almost exclusively from wealthy white suburbs, and the new executive director's move to diversify the board led to the exodus of two large donors, according to one source. This organization gave me some entrée into the black communities of western Birmingham, but I was able to gain a fuller access in the summer of 2011. I will return to this later.

My volunteer work with Southern Community Garden in West End can be seen as attempting to gain legitimate peripheral participation. This notion, developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), argues that learning involves first gaining acceptance to a community of practice, in this case gardening. I also gained acceptance because of my willingness to talk frankly about racial issues. I learned through the practice of gardening not only about gardening but also about the issues of the surrounding community. I made monthly phone calls to members of the garden after I returned to Berkeley for classes and I kept fieldwork notes from the summer of 2010 until the fall of 2011 when the formal data collection ended.

When I returned to the field during the summer of 2010, I participated with my community partner, Southern Community Gardens, in a committee to develop a food policy council and a food charter for the Birmingham-Jefferson County region. The committee was not very diverse and I challenged them on this with a letter written in December of 2010. This move was of my own volition, but it was attempt to head off the abandonment of the process by Southern Community Gardens because of anger at the lack of participation of people of color and lack of attention to issues from their perspective. This is the conflict approach (Delgado, 1986; Robinson Jr., 1989) to community organizing, in which the community development practitioner uses a political disagreement or otherwise conflictual situation to build a community around that issue. This engagement was used to help build a race-informed community of practice around urban agriculture in southwest Birmingham.

During a fundraising dinner for SCG in the spring of 2010, I met the organizer of Southwest Community Development. (SCD), a religious affiliated social service non-profit that operates a garden. I developed a relationship with her, and through her was able to gain deeper entrée into the black community. During the summer of 2011, I began working at the non-profit associated with Southwest Baptist Church, SCD. I taught "life skills" as a part of the GED attainment class. This entailed helping participants develop strategies both to attain a GED certificate and also to use it successfully in the employment and higher education world. This is the self-help

approach to community development, in which the community development practitioner helps find ways for communities to solve their own problems.

> The idea of self-help is one of several distinguishing features of community development theory, practice, and ideology (Bilinski 1969). Self-help is based on the premise that people can, will, and should collaborate to solve community problems. In addition to the practical problems solving utility of this perspective, self-help builds a stronger sense of community and foundation for future collaboration (Littrell & Hobbs, 1989).

My interest is in finding ways to connect this self-help approach with the community of practice created by the conflict approach and the technical assistance approach. SCD has a community garden, and this has been discussed, but to date there has been no real move to connect the two. Essentially, the GED class works to give me a window into the black community in exchange for my attempts to foster learning and critical thought.

The GED class is also less than ideal because of both the disciplinary stance that SCD takes in administering the class and my status as a white teacher. SCD has many rules and talks often about "staying on" the students. The executive director has on numerous occasions noted that she thinks that teaching children and teaching adults is the same. Moreover, my status as a white teacher places me further in a position of unearned authority, something that I battle on a class-to-class basis by treating each of the students as my equal. Thus, the disciplinary and authoritarian position of the program, my status as a white person, and student's expectations that all education is authoritarian creates a poor environment for creating communities of practice around adult education, though this approach is probably appropriate for helping people achieve their GED.

Two attempts at creating communities of practice were failures. During the spring of 2011, I suggested to SCG that our partnership should include anti-racist allies training. After some deliberation, SCG refused this intervention, or, more accurately, said that they may do allies training, but I would not be involved. Southern House Church, the church affiliated with SCG has subsequently done conversations on race, but it stops short of the anti-racist paradigm, which is highly critical of white privilege and white supremacy. A similar situation happened during the summer of 2011 which I suggested a community organizing program as a part of research, which they rejected out-of-hand. Our formal partnership had gone as far as it could go, though I still work with them informally.

The reasons that our partnership ended are complex. The most important reason is that community-based organizations see very little value in research. They need labor and money, and as long as my volunteer work included working in the garden and helping with grants, I was in my place. As soon as I started suggesting larger projects, I was out of place as a volunteer. What is key is that this particular organization never saw me as a partner or academic researcher, but as a volunteer, and they have no internal structures for allowing a volunteer to be involved on a programmatic level. The other community partner on this research, SCD, has no paid staff and a very small budget, meaning that there is more need and flexibility for non-employees to participate on a programmatic level. SCG also has an organizational aversion to partnering with other organizations or people unless it is solely on their own terms. As the program director stated to me in criticizing Growing Power in Milwaukee, "There is no reason to be aligned with a bunch of people just to do it." Ultimately, I brought nothing to the table

that could directly benefit their organization, and, as a result of this, there was never any fundamental partnering that could lead to the creation of communities of practice, which they did not see as beneficial.

Finally, I started Magic City Agriculture Project with a white graduate student colleague from the University of Alabama, Birmingham. The organization was initially a for profit consulting firm that sought to raise money by doing work for wealthy people who wanted gardens and use the money to aid in poor communities. This turned out to be quite a ridiculous strategy because no wealthy people wanted our services. We made a total of 240 dollars in four months and decided to change to a non-profit model. At this point we added four people of color, three blacks to our board of directors. This latter non-profit model is a much better model because it includes people of color formally in the decision-making process. This organization uses a technical assistance approach to aid community-based organizations in community development and urban agriculture. We have worked extensively with SCD to develop their farming operations, providing labor and technical expertise, and we have also helped to organize the community through hosting events and farmers' markets. This technical assistance combines with conflict (anti-racist campaigns and trainings) and self-help approaches to form a community and agriculture development program, a community of practice, for the greater Birmingham region. At the time of the writing of this dissertation, the three years of work put into creating a anti-racist community of practice surrounding urban agriculture is still in its infant stages and only moderately successful, indicated by the existence of a new urban farm, a conversation on anti-racism within the food movement, and partnerships among diverse organizations.

Supplementary Techniques

While creating and participating in communities of practice surrounding urban agriculture was the primary method utilized for this research, it was supplemented by participant observation in community meetings, primary and secondary documentary analysis, particularly so-called "grey literature," and interviews. I will summarize the community meetings that I attended, my role at those meetings, and how my participant observation contributed to the creation and participation in communities of practice. Second, I will summarize the grey literature and how it contributed to the creation and participation in communities of practice. Finally, I will briefly discuss interviews and interviewing. This research was conducted from the spring of 2009 to the fall of 2012, and is ongoing at the time of this writing.

The set of first public meetings that I attended were hosted by BFG and were called the food charter convening committee. It was there that I was able to connect with many of the participants in the food movement in the region. I also was able to develop the concept of white habitus in Birmingham's food movement through my participation in these meetings. This led to much discussion with my community partner and others about the lack of black and brown representation within the professionalized ranks of the alternative agriculture movement. The meetings were during the summer of 2010.

The second set of meetings that I attended was city council meetings. I attended these public meetings during the summer of 2011. City council meetings gave me a window into the cultural understandings of the black bourgeoisie in Birmingham. Often black city councilors lamented the position of the black community and derided blacks that did not "talk right" or wore baggy clothes. They placed the blame for Birmingham's

high level of poverty squarely on the shoulders of the black community arguing that Civil Rights leaders "would not be proud of how far we've come." They also recognized church leaders every week by allowing them to lead opening prayer. Attending these meetings gave me insight into how black political leadership sees their role in the context of the black community and allowed me to participate more fully in the black community because of this understanding.

The third set of meetings that I attended during the summer and fall of 2011 were the meetings hosted by Main Street Birmingham, a public/private economic development non-profit, and SCD to create farmer's markets in southwest Birmingham. These meetings were highly interesting in that they were a collision between members from the second set of meetings, the black bourgeoisie, and a low-income black community. While there was much communication between the two entities, there was still disagreement leading to the executive director of SCD calling the black program director of Main Street Birmingham a "token." This refined my notion of class habitus and the argument that the conflicts and incongruences between the black bourgeoise and the black working class spring from different practices and interpretations of those practices.

The grey literature that was analyzed for this project can be grouped into two different groups, economic development and agricultural development. The first group includes the Birmingham City Center Master Plan Update (Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc., 2004), Blueprint Birmingham (Market Street Services, 2010), The Railroad Park/Sloss Furnaces Corridor (Operation New Birmingham, 2010), and the second group includes The Birmingham Public Market Study (Project for Public Spaces, 2011), Examining the Impact of Food Deserts and Food Imbalance on Public Health in Birmingham (Mari Gallagher Research and Consulting Group, 2010), Alabama, and the Farmer's Market Feasibility Study (Bukenya, et al., 2007).

The economic development grey literature lays out Birmingham's strategy to increase its competitiveness in the global market. It focuses on working to recruit high-end labor to the region through the construction of downtown housing and amenities to support it. The high end labor that it seeks to recruit are health researchers and doctors affiliated with the University of Alabama, Birmingham, the largest employer in the region. Basically, the gentrification of the central city is the goal.

The agricultural development literature, in contrast to the economic development literature, focuses on the neighborhoods surrounding the central city. The goal is ostensibly to use agriculture to improve the health of these neighborhoods most of which are very poor and have poor health outcomes. However, the underlying goal of these plans is to use the food movement to promote economic development in these neighborhoods through "public" markets (fancy name for a farmer's market), getting corner stores to stock fresh produce, and the creation of neighborhood, local foods grocery stores. The focus on health is an attempt to fit into the narrative of the well-funded, white-controlled end of the local food movement. They are required to adopt a healthy stance because of the distribution of power within the local food movement. This will be analyzed and substantiated in depth in Chapters 3 and 4.

Finally, I interviewed 16 people, most of whom were civil society leaders in the region. They ranged from the executive director of the chamber of commerce, to religious leaders, to the executive director of a black non-profit. First, I want to make a point about interviewing. Interviewing is the least reliable technique used in this study,

and because of this it was used very sparingly. The social context of interviewing is that interviewees understand who I am, what institution(s) that I am associated with, and at least something about my politics. They therefore adjust their answers to fit what they think that I want. Furthermore, formal interviewing happens outside the realm of practice, which can only be researched through participation. People often do differently than they say. In this context, I merely tried to grasp the stance of the organization that the interviewee represented and their present and future plans. Because of this, I was better able to understand the institutional power behind development plans in Birmingham. Some of my interviewees became key collaborators on this research, and in this context, because we worked together, I was better able to understand practice.

I would like to return to the notion of community-based participatory research. This has been traditionally treated as an innovative approach on basic research. The techniques and theory of knowledge behind those techniques remain fundamentally unchanged. This chapter has laid out a theory of knowledge and a set of techniques that can move CBPR from merely a democratizing approach to traditional research to a methodology that stands alone. This methodology focuses on creating and/or participating in communities of practice; this research creates its own subject and chapter 5 of this investigation documents that process. CBPR can be supplemented by traditional research methods, but that supplement is purely in aid to the process of CBPR.

One final note, I consider my research thus far to be more or less a work in progress. This methodology takes years to implement and enact because of the type of trust and relationships that need to be built in order to work collectively to common goals, knowledge production being one of them. My work is therefore incomplete and partial, and the dissertation reflects this partiality. The abstractions are skewered toward an academic audience, as there has been no formal process of theory construction surrounding the community of practice that is in the making. It also occurred to me that the requirements of academic institutions are at best problematic for CBPR. The IRB has no way to comprehend this type of methodology because it does not fit neatly within accepted protocols. The requirements of academic journals, tenure review committees, and dissertation committees are reflected in this dissertation (not that I don't like what I have produced, but it absolutely reflects my institutional context). Furthermore, knowledge production in community is by and large oral and informal, and how to represent that knowledge while still making important abstractions and generalizations is a dilemma with which I struggle.

What I think can be said unequivocally is that this process of CBPR has aided the communities with which I worked. I have politicized a discussion about food that probably would not have happened had I not been in Birmingham. I assisted in building urban gardens, I wrote grants, and I was a confidant and trusted colleague to at least one of the community members. I have helped forge partnerships between different organizations. I have collaborated in problem solving and I have tried (and mostly failed) to prepare high school dropouts for careers. Ultimately, this is what CBPR should be about. It should not be about communities participating in research, but about researchers participating in communities.

Plan of the Work

The theoretical framework deployed in this research is a combination of Marx/Harvey, Bourdieu, and Levebvre. It will be expanded and unfolded gradually

throughout each chapter to ensure that the framework is useful for each chapter and that it provides a fuller picture as the dissertation progresses. The theory works to link together individuals, groups, institutions, and organizations as they move through space and time, and provides an actable understanding of barriers within Birmingham's alternative agriculture movement.

Chapter 2 explores the shifting production of space throughout Birmingham's history. I trace the evolution of the white supremacist system in Birmingham beginning with the end of the Civil War and the failure of reconstruction and ending with white flight spurred by the successes of the Civil Rights movement. What is clear from this historical analysis is the role of space in maintaining racial isolation, leading to a situation of separate but unequal that continues today. The historical unfolding of space sets the table for the current alternative agriculture movement.

In order to analyze this unfolding of space, I turn to a synthesis between Bourdieu (1977; 1979) and Lefebvre (1974). I use a modified version of Lefebvre's three aspects of space - representations of space, representational spaces, and spatial practice. I understand this to be a way of looking at the spatialization of social structures and a way to draw into the same framework different aspects of space such as social structures, spatial practice, and culture. The modified framework that I develop is that space has three moments: the organization of power, legitimate culture, and spatial practice. These moments are dialectical moments in the sense that each interrelates and internalizes the characteristics of other moments. In Birmingham, I show how white supremacy has shifted its spatial manifestation in response to national trends, judicial decisions, and cultural norms, but white supremacy remains a remarkably consistent theme throughout the century or so covered in this dissertation.

Chapter 3 documents the rise of the alternative food movement and the process of institutionalizing the movement in Birmingham, specifically the process of establishing a food policy council. It contextualizes this process by characterizing the movement as a white movement, produced by white habitus, and acting as a cultural producer for downtown redevelopment. Habitus is a set of dispositions that allow a social agent to produce classifiable practices and classifications of those practices (Bourdieu, 1979). I find participation in the groups forming the food policy council and designing the food charter to be overwhelmingly white (25-30 out of 30-40), and that the people of color who do participate feel excluded from decision-making processes or like "tokens."

This chapter shows how critical race theory is not sufficiently spatialized, building on the framework developed in chapter 2 to show how racialized social structures produce social positions based on race and class that correspond to those positions. I draw on Loic Wacquant (2004) and Michelle Alexander (2010) to show how institutions use spatial arrangements to create and perpetuate race, defined in this dissertation as an unequal social relation based on skin color between whites and non-whites. Empirical data is used to demonstrate the consequences of one of these institutions, the ghetto, on a social movement. I explain how high levels of residential segregation prevent the building of a multi-racial, multi-classed social movement focused on justice.

Chapter 4 analyzes the development plans in metro Birmingham. It uses grey literature to document uneven development throughout the region. Government, business, and civil society organizations have all coalesced around the theme of

gentrifying the downtown region of the city. The goal is to have wealthy whites who have moved out of the city relocate downtown thereby increasing economic accumulation and the tax base.

In this chapter, I take my arguments about space a step further to show that spatial arrangements create a habitus in particular social agents and that space is being arranged in Birmingham to facilitate consumption-led development (Smith, 1996; 2002). In Birmingham, the habitus associated with gentrification revolves around the consumption and taste for trendy, hip forms of food. In other words, the local food movement has worked as a producer of legitimate culture for gentrification creating spaces in which a certain type of food consumption is considered a legitimate social practice. This class habitus serves to distinguish gentrifiers from both the working class and other strata of the bourgeoisie, particularly those who still live in the suburbs. In this chapter I also show how the processes of economic accumulation and racialization converge to create spaces amenable to gentrification.

Chapter 5 documents and analyzes the process of community development through commoning. Three different organizations in west Birmingham work together in a loosely organized community of practice focused on resistance to white supremacy and urban agriculture. Individually, these organizations have different strategies. Southwest Community Development uses a traditional community development strategy to produce commons through urban agriculture and implicitly resists white supremacy. Metropolitan Mission, and the associated church, Southern House Church, produce commons through a strategy called Christian Community Development, a method that couches the production of commons within the language of Christianity and does not get involved in advocating politically for those that use the commons. Magic City Agriculture Project aids in the production of commons through its partnership with SCD and takes the lead on resisting white supremacy with its monthly anti-racist training class. The latter, MCAP, was used to implement critical participatory action research in Birmingham. It is the vehicle through which this research was carried out.

The chapters build on each other. Chapter two covers the topic of space, while chapter 3 discusses space and habitus, and finally chapter 4 illuminates space, habitus, and uneven development as it relates to Birmingham, Alabama. Chapter 5 adds the process of commoning to the theoretical architecture and develops a strategy for tackling urban agriculture in economically and socially just ways, inclusive of all participants and forward thinking. The final chapter summarizes the dissertation and provides some concluding thoughts about the possibilities and potentials of the alternative agriculture movement.

Chapter 2: "Race is what it's about in the South:" White Supremacy as Spatial Project

This chapter is about the history of Alabama generally, and the history of its biggest city, Birmingham in particular. As I conducted this research, I became intimately aware of the contested nature of this history. Diane McWhorter, a child of Mountain Brook, a wealthy suburb of Birmingham, wrote a Pulitzer Prize winning history of the Civil Rights Movement (2001). However, she is characterized by some Civil Rights Movement veterans as somewhere between a shameless opportunist and an outright liar. Those same activists lament the fact that very few black scholars are writing that history, suggesting that it is being co-opted by whites.

I'm very sensitive to that criticism, but in writing this history, I must note that I was not there during the time that I now document and I am reliant on the writings of others, including Diane McWhorter. I try to use as many black sources as possible, but I am generally limited to two excellent books in geography by Dr. Bobby Wilson from the University of Alabama (2000a, 2000b). Chapter 2 leans heavily on his work. Still, I am a white academic, writing at least partially on the experiences of blacks. I hope that I get it right; that I do justice to those who participated in the Civil Rights Movement and to their legacy. Of course, my positionality means that I will interpret events in a certain way and I hope to bring a white anti-racist perspective to the conversation and not merely co-opt this history for my own ends.

My dissertation is concerned with how three separate, but intertwined processes operate in Birmingham, Alabama. These processes stem from contradictions founded on race, class, and community. For instance, this chapter deals with how contradictions between whiteness and blackness produce spaces. It also deals, less directly, with how contradictions rooted in class also manifest spatially, and how these manifestations are countered through a process of commoning, producing spaces that are uneasily stable, but that undergo dramatic changes at certain points in Birmingham's history, like the Civil Rights Movement. The ontological foundation for this theoretical approach is dialectics, the notion that contradictions drive structured change and that these changes can be seen through the analysis of Birmingham's space. In turn, the spatial analysis reveals whose agenda, culture, and institutions are dominant in the region. It tells the story of power.

Dialectical thinking is first and foremost about understanding how dynamic processes undergo change and the resulting people, culture, events, and institutions that are produced. Much social research looks at the way things like institutions appear, such as who makes them up, what is their structure, and what is their ideological stance. Dialectical enquiry, on the contrary, looks at what processes brought such institutions into being, what is the relationship between the institution and broader society, and how does the institution change. My dissertation focuses specifically on the relationship between the processes of capital accumulation, racialization, and commoning, the spaces those processes produce, and how those relations get internalized by the habitus. The act of enquiry and the results are both dynamic, leading to a view of social reality as constantly shifting terrain upon which social agents are both embedded and effecting. Because the process of enquiry can only be understood as having an effect on social reality, the notion of an objective observer is impossible. Instead, researchers should engage in dialectical enquiry in order to change the conditions of social reality in which

they are embedded. David Harvey's 11 propositions for dialectal reasoning are summarized in Table 1.

As opposed to empiricism and positivism, which focus on the relationship between things, dialectical reasoning focuses on the processes that produce and reproduce those people, culture, and institutions. Marx clearly states this in the post face, in a letter that he wrote about his own work, to the second edition of Capital:

> But most important of all is the precise analysis of the series of successions, of the sequences and links within which the different stages of development present themselves. It will be said, against this, that the general laws of economic life are one and the same, no matter whether they are applied to the present or the past. But this is exactly what Marx denies. According to him, such abstract laws do not exist… On the contrary, in his opinion, every historical period possesses its own laws… As soon as life has passed through a given period of development, it begins to be subject to other laws (Marx, 1976).

Furthermore, people, culture, events, and institutions (things) should not be understood as permanent and unchangeable, but constituted out of their relationship between other things and the processes that produce them. This doctrine of internal relations is fundamental to dialectical thinking and basically states that all things, or more accurately, moments or permanences (people or institutions) are the product of their relationship to other things, and that these permanences or moments shift and change in response to shifts and changes in other permanences and moments. What appears as a function of this form of reasoning is a highly unstable world in constant flux, but governed by consistent processes such as the processes of racialization and accumulation discussed here.

Harvey's Dialectical Propositions

1. "Dialectical thinking emphasizes understand processes, flows, fluxes and relations over the analysis of elements, things, structures and organized systems."

2. "Elements or 'things'… are constituted out of flows, processes, and relations operating within bounded fields which constitute structured systems or wholes."

3. "The 'things' and systems which many researchers treat as irreducible and therefore unproblematic are seen in dialectical thought as internally contradictory by virtue of the multiple processes that constituted them."

4. Things are heterogeneous because they are constituted out of complex processes. Because of this they can be deconstructed *ad infinitum* and in order to understand their heterogeneity we must understand the processes from which they are constituted.

5. "Space and time are neither absolute nor external to processes but are contingent and contained within them."

6. "Parts and wholes are mutually constitutive of each other."

7. Subject and object and cause and effect are interchangeable since they are constituted out of the same processes, internalizing them.

8. "Transformative behavior"… arises out of the contradictions inherent in heterogeneity.

9. Change is constant.

10. "Dialectical enquiry is itself a process that produces permanences… which stand to be supported or undermined by continuing processes of enquiry"

11. "The exploration of "possible worlds" is integral to dialectical thinking". Dialectical thinking is enquiry in order to change social reality (Harvey, 1996, p. 49-56).

The three processes with which this dissertation is concerned are racial isolation or racialization, economic accumulation, and commoning. Accumulation is abbreviated with the following equation, which represents the law of accumulation under the historical epoch of capitalism, i.e. it is not universal through time.

$$M-(LP+MP)\ldots P\ldots C-M+\Delta M$$

This equation means that in the capitalist mode of production, money is used to purchase labor power (LP) and means of production (MP) which is then put through a production process (P). The result is a commodity (C) that is sold on the market for the initial sum in money (M) plus profit (ΔM) (Marx, 1976). Further Marxist theorists have argued that a space must be produced in order for this process to take place, i.e. the process of spatial production is integral to the process of accumulation (Harvey 2006, 1996; Lefebvre, 1974; Smith 2008).

Race is a mode of social control in the U.S. in which elite whites give privileges to a middle stratum of whites as a way to control the lower stratum of people of color. The invention of race as a mode of social control entailed inculcating the idea of white solidarity over that of class in the thoughts and practices of the middle stratum. One of the clearest examples of this is the Homestead Act, which took American Indian Land, gave it to whites, and denied access to blacks (Allen, 1994). As a social relation, it is also a structure, white supremacy, in which whites have access to a whole manner of cultural, political, and physical resources where people of color do not. White supremacy produces privileges for whites and disprivileges for people of color, though people of color are innovative in using what they have to their advantage. A social process produces race and white supremacy. These social structures are manifest in space, and the process that produces them is racialization.

It must be stated that racialization, white supremacy, and racism are quite separate from bigotry. The former three are prejudice and bigotry backed by institutional power, while the latter is holding some form of bias against an individual because of some physical or cultural trait. While it is not impossible for a person of color to hold institutional power and have some sort of bigotry toward another ethnicity or race, in practice it is highly unlikely. Even if this situation were to occur, it would still be as a result of white supremacy since whites invented the categories of race as a mode of social control. A person of color holding institutional power does not necessarily mean that they are not a white supremacist or that they don't and haven't acquiesced to white supremacy in order to maintain that institutional power. As Allen (1994), race is not about phenotype but about social control and institutional power.

Similarly, the production of space is inseparable from the process of racialization. The spatial isolation of dark skinned individuals has always been integral to the production and reproduction of race. The slave trade, a process of isolating Africans both from their home and families and from whites, took African ethnic diversity and through isolation forged it into one race, black (Sawh & Scales, 2006). Blacks were further isolated on plantations through their housing in slave quarters. Finally, after slavery, blacks were isolated from whites and institutions of power through, in the North and West, their relegation to second-class neighborhoods, and, in the South through Jim Crow laws (Massey & Denton, 1993; Wilson B. M., 2000a; 2000b). This is not to say that race did not change over this time. Particularly, race shifted scales from the individual body

(slavery), to the neighborhood (Jim Crow), to the metropolitan area (residential segregation).

Resistance by blacks and their allies produced these changes within race. The abolitionist movement, the Civil War, and reconstruction led to the shift from slavery to Jim Crow (Dubois, 1935). Documented in this chapter is how the Civil Rights Movement led to the shift from Jim Crow to residential segregation. With each victory, race became a little more egalitarian, but the hierarchy continued to be reproduced. Though blacks hand more freedom of mobility and more chances at upward mobility, race still plays a role in the oppression of blacks. One black professional person in Birmingham said that race is more psychological than physical oppression at this point in history. In other words, he felt like battling racism was more about battling internalized racial oppression (anger, feelings of worthlessness, despair) than fighting groups like the Klan or individuals like Bull Connor. This probably also reflects his class position.

The last process addressed in this dissertation that factors in the production of space is commoning. Commoning is the process by which a spatialized relationship is produced that connects a community of place the cultural, political, social, physical, and institutional resources that people can then use to build their reality (Harvey, 2012). Commoning was integral to black communities during Jim Crow because without the work of community leaders to provide for their people, very few of their needs would be met. Community leaders, like churches and civic leagues, worked to provide what the segregationist local state would not, and developed a robust community life founded on mutual aid and self help (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Without such commoning, life for blacks would have been much worse and the basis for the Civil Rights Movement would not have been laid.

For Lefebvre, the three dialectical moments in the production of space are as follows:

1. Spatial practice (lived space), which embraces production and reproduction and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance.
2. Representations of space (conceived space), which are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations.
3. Representational spaces (perceived space), embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to clandestine or underground of social life, as also to art (which may come to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces) (Lefebvre, 1974, p. 33).

Unfortunately, Lefebvre's framework is too vague to be very useful, but it presents a place to begin to develop an analytical framework. Spaces are produced via social processes. In other words, a space like a ghetto is produced by a combination of racial isolation and accumulation, and consequently the characteristics of that space reflect the processes that produced it. The next task is to diagram a new spatial framework as a combination of Lefebvrian and Bourdieuan approaches.

1. **Legitimate culture** – ideas about ways of being and acting that are struggled over

by differing factions of the bourgeoisie. For Bourdieu (1979), taste is the quintessential manifestation of legitimate culture in the sense that taste reveals one's implicit understanding of which cultural works are legitimate. He goes on to note that "(competence in a particular space) most often results from the unintentional learning made possible by a disposition acquired through domestic or scholastic inculcation of legitimate culture" (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 28). Each produced space has an associated legitimate culture, which is an artifact of the processes that produced it. For example, a culture of white supremacy is an artifact of the process of racial isolation, foisted on both blacks and whites, that produces a particular space.

2. **Organization of power** – institutions and their arrangement, both in relationship to each other and their internal organization, that give a space consistency and a certain level of rigidity. A city's bureaucracy is an example of an organization of power in the sense that it structures interactions in everything from health to building codes. The organization of power is often contradictory especially in large, multifaceted institutions or within multiple institutions. Legitimate culture generally supports the organization of power's architecture but this is not universal or necessary. Processes that produce the organization of power weave a regulatory environment that reflects that process. For instance, racial isolation will produce institutional arrangements that favor whites over people of color even when institutional actors are majority people of color. Finally, the organization of power for a given space is almost always a hybrid of many different institutional regimes.

3. **Practice** – the activities undertaken by social agents (institutions, organizations, or individuals) on the ground. There is a certain amount of coherence between legitimate culture and practice because both deal with actions taken and their meaning and consequences. This does not mean, however, that practices will not be contradictory or that the meaning ascribed to a certain practice will be perfectly logical. It only means that the general meanings ascribed by legitimate culture to certain actions or range of actions must enable appropriate practices. Practices are bounded by the organization of power.

This gives us the dialectical and relational framework needed to adequately analyze spatial relations. The following will dissect spatial relations during different epochs of Birmingham's development, focusing on three processes, accumulation, racialization, and commoning. Each cut represents an unstable resolution of these dialectical processes at a specific point in history, showing how these processes produce the spaces in which people act out their life and what social agents have the power to dictate spatial arrangements in Birmingham.

Birmingham's History

After the Civil War and failure of Reconstruction, the planter class moved quickly to solidify its place at the top of Alabama's government. Industrialization began in earnest in Birmingham, backed by Northern capital, and for the first time free black labor was put to work in the mines and mills. However, labor was segmented as whites occupied skilled or contractor positions and blacks occupied lower tasks such as mining or housework. Contractors were essentially white overseers who were hired by mines and iron mills to utilize black laborers. Essentially a 'petty capitalist,' contractors were

squeezed by industry in terms of costs and output, most of this falling on the backs of black labors giving them lower wages and longer hours. Alongside this arrangement stood the convict labor system in which companies such as Tennessee Coal and Iron, later to become US Steel, and Sloss Furnaces would rent black convicts from the state to work in the mines for incredibly low rates. This labor arrangement ensured the perceived superiority for the white working class in relation to the black working class, and maintained what had become planter-industrialist hegemony (Wilson, 2000a).

In rural areas, planters remained in power by involving former slaves in sharecropping arrangements. In a fairly straightforward labor relation, sharecroppers grew crops on the planters land in return for room, board, and basic needs on that land. Since croppers had to secure financing on the coming year's crop, they often remained in debt to the planters for life with that debt inherited by the cropper's children (Flynt, 1989). Croppers enjoyed more autonomy than under slavery, particularly in terms of freedom of travel and association – many black churches sprang up at this time - but they remained in a dependent relationship to the planters economically (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). The labor situation in the South following the Civil War remained heavily in favor of planters, but there were modest gains on the parts of blacks in terms of wealth and freedom of movement.

In the late 1880s, the Farmer's Alliance and the Knights of Labor organized to challenge the hegemony of the planter interests as represented by the Democratic Party. Their platform advocated better pay and working conditions, revision of the convict-lease system, and government ownership of the means of communication and transportation. Over one third of the delegates to this alliance were black. Also during this time, the United Mine Workers of Alabama organized black and white miners to challenge the economic power of coal and iron companies. These alliances, called the populist movement, marked a significant challenge to the power of the planters (Wilson, 2000a).

Helped by the lack of competition between blacks and whites, a phenomena emerging from the stratified and segmented nature of labor, the unions were able to organize and make some inroads economically for black and white workers (Wilson, 2000). Race relations between blacks and whites were characterized as *laissez faire*, meaning that though whites would never acquiesce to equal social relations with blacks, there were no systematized (like Jim Crow) government mandates segregating blacks and whites. Within unions, black and whites would at least organize together to challenge the planter class. According to labor leader Woodward, "never before or since have the two races of the South come so close together politically" (Wilson, 2000a).

In response to threats to their power, planters moved to call a constitutional convention to institutionalize white supremacy. President of the constitutional convention, John Knox, characterized the goal of the constitution in this way: "And what is it that we want to do? Why it is within the limits imposed by the Federal Constitution, to establish white supremacy in this State. This is our problem, and we should be permitted to deal with it, unobstructed by outside influences. But if we would have white supremacy, we must establish it by law, not by force or fraud. These provisions are justified in law and in morals, because the negro is not discriminated against on account of his race, but on account of his intellectual and moral condition. There is in the white man an inherited capacity for government, which is wholly wanting in the negro" (Flynt, 2004). The constitution was ratified in 1901 with significant manipulation of the black

vote in the Black Belt, the range of counties in south central Alabama historically home to the plantation economy. All of Alabama excluding the Black Belt voted against ratification because it centralized power at the state level, but the Black Belt turned the tide in favor (Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform, n.d.; Flynt, 2004). With a high population of blacks, the Black Belt's voting for institutionalized white supremacy implies heavy white manipulation of black votes, a phenomena common during the time.

Spatial production during sharecropping and populism (1876-1901):

1. Practice – blacks could not look whites in the eyes; black men could not affiliate with white women, or speak before spoken to. Violations of these norms could result in murder, flogging, lynching, or beating. Black votes were stolen and manipulated generally by changing black votes to votes for Democratic candidates.   Blacks worked in particular jobs in industry, while whites worked jobs higher in the hierarchy. Social relations were racialized and hierarchical.

Space in the region was bifurcated between black and white spaces, meaning that a separate realm of practice existed for black spaces as did for white spaces. Black spaces were most closely associated with the black church which functioned as the organized power for these black spaces, and produced practices such as self help, forms of ecstatic worship, and community initiatives congruent with these spaces (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Wilson B. M., 2000a; Wilson B. , 2000b).

2. Organization of power – while whites controlled all dominant institutions, particularly the steel mills and the plantations, no formal (i.e. Jim Crow) white supremacy existed. The labor market was segmented with whites holding favorable jobs and blacks holding the worst jobs. The convict leasing system ensured low wages for everyone. Labor unions had little power until close to the turn of the century when they began to affect powerful institutions such as Tennessee Coal and Iron and Sloss (both iron and steel companies). The church dominated black space and provided most of the social services that white controlled institutions were unwilling to provide. Preachers held tremendous power over the direction of the black community, often leading in highly charismatic fashion. Blacks found solidarity and shelter within the black church that would later serve as the basis of the Civil Rights Movement.

3. Legitimate culture – white supremacy was the legitimate culture of the day, and all evidence indicates that it went mostly unchallenged (Wilson B. M., 2000a; Wilson B. , 2000b; Allen, 1983). Even though the populist movement made some inroads for black laborers, it was dominated by a white supremacist culture (Allen, 1983; Saxton, 1990). Cultural norms supported white dominance of institutions and the practices described above.

The black church served as the main cultural producer for black spaces promoting both survival and liberation (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Charismatic black preachers disseminated this culture from the pulpit, which included ideas of mutual aid and self-help and the centrality of the church to social life. Still most churches were highly conservative, discouraging unionization and not challenging white supremacy (Wilson B. , 2000b). Commoning, or the creation of communal resources, dominated black life during this time, and would lay the social basis for the Civil Rights Movement.

The 1901 constitution institutionalized black disenfranchisement with poll taxes, literacy tests, and bans on interracial marriage, all of which have since been repealed or nullified. It still requires racially segregated education in a section that also states that

there is no right to state-funded education in the Alabama. In order to ensure that majority black voters could not exert influence in those counties, the legislative duties within counties are centralized in the state government. In a very strange arrangement, county commissions must receive approval from the state legislature for tax increases, development projects, and any other legislative initiatives. Many of these initiatives must pass state wide referenda in order to be enacted; they must become constitutional amendments, which is why the Alabama State Constitution currently stands at 827 amendments and includes some of the most inane amendments including animal control and traffic enforcement (Constitution of Alabama - 1901, 1901; Flynt, 2004). Moreover, the tax code is codified in the state constitution making it virtually impossible to change. Alabama has some of the lowest property taxes in the country and one of the most regressive tax systems nationally (Sanders, 2010). According to Sanders (2010), "The state's lowest-income residents pay more than twice as much of their income in state and local taxes as the highest-income residents do… For example, ITEP found that for the top 1 percent of earners, Alabama income tax is the country's third lowest. But for the state's bottom fifth of earners, the income tax is the nation's third highest."

In spite of these low taxes, low income people pay a larger proportion of the total tax revenue than high income people. As polcy analyst Chris Sanders put it, they pay a "big piece of a small pie" (Sanders, 2010). Still in existence and still disenfranchising blacks and the poor, the 1901 Alabama State Constitution set the stage for Jim Crow by institutionalizing white supremacy. It remains a millsone around Alabamians' necks.

With white supremacy institutionalized at the state level, cities turned to Jim Crow laws to further enforce white dominance. The first law adopted by the city of Birmingham required the segregation of buses, and by 1930 ordinances preventing the mixing of races in dice, dominoes, checker games, restaurants, pools, railroads, street cars, toilet facilities and any other public place. During this time efforts at implementing racial zoning began throughout the country. However, in 1917, the NAACP brought a case before the Supreme Court that struck down racial zoning on the grounds that it violated property rights. *Buchanan v. Warley* established that the property rights of an owner were annulled by racial zoning because the zoning prevented that owner from disposing of his/her property at his/her discretion, that is, it prevented a white owner from selling property to a black buyer and vice versa. However, southern cities were able to implement racial zoning as part of a comprehensive zoning plan, which was implemented primarily to protect property values. Under this plan, segregation was deemed to protect the property values of white property owners. Beginning in 1920, Birmingham formally implemented zoning ordinances, and by 1922 racial zoning ordinances were on the books, and remained so until 1946. The lack of challenge to these zoning ordinances can be attributed to a "nearly dormant" NAACP, voter disenfranchisment by state and local laws, and white intimidation of blacks by the Ku Klux Klan. The result of the zoning laws were that blacks were forced to live in the most marginal lands with the least amount of public goods and services and often very close to commercial and industrial operations. Furthermore, the areas zoned black were not large enough for the black population meaning that many families were living in very cramped quarters (Connerly, 2005).

Spatial production shifted dramatically during the emergence of Jim Crow (1901-1963):

1. Practice – informal social norms regulating interactions between blacks and whites continued as did extrajudicial killings, and social relations remained racialized and hierarchical, this becoming more rigid with Jim Crow laws. White supremacists added bombing to their repetoire of terrorism. Blacks were still influenced by the church and white supremacy, but an emerging black middle class assumed leadership roles leading to differentiation within black space, a differentiation that would lead to conflicts during the Civil Rights Movement. Whites sided with one another supporting both white supremacy and institutionalized racism. While class positions certainly existed, race was the primary mode of understanding and acting in the world. Practice was divided into two realms creating two separate and highly unequal spatial arrangements.

2. Organization of power – voter disenfranchisement was institutionalized in the state constitution and power was centralized in the hands of the state government. Racial zoning segregated housing, and Jim Crow laws formalized and enforced segregation in all manner of everyday life. Fordism structured the economy dominated by the iron and steel industry (Wilson B. , 2000b). The organization of power remained divided and hierarchical with class differentiation within each space. In addition to the church, civic leagues emerged to provide social services in black neighborhoods. These also demanded that the city government provide more public goods to black neighborhoods.

3. Legitimate culture – the black church and civic leagues became a locus of resistance both in union organizing and in resistance to Jim Crow (Lincoln, 1990; Wilson B. , 2000b), producing a culture of resistance to white supremacy which continued to be legitimate culture. Importantly, from the standpoint of Birmingham broadly, the church and civic leagues produced a culture of resistance, but from the standpoint of black neighborhoods, these organizations were the organized power in the absence of the white-dominated city commission. In other words, from the perspective of black communities civic leagues and black churches were hegemonic, highlighting how the goal of two societies, black and white, was accomplished via segregation, though the societies were highly unequal.

White culture was dominated by ideas of white supremacy while black culture was fueled by ideas of liberation that ran through church doctrine. Black culture was also shaped by ideas of survival stemming from the dire circumstances in which they found themselves. Both survival and liberation were addressed through a process of commoning. Ultimately, these ideas of survival and liberation laid the cultural ground work for the Civil Rights movement, in spite of the fact that it was a minority of churches that actively resisted white supremacy

In the late 1940s, blacks began to challenge racial zoning by purchasing housing in areas zoned for white occupancy. They were met with terrorist violence. Between the years of 1950 and 1965 there were forty-three race-related bombings in Birmingham, giving it the nickname, Bombingham. When denied the right to live in properties they owned, blacks turned to the courts for redress. Finally, in 1949, Birmingham lawyer Arthur Shores and the NAACP successfully challenged Birmingham's racial zoning law using the exact same arguments that deemed racial zoning unconstitutional in 1917 (Connerly, 2005). Racial zoning had ended, but segregation continued aided by the use of federal programs, like Model Cities, to displace black residents and to enforce neighborhood boundaries. Birmingham, in 1951, was one of the last cities to end racial zoning in the nation, setting the table for the internationally known fight between Eugene

"Bull" Connor and no-compromise segregationists on one side, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights on the other, and the Birmingham business community somewhere in the middle (Connerly, 2005).

In 1956, the ACMHR under the leadership of Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth through organizing lower class blacks in the city began to challenge Jim Crow laws in Birmingham. Emboldened by the successes of the bus boycotts in Tallahassee, Florida and Montgomery, the organization moved against segregated buses, city parks, schools, and other public places (Connerly, 2005; McWhorter, 2001). The movement continued throughout the fifties with little change, but much terroristic retribution. The tide turned for ACMHR with the Freedom Rides of 1961.

The Freedom Rides were an action initiated by the Congress of Racial Equality in which black and white bus passengers rode together across states in the South, ensuring compliance with Supreme Court and Interstate Commerce Commission mandating bus desegregation. The buses made it peacefully through much of the South, but upon arrival in Birmingham, terrorists from the Klan and the American States' Rights Party were allowed 15 minutes to beat freedom riders (Connerly, 2005; McWhorter, 2001; Wilson, 2000). City Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor made this arrangement to enforce segregation in Birmingham, leading to international attention on the conditions in Birmingham.

Bull Connor had a long history in Birmingham. A sportscaster by trade, Birmingham's 'Big Mules' or business elite made mostly of steel magnates chose him to squelch any form of social uprising that threatened the political order. The racially divided working class and segmented labor market served the Big Mules well, relying on racial animosity to prevent working class solidarity and keeping wages low. Birmingham's centrality in industrial production in the South made it a target for organizing by the communist party, and Connor was brought to crack the heads of anyone who stepped out of line. The Communist Party in the 1930s and 40s planted many of the seeds of Birmingham's Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. The communists felt that the first battle of the coming proletarian revolution was black liberation and focused many of their efforts on the South (McWhorter, 2001). Connor initially was on the winning side, fighting for the industrialists against the communists, but eventually as neoliberalism began to emerge, he was on the losing side, with the segregationists against the Freedom Movement. Birmingham's economic shift from manufacturing to medical research created the political space necessary for the removal of segregationist codes.

In attendance at an International Rotary Club Meeting in Japan was Birmingham Chamber of Commerce president Sydney Smyer, a realtor and dedicated segregationist. The news of Birmingham's beatings reached the meeting, and as Smyer put it, "boy, (other Rotarians) didn't have anything to do with you" (Connerly, 2005: 177). Smyer recognized the segregation was bad for business in Birmingham, costing jobs, industry, and tourism in the area. He famously and ironically stated, "I'm a segregationist, but I'm not a damn fool" (Connerly, 2005). Upon his return from Japan, Smyer immediately began to organize the business community to depose of Bull Connor.

The strategy employed by the Birmingham business community was to reorganize city government from a commission system, in which the city was governed by three

commissioners, to a mayor-council system in which the city government would be governed by territorially-based council members and a city-wide mayor. The strategy worked – a referendum on the mayor-council style of government passed on November 6, 1961, and Connor was defeated by Albert Boutwell in a city-wide mayoral election in a run-off on April 2, 1963. However, Connor challenged the legality of the election, and Birmingham effectively had two governments until May 23, 1963.

Meanwhile, ACMHR with the help of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the SCLC organized a boycott of downtown business on April 3, 1963. While many of the downtown businesses were ready to do away with segregation because of its economic costs, they were recalcitrant about negotiating with black leaders. The boycott extended into May, and King and Shuttlesworth organized a march to add to the boycott. The purpose of the march was to send school children into the streets to fill the city jails. The action was transcendent. School children flooded the streets and were arrested in droves overfilling the jails and spilling off into Legion Field, a local sports stadium. The deposed Connor was fed up, and on May 3, he turned fire hoses and dogs on the school children in a moment that has come to define Birmingham, then and now. Finally, on May 8, downtown business leaders and black leaders agreed to the desegregation of downtown stores and black employment opportunities in those stores. They did not agree to the two other demands, desegregation of parks and schools and the hiring of black police officers. The agreement won by Martin Luther King, Jr. enfuriated Reverend Shuttlesworth who could not participate in the negotiations because he was injured during the May 3 rally. Shuttlesworth wanted nothing but full desegregation from the protest. He did not have to wait long. On July 23, 1963, a month after the new government took office, the city council voted unanimously to repeal all segregation ordinances (Connerly, 2005; McWhorter, 2001). This revealed that the majority of Birmingham was against maintaining segregationist ordinances, but with power centralized in the city commissioner system, the majority had little recourse for Connor. The ACMHR and the SCLC had swung the tide of public opinion through radical political action.

Segregation ended, leading to the last dramatic change in sociospatial relations in Birmingham, white flight and suburbanization. Birmingham's population peaked in 1960 at 340,887 and has dropped dramatically since to 212,237 in 2010 (Birmingham Public Library, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011), a drop of 38%. The vast majority of those leaving the city have been white as the percentage of the white population has dropped from 60% in 1960 to 22% in 2011 (Birmingham Public Library, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The resulting loss of population and capital has led to the ghettoization of much of Birmingham and has left Birmingham with over a quarter of the population living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

The following maps are a visualization of processes of ghettoization and suburbanization in Birmingham from 1960-2010. Figure 1 is a spatialized dissimilarity index, or a measure of the distribution of blacks and whites across space. The dissimilarity index is calculated by comparing the distribution of blacks and whites for a particular region to that of individual neighborhoods. For example, if the distribution of Jefferson County is 50 percent black and 50 percent white and a particular neighborhood is 50 percent white and 50 percent black, then the dissimilarity index is zero, since the distribution is the same as the region. However, if it were 100 percent black and 0 percent white, the dissimilarity index would be quite high (Massey & Denton, 1993; U.S.

Census Bureau, 2011; Wong, 2008).

      Figure 2 is merely the concentration of blacks and whites in the county. Figure 3 is isolation. Black isolation from whites means the chance that a black person will encounter a white person in a particular space. White isolation from blacks is similarly the chance that a white person will encounter a black person in a particular space (Massey & Denton, 1993; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011; Wong, 2008). As you can see, since the end of the Civil Rights Movement, metro Birmingham has moved from *de jure* Jim Crow segregation to *de facto* residential segregation reproducing white supremacy and recreating white and black spaces. All figures are from Henson and Munsey (submitted for publication).
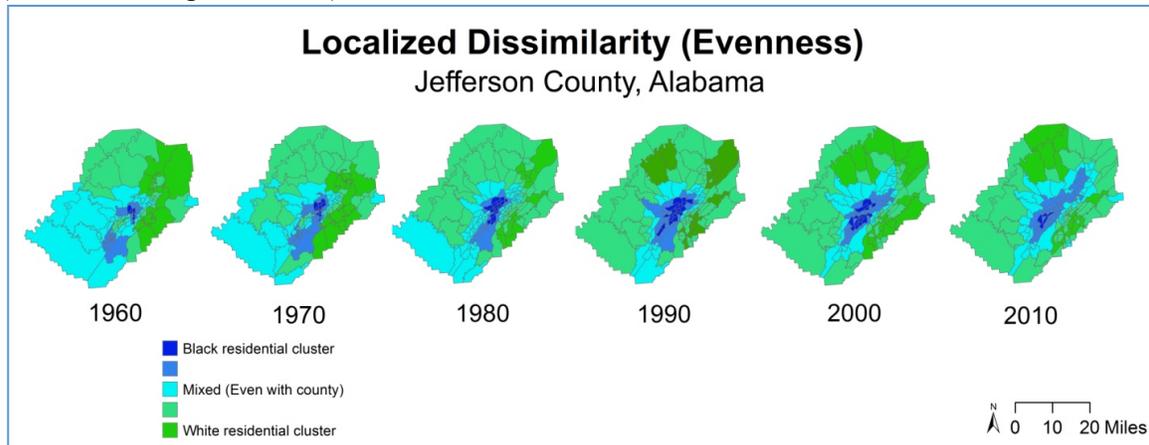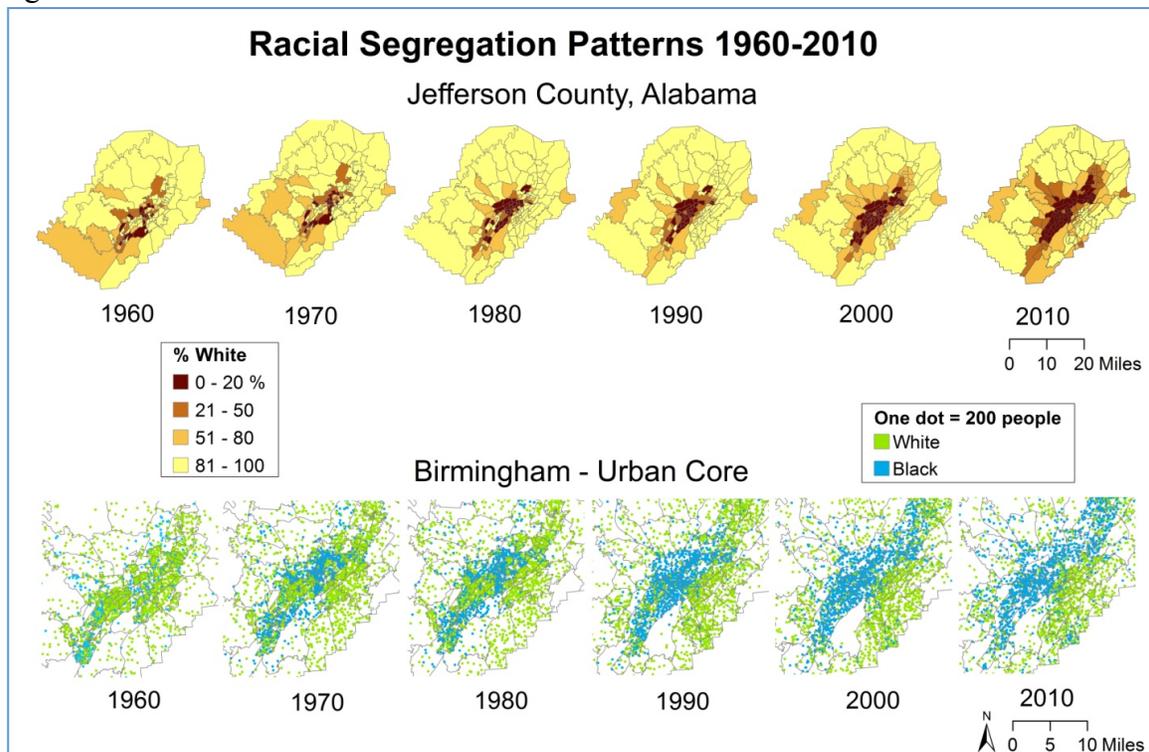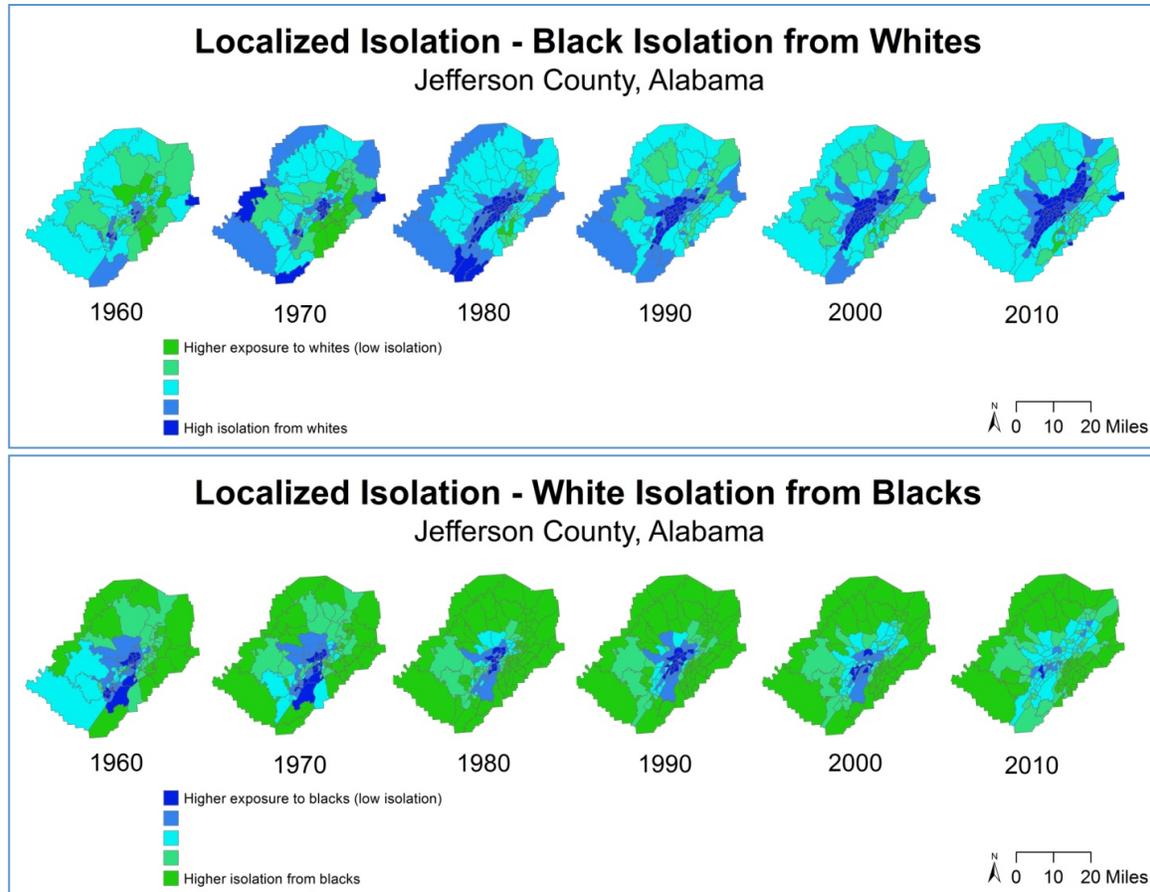

Figure 1

Figure 2

Localized Isolation - Black Isolation from Whites
Jefferson County, Alabama

1960   1970   1980   1990   2000   2010

Higher exposure to whites (low isolation)

High isolation from whites

N   0   10   20 Miles

Localized Isolation - White Isolation from Blacks
Jefferson County, Alabama

1960   1970   1980   1990   2000   2010

Higher exposure to blacks (low isolation)

Higher isolation from blacks

N   0   10   20 Miles

Figure 3
After the Civil Rights movement, Birmingham was organized spatially as follows (1964-present):

1. Practice – blacks and whites shared the same spaces such as parks, restaurants, drinking fountains, and sidewalks. While racism still structured interactions, the removal of formal controls meant more freedom of movement and practice for blacks. Whiteness and blackness remain relevant, but the ascension of Birmingham as a black city exacerbated class divisions within the black community. With this ascension, the distinctions between blacks and whites were diminished, but they remain important even today. Most of the business community, the people with the economic power, are white and have tremendous influence over the city government, and occasional events will lead to the charge of racism, such as a recent conflict over the direction of the Birmingham Board of Education, at least giving the impression that black and white, however diminished, remain an important paradigm for interpretation. However, the rigidity of racialized social relations has greatly diminished and interpretation predominately through the lens of race is wholly inadequate.

Without a doubt, the Civil Rights movement was not only a movement to remove segregationist codes, but also a movement to remake black identity in the area (Wilson B. , 2000b). The explicit, violent, and oppressive inferiority inculcated in blacks was replaced with a blackness marked by engagement with new and rapidly evolving black power structures and by class differentiation. Racial and class divides continue in existence, but the distinction becomes more murky. Class is no longer synonymous

white or black space, but cuts across racial lines meaning that black city leaders, at city hall and in the business community, may be more aligned with white business people than with the black or white working class, leading Bobby Wilson to call for more attention paid to class in greater Birmingham (2000b).

2. Organization of Power – with segregationist codes removed, capitalism took over as the method of organizing power, at a time when capitalism was reorganizing in the region. This is not to say that capitalism was not an organizing power during Jim Crow and slavery, but, at this moment in time, it played a supplementary role to the regime of white supremacy. Neoliberalism was ascendant, beginning in the 1950s, but taking hold in the 1970s, and the old steel town was no more. In its place, a new medical research university, the University of Alabama, Birmingham, the creation of which was an urban renewal project in 1955, by 1982 had become the major economic driver of the region, employing more people than U.S. Steel, and hired mainly highly educated white collar workers (Connerly, 2005; Flynt, 2004). Birmingham lost 25,000 jobs in the steel industry during the 1950s and 1960s (Flynt, 2004). In 1970, the manufacturing sector accounted for almost 30 percent of Birmingham jobs. By 1988, the number stood at 14 percent (Flynt, 2004). Almost as soon as segregationist ordinances were removed, blacks, the vast majority of whom were not college educated, saw their chances of economic stability and advancement evaporate. Spaces of poverty, mostly black, remained in poverty as the logic of capital invests only where the return is high. Capital, in transition from Fordism to neoliberalism, latched on to existing racially segregated conditions and reproduced them spatially (Wilson B. , 2000b). Birmingham was unable to annex white suburbs leading to further capital drain from the city. However, the removal of racial codes led to social services and public goods flowing into black neighborhoods for the first time. Black and white organized powers were partially merged leading to analytical murkiness in determining whether racial or class processes are implicated.

3. Legitimate culture – the black church and black civic leagues became more solidified in its contradictory position as creator of a culture of liberation and as the de facto political body for black neighborhoods. Currently, the black church still holds purchase as a producer of legitimate culture, and civic leagues have been integrated into city government (Connerly, 2005). The division between black and white legitimate culture is stark and prevents effective collaboration within the city, even collaboration between groups with similar goals; this will be covered in more depth in Chapters 4 & 5.

Race remains an important force culturally, but blacks and whites have largely entered into an implicit agreement to not discuss race publically. As we will see later, race hierarchies structure the engagement of social movements, but this is largely an unacknowledged phenomena. It is as if racial peace has become the culturally appropriate way to deal with race for both black and whites (low-income is often used as a politically correct term for person of color) at the expence of racial progress. Race remains the elephant in the room.

Another less dramatic moment occurred in 1977 when Birmingham implemented the Citizen's Advisory Board. The plan incorporated civic leagues into the city government formally. Each neighborhood elects a president and those presidents advise the mayor and council. As an organization of power, it extended democratic relations further into communities. Furthermore, the CAB was developed with the participation of

the long-standing civic leagues in Birmingham. The process of developing and resulting Citizens' Advisory Board is a unique hallmark emerging from the black planning tradition (Connerly, 2005). Birmingham is therefore contradictory in the sense that while highly democratic structures exist (commoning), such as the CAB, the range of political possibilities is limited by disinvestment in manufacturing and white flight, specifically, and the dictates of accumulation and racialization in general.

The implementation of the CAB created what is colloquially known as the neighborhood associations. The neighborhood associations are a network of 99 geographically-based neighborhoods, each electing a president. Also included in this system are 23 larger communities that encompass about four to seven neighborhoods. Each community also has a president. The purpose of this system is to organize communities and advise the city council on policy decisions. I will discuss the neighborhood associations in more depth in Chapter Five.

The history of race in Birmingham can be understood by the shifting spatial arrangements developed and implemented by segregationists. While racism has been the common theme throughout the state, the division and racialization of space was used to disenfranchise and oppress blacks throughout Birmingham, and after the Civil Rights movement, this racialization was reproduced by capitalism. Capitalism not only produces a working class for exploitation, but also produces and reproduces certain spatial arrangements, such as the ghetto and suburbia. This colorblind capitalism perpetuates the dire conditions in spaces deemed unworthy of investment, or when those spaces receive investment, transforms them leading to the displacement of black and brown bodies to other unworthy spaces. Ultimately, a racialized working-class is produced by these processes and located in particular, often shifting, geographic regions. To deal with this, blacks have consistently used commoning strategies to meet the needs of their communities, and at times, have used commoning to outright confront the dictates of racialization and economic accumulation.

Chapter 3: Racial Habitus and the Power of Implicit Bias

I write this chapter with a tinge of reluctance. My experience with the alternative food and agriculture movement in Birmingham has been dramatically shaped by whiteness, but many of the people I now criticize are my friends and I respect what they do. Some are not my friends, and some do not like me at all. However, I feel that most of our activism surrounding race in the region has been ignored or pushed aside, and this leads me to the inevitable conclusion that we still have to find a way to talk about race in the movement or it will fail to grow into something that can fight for justice in a real way. In some ways I want to apologize to Andrew Grace, whose film *Eating Alabama,* I critiqued on my blog and in this chapter. He felt that I made a personal attack on him, and I never intended it to be taken that way, and I don't intend for it to be taken that way here. Grace is merely a product of a movement that is overwhelmingly white and privileged and he produced a work of art that reflects this. So, with reluctance, I write this chapter because I am concerned about the health and well-being of the movement, not as a personal attack on the participants involved. I don't hate white people; I don't have an "aggrieved sense of racial injustice." I'm not angry.

I realize that race is an emotional topic. Undoubtedly when whites in the movement read this chapter they will experience a range of emotions from guilt to anger and denial. But, my critique is not a personal attack. I respect all of the participants in the movement and I respect the work that they do. I just want all of us to take a long, hard look at why no black folks are at the table. Black folks are on the table, that is, there is much discussion about how to get low-income people and people of color to eat healthier, but blacks aren't at the table helping to make those decisions. This chapter highlights the barriers that exist and chapter 5 looks at some solutions as to how to deal with them.

I began this dissertation by arguing that space is socially produced and that space is arranged to facilitate white supremacy and capital accumulation. This perspective is founded on a dialectical ontology in which social reality is constructed out of social processes such as capital accumulation or racial isolation, which reproduce certain enduring features while adapting to others. Initially, I looked at the history of space in the Birmingham region, focusing on how racialized spaces are produced, changed, and maintained. The next piece to this theoretical framework, the task of this chapter, is to develop the concept of racial habitus, showing how it is produced by and produces racialized space.

Theoretical Framework

All told, the literature on food justice, whiteness and the alternative agriculture movement informs this chapter. I hone in specifically on whiteness, its generation as a social position, and the effects of that whiteness on the broader metropolitan region, and therefore also on the alternative agriculture movement. While the authors reviewed here focus specifically on whiteness in alternative agriculture's public space, arguing that that space is codified white, I set the alternative agriculture movement within the context of broader metropolitan processes, making it relevant not only to whiteness studies of alternative agriculture, but also to urban geography.

I will develop in this chapter a synthesis of Marxism and whiteness or white privilege theory that reveals the interwoven mechanisms of race and class and shows how the processes producing race and class, isolation and accumulation, crystallize in the

creation of the habitus inculcated in a social agent. I show this process in the context of the alternative agriculture movement in Birmingham, Alabama. I argue that residential segregation in specific and spatial arrangements more generally structure the practices of the local food movement in the region, and that the high levels of segregation means that the practices of the local food movement are highly racialized. The framework may be jarring for some since I purposely problematize ideas of structure/agency, conscious/non-conscious motivation, and internally/externally driven practices. I do this because I believe that this way of looking at the world is false and the analysis of data produces artifacts that do not accurately represent reality.   I continue with an analysis of the film *Eating Alabama* by University of Alabama professor Andrew Grace. Using the film and Bourdieuan theory, I discuss how the cultural foundations of the local food movement in Birmingham come from whiteness. In this way, I show both the lack of participation of people of color in the alternative agriculture movement and a cultural reason for this lack of participation. The following theoretical framework is part of Henson and Munsey (submitted for publication).

The framework developed here is particularly germane in forwarding debates in whiteness studies (Duncan & Duncan, 2006; Harris, 1993; Kobayashi & Peake, 2000; Pulido, 2000). Whiteness studies often have the unfortunate quality of giving whites entirely too much agency in controlling the white supremacist system (e.g. McCarthy & Hague, 2004). Far from being a conscious choice weighed by the morality of racial paradigms, white identity and the practices associated with it appear as the appropriate choice to the habitus and related spaces, both of which are produced through the more or less automatic reproduction of white supremacy. Thus, habitus is composed of durable dispositions that are very difficult to transform, and analysts must use caution not to make individual or group accusations and recriminations when assigning blame for racist conditions. My approach accomplishes this task by approaching race in a material, systematic way.

It also adds to the burgeoning literature on whiteness in the alternative agriculture movement (Alkon & McCullen, 2010; Guthman, 2008; Slocum, 2006, 2007). The literature on race, class, and the food movement is varied. Its main aim is to bring ideas of inequality and diversity into the food movement narrative on industrial agriculture. The crux of the arguments, which will be summarized in more detail below, is that while the critique of industrial agriculture is important, the solution, to vote with dollars, is inaccessible to those most harmed by industrial agriculture. Alkon and Ageyman (2011) argue that this should be addressed by focusing on race and class within the food system. The ways that scholars should do this is to focus on a diversity of issues regarding justice, including farmworker's rights, whiteness, cultural foodways, and unequal access to food and the institutional resources to control the one's food system.   The collection of essays they assemble are broad ranging, from black vegetarian identity, to the production of inequality through the built environment, to the story of farmworkers. All said, the work, *Cultivating Food Justice* (2011)*,* outlines a broad movement strategy that encompasses not only critiques of industrial agriculture, but also questions of justice. The only real weakness of the work is that the authors conflate race and class processes, something addressed in this chapter.

Food Justice (2010) by Robert Gottleib and Anupama Joshi craft a work similar to that of Alkon and Agyeman, with a more mainstream focus and more attention paid to

current alternatives. They similarly focus on farmworker's rights, the production of unequal access, but instead of focusing on cultural politics, they argue for different alternatives from farm to school, to community gardens, to food policy councils. They lack an explicit focus on race and class, but they do assert the need to focus on inequality within the food system. The biggest weakness of this work is that it takes food movement initiatives uncritically, giving the view that current interventions are subject to the processes of race and class described by Alkon and Agyeman. Together these two works form the backbone of the food justice literature. The following review is a review of literature relevant to food justice but more directly focused on race.

Rachel Slocum (2006) makes the first major contribution to this literature with her article on anti-racist practice within the local food movement in a 2006 issue of *Antipode*. Anti-racism is the ideology and practice of addressing through popular education, activism, and intellectual inquiry that white supremacy structures all aspects of social life producing benefits for whites and disadvantages for people of color. In it, she uses participant observation and interviews in the alternative agriculture movement in Syracuse, New York to flesh out her theory that whiteness pervades the alternative agriculture movement. She provides statistics noting the dearth of people of color in leadership positions in community food organizations. She goes on to relate her experience with attempting to institutionalize anti-racism within the Community Food Security Coalition and within a local community food organization in Syracuse. Showing whites' resistance to anti-racism, Slocum shows convincingly how anti-racist initiatives are deflected in favor of class and feminist narratives and how whites' discomfort with anti-racism manifests through food movement initiatives.

In a later article, Slocum seems to abandon the anti-racist commitment in favor of a more post-structural understanding of race. In her conclusion, she makes the following arguments.

> Whiteness is an organizing feature of alternative food practice. Race is about the phenotyped body in relation to other bodies and things. Most would argue that because of its historical associations race must be abolished. Some propose instead that race is embodied difference that should be multiplied, not erased. As multiplicity, race can change so that neither whiteness nor brownness results in supremacy or any other familiar, negative association that denies people their complexity and humanity. Being skin, we do not need to erase whiteness and brownness in desire (or in the absence of desire; *race will change through desire or interest or mild curiosity)*. Whiteness, capable of endlessly transforming itself, can change its tendency to reproduce racial oppression (Slocum, 2007: 531-532 my italics).

While Slocum is right to focus on the relationality of race, I disagree with her approach to the transformation of race and the purpose of academic research in that potential social change. First, the line in italics is not historically validated. Race has changed in the United States through structural initiatives like the 13th and 14th Amendments, the Civil Rights Act, and the Voting Rights Act. As I will explore more in depth later in the dissertation, structures serve to train the behaviors of those subjected to those structures, and cultures are a function of one's position in that structure, a position that is determined in relation to others (Bourdieu, 1977, 1979). Race, the social relation and structure, will not change merely because whites desire to be close. In fact, this may serve to reinforce

white supremacy instead of dismantle it. Consider how many times we have heard whites say "I have lots of black friends" and we all know that that means that that person can't be racist because of his/her closeness. Race, the social relation and structure, must be abolished in order to free the proliferation of embodied difference. These differences are differences that white academics cannot and should not prescribe, but leave to everyday people to work out. The task of white anti-racist academics is to destabilize whiteness in order for the proliferation of embodied differences to occur.

Alkon and McCullen argue that farmer's markets are produced culturally by a "liberal, affluent habitus of whiteness" (2010: 940). This habitus produces cultural justifications for the farmer's market that include a white farm imaginary and through whitened community narratives. They argue that the romanticization of yeoman farmers is a specific instance of a whitened history that ignores the history of white exploitation of people of color in the realm of agriculture. They also argue that narratives about who belongs to the community surrounding the farmer's markets reflect a white cultural politics associated with the market. Alkon and McCullen go on to reveal some of the anti-racist practices that are occurring at farmer's markets, though these are generally individual and piecemeal including the presence of farmers of color and the acknowledgement that the market is a white space. They argue, like Slocum, for an anti-racist alternative agriculture movement.

While Alkon and McCullen's article tells us a lot about the alternative agriculture movement, it does not contextualize the movement within the broader city-region. Because of this, it appears that the movement operates in a vacuum, unaffected by broader political economic processes at the metropolitan level. My analysis specifically contextualizes alternative agriculture within historical processes in the region, giving a more clear view of how the alternative agriculture affects these processes and how these processes affect alternative agriculture. Whiteness is not a phenomenon that only affects farmer's markets and local food; it is a part of a larger process of racialization.

Guthman (2008) makes similar arguments and similar omissions to that of Alkon and McCullen. She asserts that farmer's markets and CSA are supported by both the color-blindness and universalism of whiteness. She uses survey data to flesh out a framework arguing that farmer's market and CSA managers believe their initiatives to be race neutral and promoting universal values. She questions these conclusions by showing that discursive statements like "if they only knew (where their food came from)" and "looking the farmer in the eye" reflect a whitened agrarian history that systematically erases the experience of people of color and American agriculture. She specifically argues against Slocum's argument that whites can "bring good food to others," as it is part and parcel to the messianic vision of the white dominated local food movement. However, like Alkon and McCullen, she fails to contextualize the alternative agriculture movement within broader metropolitan political processes.

My theory, whiteness theory-informed, Bourdieuan urban geography, is also relevant to debates within urban geography. Analysts studying urban phenomena as an explanatory paradigm have increasingly used Bourdieu. Ley (2003) used the concept of cultural capital to explain processes of gentrification. Hanquinet et al (2012) use a field analysis approach to show the spatial distribution of cultural attitudes in Brussels, and they draw a relationship between abstract social space and physical space. I extend this literature on Bourdieuan urban geography by showing physical space's importance in

shaping social location, particularly within city-regions that are highly segregated. My result is a whiteness theory-informed urban geography that utilizes Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capitals to understand both the relationality of space and the effect of segregation on that relationality.

Habitus

Franz Fanon (1952) originally developed the notion that racial structures produce mental distortions or pathologies in social agents. Similarly, Bourdieu uses the concept of habitus to make a comparable argument in the context of class. Fanon used the language of middle 20th century psychology and psychiatry, arguing that racial structures produce mental pathologies in black and white people. These pathologies are formed because of the racializing practices of individual social agents. Fanon documents the specific behaviors of his patients, how those behaviors have been inculcated by that patient's position in the social structure, by the practices associated with particular positions within the social structure, and by the interactions between those of different social positions. Unfortunately the theory he used is not appropriate, since Fanon pathologizes homosexuality and interracial sexual relationships. The structure and insights of his argument is profound, but the theory he uses is firmly rooted in mid-twentieth century psychology. Because of this, I use Bourdieuan theory to make many of the same arguments that Fanon made, combining it with spatial theory to argue that racial structures in the United States in general and in Birmingham, Alabama in specific produce the habitus within social agents and that those habitus are spatialized.[1] The social structures that train the habitus are distributed through space. Because of this, one's position in space also, to some degree, reflects one's position in the social structure. The following is the use of Bourdieu, Lefebvre, and Marx/Harvey to evolve Fanon's social theory.

In the simplest terms, habitus is the substrate for agency, enabling and constraining it. Like Chomskian generative grammar, habitus allows for infinite variability from a limited range of options (Bourdieu, 1977). In other words, agency, while enabled and constrained by habitus, is infinitely variable and any attempts to theorize agency places limits on the possible actions of a social agent or agents. Consequently, discussions of agency necessarily lead to essentialism or structural determinism, because certain social locations or identities are seen as connected to certain practices or range of practices. Using the principle of habitus, the agency problem, the problem of connecting social position with behavior, is limited because the potential range of choices is infinite. This is not to say that choice is unstructured, but to say that the system of relations that are internalized by the habitus can be arranged with infinite variability, much like language has infinite variability despite the fact that it has a limited set of options. Habitus is the "deep structure" of human behavior (Chomsky, 2002). In this scenario, agency becomes conceptually superfluous since it is understood that all individuals have an infinite range of choices from a finite generative structure. What is important is to show how the generative structure produces certain structured forms of practice that tend to reproduce that generative structure, though the roots of structured change lie within these spatialized generative structures. With my analysis, practices can only be connected with particular habitus after the fact, i.e. habitus is not predictive, but

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[1] Fanon also spatialized his theory arguing that racial structures are different in different locations

explanatory of behavior. The relationship between habitus and agency is not predictive, but explanatory of a social agent's position with a generative hierarchical structure or space. All choices are structured forms of practice. As Bourdieu notes:

> The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions… as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations… without in any way being the product of obedience to rules… collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72).

Bourdieu's work leads to an analysis of what constitutes the habitus and how it operates. Habitus therefore includes:

1. **Social structure** - "The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment produce habitus" indicate that social structures are internalized in habitus (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). In other words, habitus is produced by social structures and is optimally functional in the social structures that produced it or in those that are very similar.

2. **Dispositional fit** - "Habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions… as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations" means that the habitus both constrains and enables practices and interpretation of those practices (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72; 1979). It also ensures that those practices and interpretation of those practices will be matched to a given environment. A habitus mismatched to the environment can lead to embarrassment, offensiveness, or in drastic scenarios the complete inability to communicate or act in ways appropriate to that environment. For instance, some social agent with a white habitus may find difficulty communicating or producing recognizable practices in a black space without first undergoing some shift away from that white habitus.

3. **Self-perpetuation** - Habitus, produced by the social structure, tends to reproduce that structure in the practices and representations that it produces (Bourdieu, 1977; 1979). This reveals how social structures persist in spite of no conscious effort to perpetuate them (and in some cases, in spite of conscious effort to change them), and how change in those structures depends on the habitus structured by the social structure for transformation. Echoing Polanyi (1944), the roots of change are found in existing social structures. Within any durable system of relations there lies the ability for a social agent to combine those relations in novel ways, producing a novel habitus, thereby promoting transformation in the social structure.

4. **Social location** - Social structures give rise to distributions of economic and cultural capital in a social agent or agents, the specific composition and volume of which determine the social location in a given environment of that social agent (Bourdieu, 1979). Habitus are tied to social location via its production by the social structure. The social structure gives rise to economic and cultural capital that are also internalized in the habitus.

To sum up, habitus, which internalizes social location, is produced by the social structure of a given environment and allows a social agent or agents to produce practices and representations of those practices in ways matched to that environment. Structured

change in these spatialized social structures is produced when a particular social agents combines aspects of the system of relations internalized by the habitus in novel ways, consequently producing incremental shifts in spatialized social structures.   This chapter deals with one aspect of habitus, the durability of spatialized social structures that are produced and reproduced by the habitus. The relationship between habitus and space contains within it both the seeds of durability and change. For instance, someone with a white habitus will reproduce white supremacy in a more or less automatic, non-conscious way. However, within that habitus exist the roots of change if the social agent can find a way to reinterpret whiteness in an anti-racist way, and if that change can become ubiquitous, the social structure itself will transform, i.e. anti-racist whiteness will become automatic. This transformation will be addressed in Chapter 5.

Bourdieu's theory is clear except for one term, environment. What is this environment to which the habitus must be matched? I argue that this environment must be treated as space in Lefebvrian terms, that the production of space is also the production of habitus.

Space

Moments in the production of space must be understood as dialectical moments. According to Harvey in his discussion of dialectics, "each (dialectical) moment is constituted as an internal relation of the others in the flow of social and material life"(1996). In other words, developments or changes in one moment of spatial production immediately effect the other moments, which, in turn, effect the original moment. What emerges is a view of constantly shifting space continually produced and reproduced by social and material flows and processes (Lefebvre, 1974). These processes are governed by dialectical tensions that produce spatialized social structures, resulting in, at times durability and at other times, structured change. I am concerned with two flows, cultural (racial) and economic capital, and two processes producing these flows, economic accumulation and racial isolation, though these flows and processes must not be seen as a comprehensive set of social flows and processes. Gender, religion, sexuality, and so on all represent social flows that produce and are produced by space.   Of the two processes implied by processes of economic accumulation and racial isolation, the production of surplus value or accumulation is very well known (Harvey, 2006; Marx, 1976), while the outlines of a structure of racial production is less systematized. By racial production, I mean the creation and maintenance of hierarchies based on physical appearance, the most common being skin color. These hierarchies govern access to and control over a specific type of cultural capital that I call racial capital. This racial capital is tradable for benefits in a wide range of situations from employment to dating to education. Because of this, people of color are systematically excluded from important resources in very profound, yet subtle ways. For instance, whites can almost always be assured of being represented in media or of being in groups of people that look like them (McIntosh, 1990).
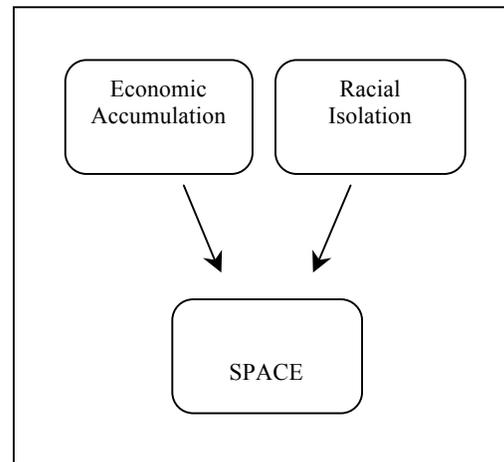
The following discussion of uneven development and racialization is a bit of a digression, but it is necessary to set the context in which racialization and capital accumulation operate within Birmingham and the alternative food and agriculture movement. The process of racial isolation constitutes spaces necessary for the production and reproduction of race, defined as an uneven social relation between whites and non-whites. The distinguishing feature of these black urban spaces (my research deals exclusively with the black/white paradigm) is their isolation from processes, which control the distribution of resources in a particular geographic area. In contrast, the distinguishing feature of white urban spaces is their intertwining with processes of power and privilege. The two institutions, constituted out of racial and class processes, responsible for this isolation are the penal state (Alexander, 2010; Gilmore, 2007; Wacquant, 2004, 2000) and the ghetto (Massey & Denton, 1993; Wacquant, 2004; 2000). The following analysis shows how racial isolation constitutes spaces and how those processes are manifest through the creation of a food policy council. The spatial arrangements resulting from this movement lay the foundation for current movements, the local food movement being addressed with my research.

The roots of racial isolation through residential segregation, or ghetto conditions, lie in restrictive covenants, redlining, and violence by whites and emerged during the 1920s and 1930s when black migration to the North intensified. After the legal fortifications that created the ghetto were ruled unconstitutional, the ghetto was and is perpetuated by market relations wielded by whites. For Wacquant (2000, p. 383) he ghetto is a:

> distinct space, containing an ethnically homogenous population, which finds itself forced to develop within a set of interlinked institutions that duplicates the organizational framework of the broader society from which that group is banished and supplies the scaffolding for the construction of its specific 'style of life' and social strategies. This parallel institutional nexus affords the subordinate group a measure of protection, autonomy, and dignity, but at the cost of locking it in a relationship of structural subordination and dependency.
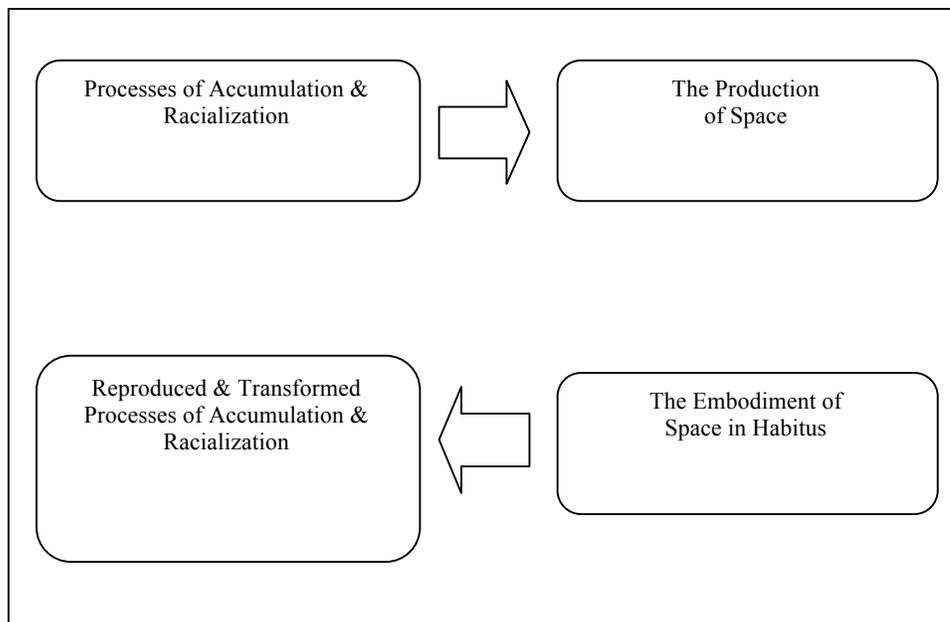
Isolation works in tandem with processes of accumulation.   Isolation in ghettos prevents many blacks from establishing robust ties to economic and governmental institutions, leading to cycles of poverty. This poverty means that ghettos offer little market for capitalist accumulation, leading capitalists to invest elsewhere. Disinvestment in the ghetto leads to further isolation from economic and governmental institutions, perpetuating the cycle. Black spaces, therefore, emerge from (shrinking) flows of economic capital and flows of cultural (racial) capital increasingly illegible in dominant spaces. Economic accumulation and racial isolation produce these flows.

Not only do social processes produce space, they also produce capitals associated with that space. Racial isolation produces racial capital and economic accumulation produces economic capital. The specific levels of racial and economic capital in a particular social agent give that agent a social location or positionality within a given space. Thus, processes of economic accumulation and racial isolation produce spaces and distribute social locations within those spaces. A social agent who is racialized in a particular way has a certain social position in a given produced space. A person racialized black has a particular social location in a white space that is different, though

not necessarily unequal, from the social location of that same person within a differently racialized space, such as a black space.

The production of the ghetto adds the process of isolation to processes of differentiation and equalization. For Neil Smith (2008), uneven geographic development is a function of the latter two, both of which are integral to accumulation. Capitalists in their search for increased profit either transform the technological mix or seek spatial relationships more favorable to increased accumulation, such as siting a manufacturing plant close to a transportation hub. However, as capitalists struggle over these advantages they tend to disappear as competition erases the gains of differentiation; this is equalization. Racial isolation acts as a market signal, mainly articulated through land value, selecting for certain forms of differentiation such as investment in polluting industries and selecting against high-value industries such as biotechnology (Pulido, 2000). This means that when differentiation guides investment to communities of color, that investment tends to harm those communities. Selective investment and poverty tend to reinforce isolation and within ghetto neighborhoods, equalization tends to further concentrate poverty through coercive competition among neighborhood residents.

In summary, the processes of racialization and economic accumulation initiate spatial production that inculcates habitus in a social agent or agents. The habitus, a set of dispositions that produces practices and representations of the practices of social agents, produces space through the practices and representations of those practices that it creates. Habitus, produced in the process of spatial production, constitutes, reconstitutes, and sometimes transforms processes of racialization and accumulation, perpetuating the production of space. This process can be abbreviated in the following way:

Processes of Accumulation & Racialization	→	The Production of Space
Reproduced & Transformed Processes of Accumulation & Racialization	←	The Embodiment of Space in Habitus

The combination of racialization or racial isolation and capital accumulation tends to produce durable, stable spaces. These spaces instill consistent habitus in the social agents that come from those spaces. Because of this, the non- or partly conscious interactions of these social agents are structured by the spaces that produced the habitus. The structured interactions occur naturally to social agents, though they may be aware of

the consequences of those interactions. The following analysis documents these structured interactions within the alternative food and agriculture movement's attempt to create a food policy council. While the creation of the council establishes a new institution, the process by which it was formed reproduced the spatialized social structure internalized in the habitus in a way that was more or less unchanged. In other words, the production of a new institution reproduced racial and class-based social positions.

The Birmingham-Jefferson Food Policy Council

The current spatial context with an enfranchised, but poor black population centered in Birmingham, and a white, wealthy population that dominates the downtown business district (see chapter 4) structures the emergence and development of the local food movement over the past ten years. The beginnings of this movement are found in Reynolds's Urban Farm, which has been in operation as a 501(c)3 since 2001. Though the organization frames itself as a community organization, its focus is production and education and has very few programs extending heavily into the community, despite the fact that the new (2012) executive director has stated that he aims to change this. Pepper Place Farmer's Market, also on the northeast side of downtown Birmingham, bills itself as a local food outlet and is oriented toward serving customers from "over the mountain," as it is called in Birmingham, meaning the white, wealthier sections of the region. The atmosphere is swank with music and chef's demonstrations, and the prices are high. Still, it provides an important outlet for local farmers who would otherwise have few. The political stance of these two organizations and other aligned organizations is moderate and apolitical and focuses on interventions that will not upset nor off-put their organizational base - middle class and wealthy white consumers and donors.

The local food movement is deeply racialized and this became manifest through recent interventions to create a food policy council. The move to create the council began five years ago with the creation of Birmingham Food Group, an informal organization populated by local food activists and food and health related organizations that evolved to include larger food and health-based organizations, eventually being subsumed by the Health Action Partnership. In 2009 and 2010, members of BFG, specifically those members affiliated with the Health Action Partnership, received two large grants, one called "Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities," and the other called "Communities Putting Prevention to Work," from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Department of Health and Human Services, respectively. The lead agency on the first grant is the Helping Hands, Inc., and the second grant is the Jefferson County Department of Health. The CPPW grant funded 25 member organizations of the Health Action Partnership, a group of 100 organizations that address a wide range of health issues. Part of the money from the latter grant was used by Birmingham Friends of Food, an organization jointly managed by Reynold's Urban Farm and Harvest for the Poor (both white dominated organizations), for the creation of a food policy council, and this process has revealed the stark divides along racial lines.

The process began with BFF convening a committee to develop a food charter that would lay the ideological foundations of the movement and the food policy council. The committee brought together activists, health professionals, academics, and urban farmers to frame the message and was notable for its lack of people of color. Of the 30-40 participants, only about five were people of color, striking in a city that is 73% percent black (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Furthermore, almost all of the participants were

college-educated professionals and the meetings were held during the day on weekdays. The language used was technical and focused on how to package food movement ideology, broadly being the importance of local food and farmers and on health, specifically childhood obesity, in ways palatable to middle and upper class whites. Convening committee participants repeatedly asserted the need for the right "messaging" during the food charter meetings.

       Many of the participants in the creation of the food policy council recognize the process's shortcomings in regards to diversity, but struggle to develop solutions. This is apparent in the makeup of the council, chosen by a committee chosen by BFF in December of 2011. Of the 21 members, only five are people of color and the working class is not represented. Notably, it lacks any representation from either black churches or the neighborhood associations, the institutional home of the black community in Birmingham. Though the council's stated focus is on food deserts, the habitus represented by the council is overwhelmingly white and economically privileged. Organizers of the council understand that the council lacks diversity. As one facilitator commented,

> ...but I'm really excited to see this diversity around the table, a different type of diversity... First and foremost, we've really tried to have diversity at the table, that is diverse representation of our community. So, we've worked hard to have the business voice at the table (Swant, 2011, p. 3D).

The quote is telling because it shows an implied recognition of the lack of class and racial diversity with the statement "a different type of diversity," and that the Birmingham-Jefferson Food Policy Council has essentially a diversity of business, government, and non-profit professionals. It is a council of elites.

       Mark Hassan (pseudonym) is one of the few blacks who participated in the food charter development and is a member of the food policy council. He stated that he felt his participation was tokenized, that is, that his involvement was desired only because of his status as a person of color. This reveals, not the racially insensitive intent of the group's organizers, but the incoherence of black racial capital (blackness) in white spaces.

       The combination of isolation and disaccumulation leads to the creation of racial capitals, a form of cultural capital. White racial capital (whiteness) is universally legible and can be wielded in almost all spaces for benefits. Black (or non-white, but this research deals with the black/white paradigm) racial capital (blackness) is legible only in black spaces, but can be exchanged for benefits in white spaces by fulfilling a role appropriate for blackness in those spaces. Tokenism is the most obvious manifestation of this phenomenon in which blackness is legible and tradable in a white space solely for the quality of being black. In this situation, otherness is available to a particular social agent to gain the some of the benefits of the mainstream or whiteness. Similarly, affirmative action formalizes the field (the social space created by struggles over power and position) for black racial capital within a universalized field for white racial capital (Bourdieu, Distinction, 1979). Whites perceive this formalized market for black racial capital as exclusionary because the market for white racial capital is universalized and therefore appears as normal or default.

       Black and white social agents bring to the field created by the process of developing a food policy council the habitus that are forged in black and white spaces.

Since the organizers and majority of participants in the BFG are white, sporting habitus forged in white spaces, the field created by the food policy council process is also racialized white, and for blacks to participate in that field, they must make black racial capital legible in a field that is incongruent. The blacks participating in the food policy council process are therefore forced to wield blackness in their favor, to use tokenism to influence the process forming the council. This means that while their opinions may be perceived as valid, they are not perceived as universally valid, but as valid from a black perspective, i.e. they speak for blacks. The consequence of high levels of spatial segregation is that habitus producing and produced by segregated spaces, has difficulty producing actions and classifications of those actions appropriate to spaces in which it was not produced. Simply, blacks have difficulty acting in ways appropriate to white spaces because of the high level of segregation of space – in Jefferson County, space is not diverse, it is black or white.

   Bourdieu argues that:

   "spatial organization… governs practices and representations… and thereby contributes to the durable imposition of schemes (habitus) of perception, thought, and action, it is necessary to grasp the dialectic of objectification (of schemes in space) and embodiment (of schemes). (parentheticals added, Bourdieu, 1977, p. 90).

   From this, the habitus appears to be in a dialectical relationship with space, echoing Soja's socio-spatial dialectic (Soja, 2010). Spaces produced by isolation and disaccumulation can be understood to produce a habitus that embodies an adaptation to those spatial characteristics. Massey and Denton (1993) call this adaptation "oppositional" and West (1994) calls it "nihilism," meaning that spaces organized by flows designed to isolate and exclude produce in social agents dispositions incongruent with dominant spaces – isolation and disaccumulation inculcate dispositions that tend to reinforce isolation and disaccumulation. Habitus is simply embodied space, and space is the objectification of the relationships internalized by the habitus. The necessity for blacks to possess dispositions congruent with both black and white spaces, or to put another way, to have the ability to wield black racial capital in both white and black spaces is what Du Bois (1903) termed double consciousness, and suggests that blacks have, from the beginning, been multicultural, or as West would say, multicontextual (2010), and in my words, multi-spatial.

Eating Alabama: The White Farm Imaginary

   There are many other examples of the lack of participation by blacks in Birmingham's alternative agriculture movement. Birmingham Food Group, an advocacy program focused on hunger, routinely has only one black participate in their proceedings. The Health Action Partnership meetings lack a presence of people of color, though they have recently moved to try to better include blacks. Freshworks, an event held by Reynolds's Urban Farm, was overwhelmingly white despite the organization's proximity to a black community. However, I want to depart from participation to discuss how the movement is culturally white by doing an analysis of the film *Eating Alabama,* produced and directed by University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa professor Andrew Grace.

   Bourdieu tells us that "art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfill a social function of legitimating social differences" (1979, p. 7). By this Bourdieu means that the spaces produced by social process also

give rise to cultural products that are matched to those spaces. The artist's habitus, consciously or non-consciously, produces works that can be perceived as legitimate by the culture of those spaces. Grace has produced a cultural product that is legitimate by the standards of white spaces, which tend to be embodied by the alternative agriculture movement in Birmingham. He has done this by deploying what Alkon and McCullen (2010) have called the white farm imaginary.

> For many customers in farmer's markets we study, the markets are more than just a place to procure food. Customers are motivated to shop at farmer's markets by ethical imperatives to 'support your local farmer' or 'buy directly from the people who grow food.' Such phrases are common not only in the everyday conversations of market shoppers, but in the work of food writers and celebrity chefs that has made alternative agriculture so increasingly popular. In this section, we argue that these common slogans produce what we call a white farm imaginary. This imagery romanticizes and universalizes an agrarian narrative specific to whites while masking the contributions and struggles of people of color in food production (see also Sackman 2005).

> The white farm imaginary holds that small-scale, yeoman farmer as an American agricultural icon. Only whites, however, were historically able to farm this way. This imaginary ignores the justification of Native American displacement by white homesteaders, the enslavement of African Americans, the masses of underpaid Asian immigrants who worked California's first factory farms, and the mostly Mexican farm laborers who harvest the majority of food grown in the USA today (Allen 2004: Guthman 2008b). Therefore, it is quite possible that the romantic notions of yeoman farmers and rural culture do not resonate with many people of color whose collective history recalls the racism and classism of America's agricultural past and present."

Eating Alabama played in front of sold out crowd of 2500 almost exclusively white people in downtown Birmingham during the Sidewalk Film Festival on August 25, 2012. It was sponsored by Freshfully, a local foods grocery store; members of Freshfully wore and sold "Who's Your Farmer" t-shirts at the event, and the film won the Alan Hunter Best Alabama Film Award (Roberts, 2012). An almost all white crowd of approximately 125 people screened *Eating Alabama* at the Birmingham Public Library on September 13 of the same year. A black neighborhood association president who attended the screening stated that "there were about 7 black people in the audience and 3 worked (at the Birmingham Public Library)." Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network characterized Andrew Grace as "our friend" when advertising for the film at Sidewalk. The film was generally well received especially within the alternative agriculture movement where it acts as a sort of anthem.

Grace clearly plays on the white farm imaginary. The arc of the story is that Grace and his wife were going to document eating only Alabama food for a year. He couches this in a romanticized notion of the agrarian ideal stating that he has an "image of Alabama – a rural place living a rural ideal" and asking questions like "How did we get so far away from the land?" and that he was going to try to "eat like his grand parents." He wonders aloud if "we could go back to a simpler way of life?" As the movie progresses Grace states his reservations as to whether this romanticized past can be realistic in the present, but he never strays far from language and imagery that

romanticizes the small family farmer. He states later in the movie that, though he has these reservations, he "feels like we're finding something that's been lost" and that they are "getting back to something old and tried and true."

While Grace stops short of a wholesale endorsement of the white farm imaginary – he leaves it up to the viewer to determine whether this is realistic or not - the film is clearly founded on romanticized notions of an agrarian past and an idealization of yeoman farmers. The film had one black farmer portrayed in it and, by Grace's own admission, lacked narratives from black farmers and black experience. There was no talk of the Civil Rights Movement in a film on the history of Alabama, Tuskegee University, which has been aiding small farmers for over 100 years, Alabama A&M University, the 1890 Land Grant Institution in Alabama, or the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, a black-run cooperative farming organization that grew out of the Civil Rights Movement. As the neighborhood association president pointed out, "if (Grace) had gotten out of his own narrow conception of farming, he might have had an easier time (eating Alabama food)." By this she means, that if Grace had included black farmers in his project, he would have had more options in eating Alabama food for a year.

Eating Alabama is a cultural product that serves to reinforce already existing distinctions within Birmingham's alternative agricultural movement. Its use of cultural memes that resonate with whites buttress and utilizes differences in race and culture prominent in Birmingham. The work is a culturally legitimate product that white people recognize because of the spaces in which their habitus was trained. Whites recognize what they know, and the white farm imaginary, the romanticization of the white yeoman farmer, resonates with their cultural understanding of farming. The following quote from Grace's response to my blog criticizing the film for the lack of inclusion of people of color and their perspective is telling:

> Could racial injustice have found its way into the movie in a more significant way? Probably. But every time I tried to go that route I found myself feeling guilty that my only reason for including the storyline was to placate a critic whose knee jerk reaction to stories from the South is that they must primarily deal with issues of race and injustice.

While Grace acknowledges the importance of racial justice, he produces a cultural product that purposely omits it, mostly because, as he claims that it was a story about he and his family. This is true, but it is also a film about "food, community, and heritage" (Roberts, 2012). The heritage presented here is one of a whitened rendering of history that reverberates well with his audience, and he wants to construct a narrative that has erased any history of racial injustice. Grace omitted black narratives, consciously or not, because he didn't perceive his audience to include blacks, who would have championed his inclusion of racial injustice and/or because he had no idea how to tackle the topic of race in his film. His habitus prevented him from talking about black farmers because his film is a work of art – it serves the social function of reinforcing differences and because it comes from a social agent who is specifically positioned within the alternative food and agriculture movement as one of it's champions. The relationship between the film, the cultural context that produced it (the alternative agriculture movement in Alabama), and the habitus of the director and his audience displays a powerful strain of deeply embedded whiteness that permeates throughout the alternative agriculture movement.

Members of the alternative agriculture movement in Birmingham have recognized

the dearth of people of color participating in their organizations, meetings, and events, and are beginning to make moves to address this lack. But when a movie like *Eating Alabama* appears to so much fanfare among folks in the movement, one can't help but wonder why blacks would want to participate in white institutions and organizations. Maybe this is a backward equation. Black institutions, like Tuskegee and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, have much more experience and a clearer, more proven vision (cooperatives) for dealing with the small farm in crisis. Instead of creating institutions and organizations and then inviting blacks to join, particularly when the culture associated with those institutions and organizations ignores the contributions of blacks to small farming throughout history, whites should seek to learn from blacks about methods of organizing farming and community, aid them when possible, and take those lessons back to white communities and try to implement them there. The black strategy is the practice and process of commoning, which will be addressed in chapter 5. The other option is to create diverse institutions and organizations from the beginning, and while diversity by itself is not enough – it needs anti-racism – it would be a good place to start.

Conclusion

Much has been written about whiteness in the local food movement, and it focuses almost exclusively on how the movement is racialized white, preventing the participation of people of color. In this chapter, I extend this argument to contextualize alternative agriculture within processes at the city-region level. I show how the space of the city-region is segregated, that is to say, divided racially. This divided space is important for producing social locations that in turn produce habitus. Habitus, a set of dispositions that allow a social agent to produce classifiable practices and classifications of those practices, becomes incongruent when black and white habitus are forged in segregated spaces. The production of the ghetto and its spatial twin, suburbia, prevent collaboration within the local food movement because the practices deemed acceptable by the dominant faction of the local food movement, whites, are different from the practices deemed acceptable by the dominated faction of the local food movement. This collaboration is further prevented by differences in the cultural understanding of farming between whites and people of color, evidenced by the film *Eating Alabama,* a film founded on the white farm imaginary. Segregation and accumulation, combined with real differences in culture, create a formidable barrier between whites and blacks in Birmingham, generally, but specifically within the alternative agriculture movement.

The theoretical framework developed here is broadly applicable to larger metro areas with high levels of segregation. This spatialized theory could also work at the state level in states like Alabama, where blacks dominate the Black Belt and Jefferson County, while whites dominate in other areas. These spaces are also hierarchical because black spaces face the most deprivation. It is also unlikely that this framework could be used at the national scale because though people of color are concentrated in city-regions, those areas also tend to be the wealthiest. I would argue, however, that the framework is most useful in looking at segregated cities.

Chapter 4: Playground Birmingham

I am less reluctant about critiquing powerful actors involved in the transformation of downtown Birmingham. From my position as dissident bourgeoisie, I find this to be part and parcel of my activism and mission. The people who are benefitting from this transformation are overwhelmingly economically and racially privileged, and they have no qualms about promoting themselves as the saviors of Birmingham. In fact, with the exception maybe one other activist, the gentrification of downtown Birmingham has gone virtually unquestioned. The triumphalist rhetoric of economic development organizations, the business community, and the city is not tempered in the least by the fact that this transformation has almost solely benefited white people. Furthermore, growth machine actors have borrowed the language of environmentalism, health, and the food movement to justify this transformation.

While I believe that both growth machine actors and members of the alternative food and agriculture movement lack self-critical abilities, at least the alternative food and agriculture movement has some inkling of social justice, e.g. ending health disparities. Those promoting the transformation of downtown are looking to turn it into a playground for the purposes of making money. I find those intentions easier to critique than those of the well-meant, if somewhat misguided, intentions of the alternative food and agriculture movement.

What is more troubling is the complete lack of critics in the Birmingham metro area, aside from the ones that Magic City Agriculture Project is cultivating. Any region that claims to want to attract young, vibrant professionals must also embrace its critics if it wants to have a robust, democratic public dialogue. Maybe it is my style and maybe it is my content, but I have been repeatedly met with anger and derision for even the thought of questioning the status quo in the area. I genuinely hope that this dissertation will light the fire under other critics who can push the conversation onto grounds more amenable to justice. Though I do have a few like-minded friends and activists, a group that is growing in the ranks, my activism has been a very lonely endeavor. Discussions that I raise often are me against five or six other people, with very few taking my side, even the most basic level. While I really value the activist community in Birmingham, it would be better if all of us were a little louder.

Racial and class social structures are spatialized in Birmingham. Harvey (1989) argues that residential differentiation is a function of class structures, and that "secondary" differentiation occurs because of residual structures such as feudalism or race. The argument made here is that three separate processes intertwine to produce uneven development in the Birmingham region. Importantly, racial processes are not subordinated to economic processes in this framework, but work alongside them, at points undermining them and at points reinforcing them. The three processes are equalization, differentiation, and racialization or racial isolation.

To review my theoretical framework so far, I know that space is produced via social processes. Underpinning this theoretical framework is a dialectical ontology that understands the world to be produced and reproduced by social processes and flows (Harvey, 1996). The three processes in which I am interested are commoning, economic accumulation and racial isolation, or simply racialization. These articulate to produce the racialized space of Birmingham, Alabama documented in the chapter 2. This space can

be analyzed using a modification of the Lefebvrian (1974) framework of three dialectical moments. These moments are the organization of power, legitimate culture, and social practice. These racialized spaces are then internalized in the habitus of specific social agents, both enabling and limiting practice. The latter was documented in the analysis of the food policy council process in chapter 3. In this chapter, I hone in on processes of accumulation that are aided by racialization in contrast to the last chapter in which processes of racialization are aided by accumulation.

Spaces for accumulation must be produced in order for accumulation to proceed. In other words it is not as simple as finding a place with low labor costs and investing there. A whole host of spaces must be produced so that capital accumulation can proceed. In order for a particular space, such as a city, to be ripe for investment it must meet a few criteria.

1. The city must be geographically located on international trading routes. This means it must have a major dock, railway terminal, or airport. The interstate highway system must enhance traffic flow and not impede it. And it must market itself in a way that is attractive not only to investors, but also to the high end of the labor pool such as doctors, athletes, lawyers, and researchers.
2. The city must have a quiescent and relatively low paid labor pool. Labor unrest and civil strife, as is evident in Birmingham, are red flags for international investors. The civil strife in Birmingham, and the lack of any real resolution or reconciliation, has placed the city in an unenviable economic position for the last 50 years.
3. The city must have a robust and functioning infrastructure. High utility cost, corruption or bankruptcy among municipalities and water, sewage, transportation, electricity or other problems will cut into the profits of potential investors. New firms need to utilize low costs of relocating meaning that municipalities must subsidize new infrastructure development. Jefferson County's recent bankruptcy is a very bad omen for attracting investors to the region, since the likelihood of the county selling debt for infrastructure has plummeted.
4. Cities need an organized civil society focused on economic growth. Churches, non-profits, chambers of commerce, newspapers, and other civil society organizations must rally around the cause of growth. This places anyone questioning the dominant economic logic far outside the mainstream, and frames them as both anti-city and anti-growth.
5. Competitive cities must provide incentives for firms to locate in their region. This means that cities must have both a large tax base at their disposal and the ability to sell debt. It also means that politicians must sell development plans to tax payers by promising jobs, amenities, quality-of-life improvements, and consumer options, promises which are unlikely to be met over the course of the new development. Politicians must also tax the right people. In other words, the tax structure must be such that new firms will be paying little while existing residents pay the lion's share.

Space must first be produced in such a way that enables capital accumulation. Space must be arranged in the following way in order for this accumulation to occur.

1. **Organization of power** – government, civil society, and business organizations and institutions must form a cohesive coalition that promotes

economic growth. This is what Logan and Molotch (1988) described as growth machine politics, arguing that cities are more or less operated by coalitions for promoting growth.

2. **Legitimate culture** – artists, activists, and even business and church leaders promote a culture that reinforces economic growth. This legitimate culture can sometimes be odd, as it has emerged around ideas of health, lifestyle, and environmentalism in Birmingham, Alabama. The legitimate culture can range from anything from fandom of a sports team, to the history of the city-region, to celebrity and fame.

3. **Social practice** – involves participating in the promotion and execution of development projects in the city-region. Shopping, going to parks, and eating at trendy restaurants are the type of practice that produce space in ways favorable to increased effective demand and growth. Also employment at firms, traveling and usage of the produced infrastructure, along with conspicuous consumption all produce spaces of accumulation.

The processes of differentiation and equalization documented in Chapter 2 produce spaces amenable to accumulation. Within a city, there are areas of uneven development, when local investors avoid a particular neighborhood and invest in a particular region of the city, uneven development occurs intraurbanly. Pivotal in this process is the process of racialization.

Many authors have attempted to racialize Marxist theory. Two of the most prominent are W.E.B. Du Bois (1935) with *Black Reconstruction in America* and Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007) with *Golden Gulag.* Each approaches the racialization of Marxism from a different perspective, Du Bois from the point of view of labor and Gilmore from the point of view of uneven development. Du Bois's argument is that the Civil War was a revolution of the black laborer in the South, and Gilmore's argues that capitalists look to invest surplus capital into the racialized prison system. Both will show how capital accumulation and racialization often articulate to produce spaces of exclusion and oppression. This informs my approach, which focuses more explicitly on how those processes work in Birmingham. I will explicate Du Bois's arguments first.

Du Bois argues that the wholesale abandonment by slaves of plantations to join the ranks of the union army was essentially a general strike and that the bravery of former slaves during that fight turned the tide of the Civil War. Indeed, Du Bois argues, the prospects that the South would have to arm its slaves to stem the tide of the ranks of the Union army, swollen by the Emancipation Proclamation, led to Lee's decision to surrender in 1865. Freedmen and escaped slaves turned the war in favor of the Union.

After the war, the nation turned to reconstruction. Du Bois argues that the Freedman's Bureau and the reconstruction administration constituted a dictatorship of the proletariat, since the main goal of these organizations was to reconstitute the union with a drastically diminished power for the Southern aristocracy, who were attempting to reconstruct slavery with black codes. The way forward in undermining planter power was to enfranchise blacks, to provide education to all poor people, and to provide land to blacks. In other words, augmenting the power of labor was the only way to ensure a stable union.

Unfortunately, this idea was never realized. Northern capitalists who were the money power behind the Republican Party removed their support for reconstruction and

the military occupation of the South ended in 1876. Moreover, no alliances between black and white labor materialized that could challenge the power of Northern capitalists. This was because of the outright exclusion of blacks from major labor unions, though blacks created their own. Instead of seeing them as potential allies and creating a working class democracy, whites saw blacks as labor competition and kept them out of their unions. With the failure of reconstruction, white supremacy reconstituted itself by dividing the working class. The revolution created by black labor in the South was only partially successful.

Gilmore (2007) argues that the dramatic increase in prisons in California was not the result of increases in criminal activity, but an attempt to mop up surpluses in land, labor, capital, and state capacity. She argues that investors saw an opportunity to profit from the expansion of the penal state, while the state saw an opportunity to bring new industry to rural areas. This is classic uneven development, where profits dry up at the city level and investors look to other less heavily invested areas to profit. This is the differentiation side of uneven development.

However, there is an implicitly racial aspect to this strategy. Politicians promote these prisons as necessary in order to deal with crime. Crime rates were not rising but the mode of punishment was changing, to the benefit of those investing in prisons. Punishments were becoming more punitive with mandatory minimum sentences and three strikes laws, leading to higher levels of incarceration. These laws are enforced disproportionately on people of color and the racialization of crime makes increased incarceration and the expansion of the prison system palatable to (mostly white) voters. The effect of racialization on the political economy of California was to provide implicit justification for the expansion of prisons and particularly for profiting off prisons.

Much has been said about private prison, but Gilmore's book shows that the Marxist analysis also works with public prisons. Investors still need something in which to invest, and as long as it is stable and profitable, it matters not whether it is through operating a private prison or merely investing in public prisons. In fact, where one begins and the other ends is quite unclear. Private prisons still use tax dollars and public debt to finance them, much the same way as public prisons, and, for investors, there is still the motivation to keep either type of prison full in order to maintain profits, though it is certainly more explicit with private prisons (private prison companies are paid by the inmate). Ultimately, what is important is that the prison system emerges from a series of processes, the two most prominent being capital and race.

These two authors show how the processes of capital and race are often intertwined. In the following analysis, I will show how racialization of a particular space in Birmingham works to either make some spaces amenable to certain types of investment and other spaces amenable to other types of investment. Racialization produces spaces that lead to particular species of differentiation and equalization. For instance, a black space will attract investment in polluting industries, while a white space will attract high value, consumption side development (Boer et al, 2000; Pulido, 2000).

Pulido (2000, p. 12) argues that "whites have secured relatively cleaner environments by moving away from older industrial cores via suburbanization," pointing out that the process of racialization of inner cities has been created and perpetuated by white flight. We (Henson & Munsey, submitted for publication) have uncovered a similar situation in Birmingham in which the white reaction to the Civil Rights Movement was to flee

Birmingham in favor of the suburbs, racializing the suburbs white and Birmingham black. White flight combined with deindustrialization (differentiation) has put Birmingham in a position of having high levels of poverty and a high degree of segregation.

In the past ten years, however, capital has begun flowing back into the city through consumption-side development through the means of gentrification of the central city. According to Neil Smith (1996), gentrification is the process by which capitalists exploit the gap between ground rent and potential ground rent. Actual ground rent is the amount paid to a landowner for use of a particular property, while potential ground rent is the amount that could be paid on a piece of property should it be developed. Urban pioneers who move into a new neighborhood and transform it into a trendy place aid this process. Birmingham has gone through two phases of differentiation, equalization, and racialization. The first is white flight, which was differentiation and racialization. As the profits gained through white flight equalized, the second process began, the differentiation to downtown and connected racialization of downtown as a white space through gentrification. Importantly, racialization acts through land value as a market signal, attracting certain forms of low value and polluting developments to communities of color, and attracting high value, consumption side development to white communities.

Gentrification has undergone three waves in transition from local piece meal gentrification to a strategy for increasing the global competitiveness of cities (Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Smith, 2002). The first wave began in the late 50s and early 60s in the U.S., in which real estate speculators exploited low property values and urban renewal to augment profits. The second wave occurred when markets began to revive after the 1970 recession. This wave was more widespread, but was still directed mainly by market forces. In the third wave gentrification becomes generalized as a global urban strategy as cities replace the liberal welfare state with neoliberal urban development.

Gentrification has also been explained via two, often competing, paradigms. Marxists argue that developers, real estate companies and more recently the local state lead gentrification, while liberal theorists argue that consumer choice is the driving force behind gentrification (Hammett, 1991; Ley, 2003; Smith, 1996). In actuality these approaches are complimentary and deserve to be forged in synthesis, something Ley (2003) has attempted using Bourdieu.

He argues that gentrification represents a field through which struggles over status are fought. Artists, in his formulation, attempt to reshape the discarded space of the inner city into a unique aesthetic. This process continues in which the aesthetic that artists create is co-opted by developers and real estate agents thereby producing the inner city as a valuable commodity. The struggle between artists, the dominated faction of the bourgeois and those high in cultural capital, and developers and real estate magnates, the dominant faction of the bourgeois and those highest in economic capital, thereby creates the field of gentrification. Though artists may have an anti-bourgeoisie perspective, their cultural capital still contributes to the creation of gentrification.

However, Ley does not take his synthesis far enough in locating the etiology of cultural and economic capital. Bourdieu's (2005; 1979; 1977) framework is fairly simple. Social structures give rise to economic and cultural capital of which the specific composition and levels give a particular social agent a social location or position. That position produces in that social agent's habitus, a set of dispositions that give a social

agent the ability to produce classifiable practices and classifications of practices. Through practices produced by the habitus, social structures are transformed and reproduced.

Though Bourdieu does not explicitly spatialize his work, he implies that the process is spatialized:

> spatial organization… governs practices and representations… and thereby contributes to the durable imposition of schemes (habitus) of perception, thought, and action (*parentheticals added* Bourdieu, 1977, p. 90).

Spatialized social structures (organization of power, practice, and legitimate culture) produce economic and cultural capital in social agents, which give rise to habitus. Habitus reproduces that space. Gentrification, within this framework, can be seen as a respatialization of social structures giving rise to habitus to which the preference for downtown living, walkability, and proximity to amenities can be seen as a social practice and legitimate culture. These desires emerge in conjunction with structural economic changes described by Marxists. Developers and gentrifiers work in unacknowledged concert to reproduce space in ways that facilitate accumulation. They do this because the habitus of the social location spur and enable the transformation of inner city space. Most gentrifiers in the Birmingham area come from Jefferson County, meaning that they likely come from suburban communities (Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc., 2004). The move in physical space from the suburbs to downtown produces different practices, but these practices do not transform social positions, it merely partially eliminates black space and overlays white space.

Gentrification

Mayor William Bell, who is black, recently gave an interview to my friend Mark Kelly, publisher of alternative weekly, Weld for Birmingham. The wide-ranging interview concludes with a question about Bell's legacy. Bell's answer revealed some telling clues about the direction that urban development is taking in the city.

> One of the biggest conflicts that has existed, and that I hope we're making progress in eliminating, is between the corporate community and the neighborhoods. Oftentimes in the past, what was seen as good for the corporate community was seen as a negative in the neighborhood, and vice versa. Through a couple of our programs, I've been trying to bring those two elements together, to promote the understanding that to have good neighborhoods, we have to build our corporate tax base. Likewise, to attract good corporations and to have their employees live in the city, we need strong neighborhoods that are attractive to a broad base of people and income levels. That's the legacy that I hope I can leave to whoever follows in my footsteps (quoted in Kelly, 2012).

The conflict between the "corporate community" and "the neighborhoods" is a euphemism for racial conflict. According to the Birmingham Business Journal, the largest black-owned employer is Falls Janitorial Service, Incorporated with 80 employees. Compare that to the largest private employer in the city, Regions Financial Corporation, with 6000 employees (2011). The so-called "corporate community" represents whites, while the neighborhoods, in a city that is 73% black, represent blacks. The formal representation of the neighborhoods, the Citizen's Advisory Board, is perceived as a black institution. While it may not be explicit, there is an implied, if thinly veiled, racial conflict between "the neighborhoods" and "the corporate community."

What is quite striking about Bell's statement is that it reveals a corporate centric urban development strategy. First, he notes that increased corporate profitability, and therefore an increased tax base is good for the city, no surprise there, coming from a mayor. But then he goes on to suggest that neighborhoods should be remade in a way that will attract corporate employees to live in those neighborhoods. Given that Birmingham's primary employer is the University of Alabama, Birmingham, a medical school and that healthcare and health-related professions are the primary industry, it is more than likely that those new residents will be white professionals. The data bear out that this type of thinking about urbanity attracts primarily whites. I will explicate this later in the chapter. Probably, the most disturbing part of Bell's self-described legacy is that Bell shows no desire to shape urban development in a way that will benefit the people, mostly black, who are already there. It's municipal trickle-down economics where the goal is to attract wealthy, mostly white people back to the city and their buying power will flow to people with lower incomes. Bell's statement is an example of the conventional wisdom, i.e. gentrification, about urban development in the region.

The gentrification of downtown Birmingham began in January of 2000 when the city of Birmingham received a $35 million dollar Hope VI grant to demolish Metropolitan Gardens, which included 910 public housing units. The city also pledged an additional $22 million for the project to build mixed income housing in its place. The new housing development, Park Place, resulted in a net loss of 570 public housing units, displacing hundreds of families (Connerly, 2005). The displaced residents of Metropolitan Gardens were almost exclusively black. The justification for this project follows:

> The recognition of Downtown Birmingham as one of America's most livable cities has been stymied for years by the concentration of distressed public housing at its core. Parking garages have been built up around the units like a blockade, shielding Downtown from this site. And a general reluctance by developers, institutions, and corporate users to get too close to the perceived dangers of this site have resulted in disinvestment and distress in the intervening blocks (quoted in Connerly, 2005, p. 285).

Residents of Metropolitan Gardens had resisted moves by the city for years to demolish their homes, often claiming that it was racially driven, but with black leadership at the city level pushing for their demolition, the residents had little recourse but to accept their fate (Connerly, 2005). The class argument unfortunately has little purchase in the Birmingham region.

In 2012, the Birmingham News, tireless booster of downtown redevelopment, ran an article connecting the Hope VI project to gentrification.

> Since Park Place opened, nearby areas have seen a renaissance in transforming old office buildings, stores and warehouses into trendy lofts, bars and bistros (Gray, 2012).

And

> Fran Godchaux, who until November served as interim president of Operation New Birmingham, called Park Place "the grandfather of downtown loft living."
>
> Godchaux credits Park Place with convincing developers that downtown was an attractive place to live. She points to a recent ONB report showing 91

percent of downtown condos have been purchased and 97 percent of apartments have been rented.

> "It was literally the transformative project that's changed the face of loft living in downtown," Godchaux said. "It took an area that had some crime issues and now downtown Birmingham is one of the safest areas in the metro area" (Gray, 2012).

Only about 60 of Metropolitan Gardens' residents moved into Park Place (Gray, 2012).

Gentrification picked up steam with investment in the region, but got a large push from the creation of development plans, a large park, and soon-to-be-built baseball stadium. Development plans in the region target young, white suburbanites to increase investment in the downtown area of the city. The City Center Master Plan Update's (Urban Design Associates, 2004) stated goal is "to make a good downtown into a great urban place – a place to live, to work, to study, to play, and to visit – a vibrant 24 hour/seven day downtown" indicating that the city seeks a consumption side development initiative for the city center region. The plan is divided into three sections, a transportation analysis, a commercial market analysis, and a residential market analysis.

Transportation

The following chart (Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart, Inc., 2004) opened the transportation section of the City Center Master Plan Update.

Previous Emphasis	Current/Future Emphasis
Primarily headquarters office employment	Office plus medical visitors, University employment, convention visitors, entertainment visitors
Daily repeat travelers	Infrequent visitors
Major emphasis on through trips (with neither origin nor destination in downtown)	Emphasis on local trips (beginning or ending within downtown)
Mobility (speed, distance) most important	Access, transparency most important
Drivers understand and tolerate complexity	Drivers deterred by complexity
Emphasis on quantity of travel (i.e. capacity)	Emphasis on quality of travel
Single purpose of travel (employment)	Multiple purposes of travel (shopping, entertainment, as well as working
Travel concentrated 7 a.m. – 6 p.m.	Much travel outside 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. window
Parking demanded on premise of final destination	Parking accepted within a wide district, provided walking environment is superior
Parking funding focused on serving new office construction	Parking funding focused on rehabilitation areas
Transit emphasis on longer distance trips to/from downtown	Transit emphasis on short shuttle trips within downtown

The chart marks a decided shift in the purpose of streets and transit in downtown from that of service to suburban commuters who drive to the city on a daily basis, to that of a downtown in which residents live and work in the immediate area. The design of downtown transit will focus on supporting the consumptive lifestyle of downtown residents by allowing easy access to amenities and walkability to and from home, shopping, and office.

The stated goals of the transportation plan are

1. Reconfigure Interstate 20/59 to better serve downtown.

2. Systematically begin the conversion of one-way streets to two-way operation, to better serve the changing mix of downtown visitors and to exploit the enormous capacity of the downtown street grid.

3. Update the character of downtown streets, recognizing that they are, increasingly, addresses for businesses, institutions, entertainment, and residents, not just office headquarters.

4. Manage parking to gain more use of existing spaces and to better serve current downtown populations.

5. Simplify and intensify downtown transit service, as a key element of the parking system.

The proposed transformation of downtown Birmingham is designed to support gentrifying processes. Consumption-led development focused on amenities needs a certain type of traffic flow that meets the desires of a population that increasingly lives, works, and plays in the same place.[2] This stands in contrast to how downtown traffic has been organized since the creation of the interstate highway system, an organization that favors suburban commuters.

Residential

According to the report, the target market for downtown residential living is mostly drawn from young, market rate homebuyers in Jefferson County. A full 53% of the market is found in buyers from Jefferson County and 63% are "younger and single couples". The rest of the market is drawn mainly from national homebuyers. Empty nesters and retirees and traditional families make up the other 37% of homebuyers. The price range of potential homes is between $110,000 and $250,000. Low-end housing for the area should be affordable to a two-person household making $35,350 per year. Finally, though there is lip service paid to low income housing, all properties are to be market rate:

> To maintain values in the City Center, units designated for purchase by lower-income households should not be priced below market value. Recording discounted sales of prices could have significant negative impact on the appraised values of existing dwellings. Purchasers of below-market housing, rather than the units, should be subsidized through the use of special financing such as "soft second" mortgage (Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc., 2004).

The average list price for a home in Birmingham is $59,900, so the price of the lowest end housing for downtown Birmingham is almost twice as expensive as the rest of the city (Zillow.com, 2012). Furthermore, the median household income for Birmingham is $31,827 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), significantly below the threshold of affordability for the city center. The plan does argue for low-income housing, but it suggests that the buyer and not the property should be subsidized. However, there are no programs in Birmingham or even in Alabama that could accomplish this subsidy. No banks run second soft mortgage programs, and there is no suggestion of using programs like Section 8. Clearly, the design of the plan is to attract young high-end buyers to the downtown area to take advantage of a 24/7 city. They are looking for urban pioneers.

The table 2 (below) seems to support the claim that there is increasing investment in downtown Birmingham, that investors are shifting from the suburbs to the central

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[2] As an aside, this type of reorganization of streets and walkways would have also benefited low-income black residents since many do not have cars.

business district. The value of a home in the downtown area has increased approximately 90% in the past ten years, while home value in two suburbs has increased 38%, and the home value of two majority black, inner city Birmingham neighborhoods has increased by 5%. The statistics reveal a stark increase in housing investment in downtown Birmingham over the past ten years. One downtown zip had no houses in 2000, and now has 10 listed as for sale at an average price of 188,323 (Zillow.com, 2012). This demonstrates high levels of accumulation as a result of the transformation of downtown Birmingham.

Table 2: Housing Value Change 2000-2010

Area	Median Value 2010	Median Value '00 (adjusted for inflation)	Difference '00-'10	Percent Change 10 yr
Downtown	186000	0	186000	1
Downtown	195000	40732	154268	79
Neighborhood	60700	63041	-2341	-4
Neighborhood	68300	58905	9395	14
Homewood	340300	218952	121348	36
Mountain Brook	192600	114700	77900	40

Avg Change Downtown	90
Avg Change Neighborhood	5
Avg Change Suburb	38

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012

Table 3: Neighborhood Transformation Downtown 2000-2010

Area	Tract 45 Downtown	Tract 27 Downtown
Black Owner Occupied 2000	0	10
Black Owner Occupied 2010	0	26
Total Owner Occupied 2000	11	56
Total Owner Occupied 2010	75	193
Percent Black 2000	52	79
Percent Black 2010	41	66
Increase in Owner Occupied Housing 2000-2010	400	
Percentage Black Decrease	12	
Black Owner Occupancy Percentage 2000	33	
Black Owner Occupancy Percentage 2010	10	
Percentage Change	-23	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012

The previous paragraph documented how accumulation has increased as a result of housing in the past ten years. Properties in the downtown area increased by a whopping 90% adjusted for inflation. Table 3 documents how the accumulation of expensive properties is isolated almost solely to white people. Of all the new housing built in downtown Birmingham, little, if any, went to blacks. This shows how the process of racialization and economic accumulation articulate in the gentrification of downtown Birmingham. As whites move in, backed by developers, and property values increase, blacks in the neighborhoods are displaced, or in this case, low income blacks were moved out so that property values could rise. The above statistics show an obvious neighborhood transition from a low-income, black neighborhood, to a white, middle class to wealthy neighborhood, though this transition is far from complete. Blacks have lost on average 12 percent of their population in downtown Birmingham. This is a fairly small number, but combined with the housing data, it shows a neighborhood in transition.

Clearly, the City of Birmingham's strategy is to draw high-end homebuyers to the central business district to live. They seek to accomplish this task through a combination of transformation of the transit system and through the development of residential areas. Investors have responded to this initiative by shifting money from the suburban region to downtown Birmingham. The next section will outline the commercial strategy, rounding out the overall strategy for the transformation of Birmingham's city center.

Commercial

The analysis of the commercial section of the plan will be brief. Commercial growth of downtown Birmingham also hinges on a dramatic increase in residents in the downtown region. The full utilization of office space will also increase the travel to downtown. These new residents will create a commercial market mainly for amenities. The increase in commercial capacity depends to a great extent on the transformation of the transportation and housing infrastructure in the region.

The overarching goal of the City Center Master Plan Update is to transform downtown from a primarily commuter destination to a 24/7 place of consumption centered development. The plan strives to meet this goal by transforming transportation, increasing downtown residency, and building more amenities. Two amenities are either built or in the process of being built - Railroad Reservation Park and Regions Field. To these will I now turn the analysis.

Railroad Reservation Park

Railroad Reservation Park or simply Railroad Park is a $17.5 million dollar park on the western end of downtown Birmingham (Birmingham Business Alliance, 2011). The park is touted as a highly modern, inexpensive incentive to downtown redevelopment. The money was raised through a public-private partnership between private foundations and the city of Birmingham. The campaign that led the fundraising was called the "Three Parks Initiative," which was spearheaded by the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham and Regions 2020, the foundation wing of Regions bank. Donors to the "Three Parks Plan" read like a who's-who of growth machine actors, including The Alabama Power Foundation, the foundation arm of a local utility that is one of the most influential political actors in the state, the Harbert Management Corporation, an international construction firm that wields heavy influence in Birmingham, Alabama, the University of Alabama, Birmingham, AT&T and others.

The "Three Parks Initiative" was designed to raise money for three urban parks, an idea concocted because it would be easier to raise money for three parks at once than to raise money for each individually. The other two parks are Ruffner Mountain Park, a hiking park in east Birmingham, and Red Mountain Park, a park created in 2012 that straddles the border of Birmingham and its suburbs. Red Mountain Park will be the largest urban park in the nation at 1,108 acres (Red Mountain Park, 2009). All told, the campaign raised over 15 million dollars and was a strong impetus to the city providing funding for Railroad Park. Both Red Mountain Park and Ruffner Mountain are in black neighborhoods, while Railroad Park is downtown.

The creation of a new park fits squarely within the redevelopment plans for the downtown area. Walkability, health and well-being are the legitimate culture being created to justify this transformation of space. The genius of using health to promote economic growth is that the health narrative associated with the transformation of downtown Birmingham is thoroughly universalized. Webb Lyons of the Community Foundation stated that the desired goal of Railroad Park and other health initiatives including local food was to use public policy to help people make the right health choices (Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, 2011). Nothing is said about using a brand new park to promote gentrification and economic redevelopment that has displaced hundreds of families. The organized power behind Railroad Park and downtown redevelopment is obscured by the legitimate culture of health being promoted by the public interest side of the growth machine, i.e. urban farms, parks, the Jefferson County Department of Health and many organizations who see this as an opportunity to grow. And to round out our triumvirate of space, a walk in the park, from this perspective, can be seen as a practice that creates the space of capitalist development.

Regions Field

Regions Field is an approximately $60 million dollar baseball stadium under construction directly to the south of Railroad Park. The park is wholly publicly funded by a 3.5 cent lodging tax (hotels) increase (Whitmire, 2010) and will reportedly result in $500 million in direct and indirect spending for the city (Bryant, 2010). The study that reported the $500 million dollar impact was commissioned by growth machine actors, spearheaded by Corporate Realty. The stadium is highly celebrated in the region in spite of the fact that sports stadiums have been shown to be poor investments (Baade R., 1996; Baade & Dye, 1990).

The purpose of the stadium is more clearly delineated than that of Railroad Park, but because the stadium sits adjacent to the park it contextualizes the purpose of the park. The developments together are designed to spur economic growth in the so-called "Parkside District" through retail and entertainment, fitting squarely within the downtown master plan. The proximity to University of Alabama, Birmingham also aids in the development of this region of downtown and is designed to act as a spatial connector between the Loft District, the financial district and UAB. Ultimately, the area is designed to promote economic growth by creating spaces for consumption by gentrifiers flocking to downtown. According to a journalist friend, black community leaders believe that enough investment has been made in downtown and that the city should focus on rebuilding the neighborhoods. The tension between downtown and the neighborhoods is a longstanding tension between white business owners and black

neighborhood leaders, and dates back to at least after the Civil Rights Movement and the creation of Operation New Birmingham (Wilson, 2000b).

The Legitimate Culture of Gentrifiers: Foodies Emerge

Bourdieu argued that food is a field of cultural production in which the competition between different food ways for what is considered a legitimate form of eating creates the field (1979). He argued that working class people have distinctive food ways, and that the bourgeoise create food ways that stand opposed to working class consumption, deemed vulgar. In Birmingham, the local food movement has succeeded in creating a foodie culture which is a major part of the legitimate culture of health and well-being associated with the space of downtown. This has been done two ways. First, the Health Action Partnership, a collaboration of 100 health oriented non-profits and government agencies, received a 14 million dollar grant from Health and Human Services to promote healthy living in the region. The grant funded 25 members of the HAP. A significant portion of this grant has gone to a public media campaign ranging from television commercials to radio drama. The partners have promoted parks, walkability, healthy eating, and smoking cessation. The second way has been through cultural producers such as journalists and bloggers.

WhyBhm, a media project designed to boost Birmingham's public image, interviewed ten restauranteurs, bloggers, and media members to elicit their favorable stories about Birmingham. Of the ten, seven stated that food was a specific reason why they stayed in or moved back to Birmingham. Eight participants were white, one participant was Asian and one participant was black. Some of the quotes follow.

> Birmingham is on the cusp of something very different… trace it back to the food scene.. there is a sort of foodie movement (here). - Sheree Martin, entrepreneur, journalist
> Why did I come back to Birmingham? A lot of it has to do with food. – Chip Brantley, entrepreneur
> Being someone who loves food, Birmingham is a wonderful, wonderful city. – LK Whitney, local blogger
> Food was incredible, not what I expected from Birmingham – Shaun Chavis, chef

These initial quotes from WhyBhm demonstrate that part of the transformation and redevelopment, even rebranding, of Birmingham is intimately tied up with the food movement. What is happening in Birmingham, according to these people, can be traced back to the "foodie movement." The alternative food and agriculture movement is explicitly tied to downtown redevelopment and the excitement that Birmingham is starting to get many of the amenities that other people have. The transformation of downtown space is directly related to the food scene in the area.

> Now, I'm starting to see things like community gardens all over the place. – Michael Nolan, entrepreneur
> One of the things that I always loved about Birmingham is its food, not just restaurants, but its culture of food. – Chip Brantley, entrepreneur
> I think we have a really great foodieish community. – Carrie Rollwagen, blogger
> (There is) plenty of opportunity to connect (with others) (around) food. – Erin Shaw Street, journalist (WhyBhm, 2011).

This second set of quotes demonstrates the process of building community through the performance of white identity documented by Alison Alkon and Christie McCullen (2010) and by Alkon (2012). For the social agents here, food is also about connecting with others and sharing experiences. However, since the habitus of each social agent is overwhelmingly white (all four who spoke on community and culture are white) and middle class, this serves to racialize the community as white, also showing how gentrifiers use food to capitalize on their cultural and racial capital to make connections and build relationships. Because food is so central to the redevelopment of downtown, and that redevelopment is about overlaying white space on black space, the performance of white identities through the consumption of food (discussed below) serves to produce, reinforce, and buttress the white space created by gentrification.

What the local food movement has very successfully done is to create a legitimate culture which combines the white farm imaginary and ideas about healthy lifestyles that support downtown gentrification. It has done this by inculcating a habitus that has a preference for downtown living because of the closeness to food venues, farmers' markets, and urban gardens. This habitus is an internalization of the gentrified space of downtown with its three aspects of organized power, legitimate culture, and social practice. The preference for high end foods is backed by the Health Action Partnership and acts as both legitimate culture and practice to the habitus. Simply, the food movement lends its culturally legitimacy to the practice of gentrification backed by both cultural producers such as film makers, bloggers, and reporters and by economic powers such as the city, the Birmingham Business Alliance (the chamber of commerce), Sloss Real Estate who owns Pepper Place Farmer's Market, and others. Both those with high cultural capital and high economic capital are staunch supporters of the food movement because it helps lend legitimacy to downtown redevelopment. This could help explain why there are few people of color, who have not been included in this redevelopment, in the food movement.

Angela Jill Cooley has analyzed Southern foodways in her dissertation, *To Live and Dine in Dixie: Foodways and Southern Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Cooley, 2011). In it, she argues that cultural prohibitions on food consumption, that range from new forms of cooking to Jim Crow laws, acted to produce and reinforce segregation. She asserts that racial purity dictated that certain customs and legal structures be enacted to prevent blacks from contaminating white food space. The promotion of the foodie legitimate culture is a continuation of this purity ethic. While it is not specifically about preventing the contamination of white food space with blackness, it is about characterizing some foodways as impure or unhealthy and others as pure or healthy. Within this culture are deep-seated notions of the "right food" meaning, locally sourced food purchased at a farmer's market, or at the very least fruits and vegetables that are cooked in a particular way. One member of the HAP noted that "Even when (black or low income) people have access to good food, they don't know how to cook it." White middle class and wealthy foodies create a legitmate culture around food that firmly situates them as the dominant culture, continues the purity ethic in the language of a social movement, promotes the white farm imaginary, and lends legitimacy to gentrification.

The whiteness evident in downtown Birmingham's redevelopment is a product of both class and race processes. The overwhelming whiteness of the alternative agriculture

movement, which lends cultural legitimacy to gentrification, combined with the accumulation of capital through the construction of new middle and high end housing in downtown create a space for accumulation that is racialized white. The convergence of race and class in downtown Birmingham is a powerful example of how, at times, racialization and capital accumulation feed on each other and reinforce each other. Metropolitan Gardens had to be demolished in order to pave the way for whites, i.e. to make whites comfortable in a space that was becoming racialized white. This cleared the way for developers to feed of the white preference for white neighborhoods (Massey & Denton, 1993). Accumulation could not have proceeded without first ridding the neighborhood of blacks deemed less desirable or criminals. As whites began to takeover, their preference for the white farm imaginary and a narrowly defined vision of health gave cultural legitimacy to the transformation of downtown Birmingham into a white space (or whiter space, the tranformation is incomplete).

Spatial makeup of downtown Birmingham:

1. **Organized Power** – The city, many non-profits and other civil society organizations like the HAP, the Birmingham News, and the business community all make up the organized power of downtown Birmingham. The most influential group of actors is the business community who were able to push through the demolition of Metropolitan Gardens in spite of the fact that the city government has a high level of black representatives. This paved the way for the Loft District and the transformation of downtown into a whiter space. As a former mayor said to a journalist friend, "You need the people to get elected, but you need the business community to govern." Economic accumulation combines with racialization to displace black residents and remake space, so much that economic accumulation drowns out any talk of racial and class oppression.

2. **Legitimate Culture** – Broadly speaking, growth is good is the legitimate culture of downtown Birmingham. People celebrate the lifestyle that comes with downtown living that can broadly be defined as a lifestyle of health. Part of this healthy lifestyle is the white farm imaginary that romanticizes yeoman farmers, exercise, eating at trendy local foods restaurants and food trucks, and a preference for farmers' markets. The alternative food and agriculture movement in Birmingham lends its cultural legitimacy to the redevelopment of the downtown region.

3. **Practice** – Living a healthy lifestyle which includes eating certain types of food that includes vegetables and fruits, locally grown meat, and avoiding highly processed foods and sugary drinks. Practice also includes walking to and from work, exercising in Railroad Park, eating at trendy restaurants that feature local food, and participating in farmers' markets and other downtown events. Legitimate culture and practice adhere well in downtown Birmingham as culture is played out through lifestyle.

Conclusion

Spaces must be produced in order for accumulation to proceed. In Birmingham, a new space for accumulation has been produced in downtown Birmingham. This space is notable because of its consumption-side development or gentrification. The strategy of the city and other growth machine actors is to remake downtown Birmingham in a way

that will draw white, wealty residents to the region. They have done this by promoting new types of transportation, residential and commercial development. They have also created a new baseball stadium and a state of the art downtown park. Of the new owner-occupied housing that has been built in the area, an increase of 400 percent, those houses have gone almost exclusively to whites and the percentage of homeowners who are black has decreased by 23 percent. The transformation of this space began with the demolition of Metropolitan Gardens and the displacement of hundreds of black residents. The basic story is that downtown lost 571 low-income housing units and saw a 400 percent increase in owner-occupied housing.

This chapter has documented the convergence of racial and class processes, which articulate to produce a new, whitened space in the downtown region. The alternative food and agriculture movement has lent its cultural legitimacy to the process. Foodies promote downtown living because of its proximity to fine dining, local food restaraunts, urban gardens, and farmer's markets. The rebirth of downtown Birmingham as a trendy white space is supported to a great extent by the foodie culture created by social agents in the alternative food and agriculture movement. As documented in Chapter 3, participation by people of color in the alternative agriculture movement is very limited and the cultural foundations of that movement in Birmingham and nationally are highly exclusionary. By lending its cultural legitimacy to downtown redevelopment, the alternative food and agriculture movement reinforces the exclusion and displacement perpetuated by gentrification. Indeed, the creation of a taste for local food is part and parcel to gentrification.

Chapter 5: Producing the Commons

This chapter will begin by analyzing community development as a strategy for producing the commons. That will lead into a more thorough discussion of each organization, highlighting strengths, but also noting weaknesses. I will also try to note throughout my personal transformation as a result of this research and try to tease out some of the transformations of the people around me through this research process. Finally, I will discuss the community of practice created around urban agriculture and resistance to white supremacy, showing how it functions as a community and noting some of the failures and partial successes of this research. As noted earlier, this type of research process can take years and even decades to implement fully, and the results of this research in practice are quite partial. In fact, they may always be.

Thus far I have argued that the power structure in Birmingham has used ostensibly apolitical spatial arrangements to enforce racial segregation and to perpetuate inequality. This began with the beginnings of Birmingham, picked up steam with Jim Crow, and continued with white flight at the end of *de jure* segregation. A high level of de facto segregation still exist within the Birmingham region, and with that comes the instilling of black and white habitus that are starkly different. In addition to white flight and residential segregation, the white bourgeoisie has began gentrifying downtown Birmingham and some areas of east Birmingham in about the year 2000. This gentrification is supported by the initiatives of the alternative agriculture movement, which produces a culture of healthy and high end dining to support redevelopment efforts.

The stark difference in the spaces in which blacks' and whites' habitus is trained leads to divisions within the alternative agriculture movement. The initiative to create a food policy council revealed this divide as few people of color participated in the process to create the council and few are on the council. Those that are on the council often feel tokenized by the process; in other words, they feel as if their perspective is only valid from the perspective of a person of color, not universally valid (white perspectives are considered valid for everyone). Because of this, the food policy council represents the white side of the movement and pays little attention to issues of food justice and community development. The dominant faction of the alternative agriculture movement in Birmingham is therefore racialized white and quite exclusionary.

I want to depart somewhat from the critique of those with the power in the alternative agriculture movement and look to those with alternatives to the alternative. Three organizations that work in majority black communities in western Birmingham use urban agriculture for community development. Metropolitan Mission, my first community partner, has about an acre in production and operates an intern program for young black men. The neighborhood of Hillman Station has organized themselves, with the help of Southwest Community Development (SCD) and the neighborhood association (see Chapter Two) to address health, economics, and community from a grassroots perspective. They have taken the initiative to organize a community farm that supplies fresh produce to the food pantry at SCD. They have also begun a program of community organizing around agriculture called Adopt-a-Yard. The last organization is Magic City Agriculture Project (MCAP), an anti-racist and urban agriculture organization that I helped to start, made up of activists from across the Birmingham region. Together these

organizations and the people associated with them make up a loosely organized community of practice around resistance to white supremacy and urban agriculture.

This chapter documents processes that work against, though not always intentionally, the dominant processes of racialization and capital accumulation. By producing neighborhood space, the organizations and institutions in this chapter utilize the process of commoning. This is a process of spatial production by community members. This neighborhood space inculcates a particular neighborhood habitus that has been common in black neighborhoods for years. In addition, my organization works directly on the habitus of individual social agents, particularly white ones, by pushing an anti-racist agenda at individual, community, and institutional levels. In this, our organizations work in unacknowledged concert on both the black spaces and the habitus of whites.

Community Development: Producing the Commons

Community development seeks to increase well-being through a bevy of market and non-market approaches. Community development has many different definitions, but each approach relies on community organizing as its heart. There are three different methods for community organizing, the Alinskyan approach (1971), the ACORN approach (Delgado, 1986), and the popular education approach (Freire, 1998; 2010; Horton & Freire, 1990).

The Alinskyan approach uses conflict to organize a community. The organizer goes into the community and begins networking with the important institutions like churches and social service agencies. S/he then uses that basis to rally the community around a particular issue that the community determines. They then use non-violent tactics such as sit-ins or protest to bring their concerns to the attention of leaders. This method is highly effective, but it needs a particular, charismatic type of organizer to organize the community. It also requires that the institutions that form the basis of the organizer are not averse to political conflict.

The ACORN approach is similar to the Alinskyan approach in that it uses conflict to organize the community. However, it is different in that the ACORN approach builds its own popular organization to represent the people. This places the priority on developing indigenous leadership and does not rely so heavily on existing institutions and the charisma of the organizer. ACORN basically built its organizations by walking particular neighborhoods and inviting people face-to-face to join the new organization. In other aspects, especially tactics, ACORN is similar to Alinskyan approaches.

The final community organizing approach is the popular education approach developed by Myles Horton and Paulo Freire. It differs significantly from the previous two approaches in the sense that it focuses more on larger political and social issues and less on immediate pragmatic concerns. The popular education model is primarily designed to liberate the oppressed through their engagement with solving their own problems, which often leads one to political engagement, but not always. In this model, the student and the teacher merge into one learning community in which everyone learns from everyone else. This learning community then uses its new knowledge to address some local problem or issue. The focus here is as much on the process of learning as on the political gains from the organizing. The Highlander Research and Education Center, founded by Myles Horton, has implemented this strategy successfully since 1932.

The goal of community development is to create commons[3] on which people, the community, can draw to meet their basic needs. This can be done through political engagement or through popular education or some combination of both. Residents of Hillman Station use a combination of both, using the neighborhood association for political engagement with the city and using SCD for education and community enrichment. Community development is the process of commoning. Harvey (2012) defines commons as

> an unstable and malleable social relation between a particular self-defined social group and those aspects of its actually existing or yet-to-be-created social and/or physical environment deemed crucial to its life and livelihood. There is, in effect, a social practice of commoning.

De Angelis (2007) argues that the commons is the site at which a divided social body is sutured and that it is sutured by the articulation of new value practices, asserting that all social practices are also about how we define values. In returning to the theoretical framework developed for this dissertation, it is also clear that social practices and (De Angelis, 2007) therefore value practices produce spaces. Could it be that commons, social and physical, are produced spaces with specific types of value practices that entail producing human and non-human species that are more complete and have more of their needs met? It must also be noted, as Harvey (2012) notes, that the powerful have robust commons at their disposal. Gated communities, professional associations, wealthy friends and family, and networked contacts all constitute a sort of commons of the wealthy ("It's not what you know, it's who you know"). When attacks by the powerful are made on public expenditure, this has the systematic effect of preventing or limiting the ability of the non-powerful to create their own commons. Commons are a necessary part of life on earth.

For this work, the definition of commons is a relationship between a community of place, that is, a group of people who live and/or work in a bounded geographic area, and the space produced by that community of people. In the cases here, the geographic area is created by the political boundaries of the neighborhood association system (see Chapter 2). As will be shown, Metropolitan Mission only partially produces commons because those working to produce the space are perceived as outsiders (i.e. they are white), because they do not work with or support the organized power of the neighborhood space, and they have obligations to outside funders which limit their ability to produce space. Southwest Community Development, however, participates fully in the organized power of the neighborhood, is seen as an insider in the community, and secures most of its funding from indigenous sources, namely the church. SCD receives aid from outside institutions, but unlike Metropolitan Mission, those people giving that aid hold little influence over the direction of SCD or Southwest Community Garden.

Southwest Community Development/Southwest Community Garden

Southwest Community Development is the non-profit arm of Southwest Baptist Church, a large 2000 member black church in southwest Birmingham (all names and organizations are pseudonyms). SCD's service area is broadly the 35221 zip code, which is 98 percent black (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The area also has a 23 percent poverty rate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). SCD was founded in 2002 and is the vision of Dr.

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[3] The usage of commons in this chapter comes from the Marxist literature on communing. It is quite different from the usage of the word commons in the property literature, for example, Elinor Ostrom

James McNeil (pseudonym), pastor of Southwest Baptist Church. Some of the founders are veterans of the Civil Rights Movement. The goals of SCD are to serve people, affirm equality, validate improvement, and endorse success. The Community Family Life Center, a multipurpose building that includes a gymnasium and commercial kitchen along with classrooms and meeting areas, was erected a few years after the founding of SCD. SCD has a number of programs focused mostly on providing services to their members and the surrounding community. They also host public meetings on a number of topics of public interest. Of all the organizations with which I worked, SCD has the most robust program for community organizing, working closely with the neighborhood association to build community around their programs. SCD is funded almost exclusively by Southwest Baptist Church and members of Southwest Baptist Church.

Southwest Community Garden is a new program of SCD. It revolves around growing food in a 2100 square foot hoop house primarily for SCD's food pantry and secondarily for the market.[4] Members of SWCG have also indicated that they want to eventually provide employment on the farm, but at this point they do not have the finances to do so. The farm has partnered with the Consortium for Agricultural Newcomers Access to Learning or CANAL, a partnership between Auburn University, Tuskegee University, Alabama A&M University, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the National Young Farmers Education Association, Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network, and the Alabama Green Industry Training Center, to operate as a demonstration farm to promote urban agriculture in Birmingham. The partnership was formed in 2010 and brokered by Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network, a state-wide farm advocacy non-profit. The partnership for SWCG is by far the broadest agricultural network of any of the organizations participating in the local food movement, extending beyond the region to the state level, and including the land grant universities. The benefits are legion, for example, SWCG is able to develop a unique hoop house production system with the aid of agricultural professionals. The partnership has also allowed SWCG to receive technical assistance such as planting, irrigation systems, rainwater catchment, and others. While other urban gardens focus on education of children and employment of youth, SWCG is focusing on adult education and production. It is a logical step for the movement.

SWCG is quite savvy at mobilizing institutional resources to support their programs, spearheaded by Becky Taylor, the group has build a robust support network throughout the state. CANAL is part of this, but what is striking is how at almost every agricultural meeting, Taylor knows everyone in the room, from high ranking politicians to farmers. They have received funding from Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network and technical support from Tuskegee and Alabama A&M. SCD works closely with the neighborhood association and is quite active in community politics. Both SCD and Southwest Baptist Church are anchors in the Southwest Birmingham Community. And possibly, most importantly, they aid and partner with other organizations that work in Southwest Birmingham to address the pressing issues in the area. They also have another agricultural program called Agricultural Women that adopts the yards of community residents. Usually, they adopt the yard of a senior with limited mobility. They elicit what the homeowner or resident wants for their yard and then implement those wants

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[4] Marketing is only planned at this point. The primary target is the new farmer's market in Bessemer that members of MCAP and SCD are organizing.

with a garden or flower bed. In doing this they seek to improve access to healthy food by installing gardens, and to beautify the neighborhood. Essentially, the adopt-a-yard program is an agriculture-related community organizing strategy, probably one of the more novel ideas in the city.

An analysis of the space produced by SCD, the Hillman Station neighborhood association, MCAP, Tuskegee University, Southwest Baptist Church, and others reveals the characteristics of a commons designed to, in the executive director of SCD's words, "provide for the whole man (sic)."

1. **Organization of Power** – Four organizations operate directly in the Hillman Station neighborhood, Magic City Agriculture Project (MCAP), SCD, Southwest Baptist Church, and the neighborhood association. Of those organizations, MCAP can be best described as an outside, technical assistance organization. The pastor of Southwest Baptist Church ostensibly heads SCD, but in practice the executive director runs the day-to-day activities and plans and organizes the operation. The president of the neighborhood association leads the neighborhood by talking with city leaders, organizing neighborhood cleanups, supporting community projects, and so on. SCD and the neighborhood association work closely to meet the needs of the community at Hillman Station. In practice power is diffuse owing to the presence of many different community leaders. The leader of SCD organizes the programs and projects of the non-profit. The neighborhood leader works on policy. The president of Agricultural Women leads community beautification activities. And other elders and activists have a respected voice in community affairs. These leaders are almost exclusively women. While there are conflicts, the group works together closely to improve the conditions of Hillman Station, primarily, and Southwest Birmingham, generally. So diffuse that it is nearly unrecognizable to whites that constantly wonder who is 'really' in charge. During a visit from the Dean of Agriculture at Tuskegee University, his entourage remarked numerous times about the presence of multiple, community-based leadership.

2. **Legitimate Culture** – There is a robust community ethic that involves working to meet the needs of the "whole man (sic)." More specifically, active neighborhood residents want to have a better, safer neighborhood. They want abandoned houses demolished; they want the burglaries to stop; and they want the neighborhood to be safe from undesirables, such as homeless people and criminals. Neighborhood association meetings consistently revolve around these three issues. The neighborhood president consistently talks about the problem of abandoned houses and longs for a day with the neighborhood was full of youth and families. Interestingly, this is not wholly different for the justification for gentrification, but whites are better able to affect changes in their neighborhood. They also want the community to be developed so that it can be self-reliant, i.e. they have a vision that everything that one needs can be met by the community and its institutions. When describing what SCD does, the executive director repeatedly speaks of self-reliance as one of the goals. By this she means both a self-reliant community and a self-reliant individual. The two are seen as connected.

3. **Social Practice** – the diffuse group of community leaders work to integrate everyone from the community into the programs of SCD. They seek to make

SCD and the neighborhood association as the centerpiece of the community, where everyone can go to meet their basic needs. Farming is an important social practice that provides food to SCD's food pantry that is then distributed to needy people in the community.

If the neighborhood association, SCD, MCAP, Southwest Baptist Church, and the residents of Hillman Station have created a unique space within Birmingham's city limits, then there must be a habitus associated with that space, a habitus that produces practices that can be recognized as legitimate within that space. That habitus entails a deep commitment to justice and community and a willingness to work long hours for little or no pay (SCD's executive director receives no salary and is one of the hardest working people that I have ever met). The community habitus of Hillman Station also reveals a commitment to working cooperatively as power is shared among many community leaders and institutions. This power is shared between the neighborhood association and SCD in such a way that it is difficult to tell where one begins and the other ends. There is also a deep desire for diversity and integration, as community leaders have expressed admiration for organizations like Growing Power[5] in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for their ability to foster diversity and inclusivity. "Affirming equality," part of SCD's mission is lived and practiced by the community's leadership through the production of commons.

In my opinion, SCD and SWCG represent the best example in the region of how the alternative agriculture movement should be done. Their first and foremost priority is to produce commons for the community. Their goals are jobs, health, and education; the latter two they are providing and the former they are working towards. Eventually, agriculture in Hillman Station will be an economic engine providing both jobs and produce to the community. However, providing jobs to the community will require the attention of the philanthropic community in Birmingham. SCD needs more money. What is highly unfortunate is the complete inattention given to their initiatives by local funders, most of which are enamored with public markets. It shows how the dominant and well-funded white faction of the alternative agriculture movement has unwittingly missed the black-run, grassroots developments in the movement, and, of course, provided no funding. These organizations jump on board with many initiatives that are produced by white people, however ineffectual. But, truly effective programs get no attention, mostly because SCD and organizations like them don't play by the rules of a technocratic and market-based non-profit sector. For example, SCD was recently denied a grant because (they believe, there was no reason given) they did not know the right people and they failed to use the correct language and framing of the project.

Not that SCD and SWCG necessarily need it. They are aided by Tuskegee, Alabama A&M, two historically black land grant institutions, by MCAP, and by Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network. Most of this aid comes in the form of technical assistance. They are networked thoroughly throughout the state and have ongoing partnerships with many different organizations. These networks are built and maintained through the efforts of SCD's public relations director, who has extensive experience with communicating across racial lines. She grew up in an Italian neighborhood and was married to a military man, and the experiences with people from

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[5] Growing Power has developed a world-renown system for urban agriculture and their executive director, Will Allen, is a former McArthur Genius.

different backgrounds serves her well in building networks to support SCD and SWCG. It says tons about the segregated nature of Birmingham, that they get virtually no help from within the dominant white faction of the non-profit and foundation world from within the city-region.

Metropolitan Mission/Southern Community Garden

Metropolitan Mission is a 501(c)3 non-profit operated by the Methodist Church in the West End community of Birmingham. The area, indicated by the 35211 area code, is 99 percent black and had a 27 percent poverty rate as of 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; 2000). Metropolitan Mission can best be described as an integrated organization with white leadership. Both the executive director and the director of development are white and the board of directors is a majority white. This is mainly because of the connections between Metropolitan Mission and white suburban Methodist Churches. However, the new executive director has made it a point to include more blacks on the board of directors and the board has moved from almost exclusively white to close to an even split between whites and blacks. This has not come easily. When the ED announced her plans to diversify the board, two board members (one the daughter of a historical benefactor of MM and the other a member of a wealthy, suburban Methodist Church) who were heavy funders quit the organization, though it is unclear what their specific reason for leaving the board was. No doubt they would not say that it was the move to diversify.

One of the major issues with any integrated organization is who actually has the power? Metropolitan Mission's funding model relies heavily on wealthy white churches to fund operations and programming. As a result of this, funders may have little clue as to what the conditions are like on the ground in West End, and may feel uncomfortable with programming that includes community development, anti-racist training, or any form of community organizing. Mostly, white board members and funders want to do direct service and they want opportunities to meet and interact with the less fortunate, especially for the youth of their respective churches.

In a sense, segregation and processes of racialization again appear in the operations of Metropolitan Mission. Because members of Metropolitan Mission are caught in an interstitial space between the black and white communities, they must find strategies to resolve the black-white dialectic in ways that will both please the funders' desire to be charitable and provide resources to the West End community. Until the last 5 years, this was mainly resolved by focusing charity work that did not in any way upset the power dynamic between the oppressors and the oppressed. More recently, with the advent of Southern Community Garden and the desire to do "Christian Community Development" the geography of Metropolitan Mission has been shifted in favor of the oppressed.

Christian Community Development has 8 components (Taken from the CCDA website):

1. Relocation - Living out the gospel means desiring for one's neighbor and neighbor's family that which one desires for one's self and family…By relocating, a person will understand most clearly the real problems facing the poor; and then he or she may begin to look for real solutions… Relocation transforms "you, them, and theirs" to "we, us, and ours."
2. Reconciliation

      a. People to God - First, Christian Community Development is concerned with reconciling people to God and bringing them into a church fellowship where they can be discipled in their faith.

      b. People to People - The most segregated time of the week in our nation is Sunday morning during church services… The question is: Can a gospel that reconciles people to God without reconciling people to people be the true gospel of Jesus Christ? A person's love for Christ should break down every racial, ethnic and economic barrier. Christian Community Development recognizes that the task of loving the poor is shared by the entire body of Christ, black, white, brown, and yellow; rich and poor; urban and suburban; educated and uneducated.

3. Redistribution - When men and women in the body of Christ are visibly present and living among the poor (relocation), and when people are intentionally loving their neighbor and their neighbor's family the way a person loves him or herself and family (reconciliation), the result is redistribution, or a just distribution of resources.

4. Leadership Development - The primary goal of leadership development is to restore the stabilizing glue and fill the vacuum of moral, spiritual, and economic leadership that is so prevalent in poor communities by developing leaders. This is most effectively done by raising up Christian leaders from the community of need who will remain in the community to live and lead.

5. Listening to the Community - Often communities are developed by people outside of the community that bring in resources without taking into account the community itself. Christian Community Development is committed to listening to the community residents, and hearing their dreams, ideas and thoughts… Asset-based community development focuses on the assets of a community and building upon them. When fused together through Christian Community Development, they can have extremely positive results.

6. Church-Based - The community of God's people is uniquely capable of affirming the dignity of the poor and enabling them to meet their own needs. It is practically impossible to do effective wholistic ministry apart from the local church. A nurturing community of faith can best provide the thrusts of evangelism, discipleship, spiritual accountability, and relationships by which disciples grow in their walk with God.

7. Wholistic Approach - There is never a simplistic answer to the problems in poor communities. Often, people will say that the problem is spiritual, social or educational. Of course these are problems, but they are only part of the larger problems. Solving the housing problem does not solve the emotional struggles that a person has. Christian Community Development has a wholistic approach to ministry that deals with the spiritual, social, economic, political, cultural, emotional, physical, moral, judicial, educational and familial issues of each person.

8. Empowerment - Empowering people as community developers meet their needs is an important element to Christian Community Development. How does a pastor ensure that people are able to help themselves after they have been helped? Oftentimes, Christian ministry, particularly in poor communities, creates

dependency. This is no better than the federal government welfare program. The Bible teaches empowerment, not dependency.
(Christian Community Development Association, 2011).

This is the strategy that underpins Southern Community Garden and Southern House Church, the church affiliated with Metropolitan Mission. The pastor of this church is a tireless advocate of Christian Community Development and has influenced the ED of Metropolitan Mission to move in that direction. This is an important move and there is much to like about Christian Community Development. The focus on racial reconciliation is important, asset-based community development is the correct approach, and the notion that community development practitioners should listen to communities is important, however unfortunate that it needs to be said; listening to communities should be obvious. However, there is also much to be desired about this framework, particularly the apolitical approach to providing commons to the community. An important piece is missing. I will try to illuminate this missing piece through a description of the Southern Community Garden and Southern House Church programming.

Southern House Church started in 2008 as a house church (a church that meets in a house instead of a church building) in West End by a white man, who moved to the area. It is part and parcel to the "church-based" component to CCD. It has since grown to about three hundred people and now meets at Metropolitan Mission. The pastor founded Southern Community Gardens in 2009 as a way to expand his ministry. The pastor is a huge fan of Wendell Berry, and his ideas about land and farming led the minister to start the farm. SCG began with one employee, a black woman program director and quickly grew to include a farm manager, a black man. The salaries were paid by the Methodist Church. Clearly, the pastor is implementing CCD. He relocated to the community and hired a black man and woman to run the garden program. This is relocation, reconciliation, and to some degree redistribution. It is church-based and the focus of the church on helping youth is leadership development and empowering. However, there are significant limitations to the scope of these initiatives.

The reliance on being church-based means that the community that forms the basis of SCG and, to a lesser extent, Metropolitan Mission is limited to those who are members of the church. SHC is essentially the organizing arm of Metropolitan Mission. All of the youth interns who work at the garden are from the church. While Metropolitan Mission does much direct service in West End, the organized community that serves as the basis of MM is SHC, not the larger West End community. This is why MM's work is partially communing. The geographically bounded community that MM for which MM produces space is West End. However, the entirety of this bounded community is not included in all of the programs associated with MM. The programs associated with the church and SCG are in practice limited to members of the church. Indeed, some of the paid staff from MM comes from the church, while the rest are whites from outside the community. The space that is partially produced by MM in practice benefits mainly members of SHC. This is not to say that these programs aren't beneficial. The internship program is probably the most important and innovative program associated with urban gardening in the city, but it is not available to everyone.

The internship program is targeted at young black men because the program director believes that this population is quite vulnerable to drugs, gangs, and violence. At this point, since funding is limited, the program can only hire three interns, part time, during the summer. I have personally seen increases in confidence over the years that I have known the interns, and they have developed a sense of responsibility and purpose that many in West End do not have. One of the interns was recently promoted to assistant farm manager. Part of the transformation in the interns is because of the controlled environment of the Southern House Church, MM, and SCG community. Mentors and advisors surround the youth of the church on a constant basis and their social group, in at least some ways, is controlled. The program and the church take youth who have been harmed by white supremacy and give them the basis to shape themselves into functioning adults.

But, SCG and SHC would not frame their programs in the terms of white supremacy, at least not publicly. The program director of SCG is very careful not to be perceived as an "angry black women" because, if she were to be characterized that way, it would undermine the credibility that she has with the white community. The problem with funding for a non-profit attempting to do community development coming from charity-oriented conservatives and moderates is that it limits the political stances that members of Metropolitan Mission can take. CCD is dramatically apolitical, and while there is indeed some redistribution, wide-ranging redistribution cannot happen just by the privileged being close to the disprivileged. It has to come through the political system and it requires that political stances be taken. The normal way of political organizing in Birmingham, through the neighborhood associations, is unavailable to Metropolitan Mission because they have an ongoing conflict with the neighborhood association president, although the president sits on Metropolitan Mission's board. In many ways, CCD is available as an option to Metropolitan Mission specifically because it is apolitical. Putting forth a political agenda, even one couched in Christianity, would likely turn off many donors and board members.

The garden programs and the church create partial commons that members of the church community and to a lesser extent the broader West End community can use to construct their life. The church provides spiritual and social guidance for youth, the garden provides employment and mentorship for young black men, developing them as leaders for the church community, and the garden provides the physical resource of food. Some of the food is given away and some is sold at local markets operated by SCG that are monetarily supported by local foundations and non-profits. SCG also has two signature events that work as quasi-community organizing. I say quasi-community organizing because they are designed to build support for SCG. However, they are not politically engaged and do not focus on popular education. So while they fit some criteria of community organizing, they fall short in terms of purpose. Basically, they are just parties that everyone likes to attend. The first is an event held in the fall called the Collard Green Cook-off in which local residents compete to create the best dish with collard greens. The only stipulation is that pork cannot be used because it is deemed unhealthy. The point of the event is to try to educate people on healthy ways to cook. The second event is called The Summer Solstice Celebration. It is basically a garden party during the summer. Both events are popular and well attended and help raise the

profile of SCG in the West End community.

CCD is a strategy for community development rooted in the church that creates commons. Specifically, it creates social, cultural, and physical commons, but fails to create political commons. In other words, the space that CCD creates in West End fails to build a functioning organization of power, either by working with the neighborhood association, or by organizing other institutions in the neighborhood like the other churches. The combination of SHC and SCG implement CCD in the West End neighborhood creating a robust support system for the youth of the church. However, because it lacks an organization of power and therefore cannot mobilize to push the local state to address the, in some ways dire, conditions of the West End community, the strategy is incomplete. It sounds good that redistribution will happen because of the proximity of privileged and disprivileged, but this could just as easily devolve into gentrification, not to mention that this strategy for redistribution is significantly limited. For redistribution to happen, politics must come into play.

The space of the community associated with SCG and SHC can be analyzed in this way:

1. **Organization of Power –** Three separate institutions structure the power relations of this community. Broadly the neighborhood associations have significant influence in West End, but they do not work directly with Metropolitan Mission because there is an ongoing conflict. A majority white board of directors and a white executive director leads Metropolitan Mission and a white pastor leads SHC. Both SCG and SHC have advisory boards that include some people from the community, at least on the SCG board, and people from the church. Like the Methodist Church that is affiliated with it, Metropolitan Mission is generally top down, with some bottom up decision-making found in the advisory boards.

   Because the organization of power in West End is generally quite fragmented, meaning that the two most important institutions, the neighborhood association and MM, cannot work together, the produced commons is incomplete or partial. This limits the effectiveness of political engagement on behalf of one of the poorest populations in Alabama. There is a struggle between who speaks for West End between these two institutions. The pastor of SHC has repeatedly said that the neighborhood association is just the neighborhood president and "her friends," delegitimizing the elected leader of the neighborhood and suggesting that MM does not need to work with them.

2. **Legitimate Culture –** The philosophy of Christian Community Development increasingly guides the programming of Metropolitan Mission. It is underpinned by the understanding that in order to be whole people, people must accept Christianity as their religion; i.e. it is evangelical. It goes further than evangelism by couching community development in the language of Christianity, focusing heavily on spirituality, but also on creating commons for members of the community to use. There is also a specific focus on a culture of racial reconciliation, though it falls short of the anti-racist paradigm, and, though it represents some form of resistance to white

supremacy, that is more implied than explicit. CCD believes that racial reconciliation comes through closeness and friendship, not in challenging white supremacy directly.

3. **Practice –** Going to church, sitting on advisory boards, and community gardening are the main practices of this group. They adhere well to the legitimate culture of Christianity that focuses on closeness as a method for racial reconciliation. The garden offers opportunities for white volunteers to experience poverty and to work side-by-side with the less fortunate. It also satisfies the white need for an outlet for charity, balancing community development and charity in these practices.

Metropolitan Mission, SCG, and SHC are a good example of how processes of racialization get resolved in spatial arrangements. The needs and desires of whites for charity must be met or that funding will not materialize. In the past, this has been resolved merely through charity, but the advent of CCD starts to address the underlying problems that make charity necessary. This move is fraught with danger. If donors and funders perceive any initiatives that would undermine their position as givers, they will likely stop giving. This importantly means that almost no political stances can be taken by members of Metropolitan Mission, particularly political stances within the metro area. (Members of Metropolitan Mission do take political stances at a state level, but they follow the general initiatives of state-level, liberal advocacy groups.) The black-white dialectic is resolved in their minds by doing community development, couched in Christianity that can be understood as charity by white donors. This dialectic is resolved in a habitus that produces practices matched to both Christian charity and a necessarily apolitical form of community development, i.e. matched to the space produced by the organization.

In some ways, this is a very strange and uncomfortable situation. Blacks in the neighborhood perceive Metropolitan Mission as a sort of quasi-governmental entity that produces benefits through charity, but involves a high level of bureaucracy to produce those benefits. White donors and funders are increasingly uncomfortable with the move towards community development currently being undertaken. It is not a concept of which they are familiar and, for some, it looks too political. This puts Metropolitan Mission in a difficult position of trying to please two very different types of constituents – recipients of direct service and white donors and funders. While Metropolitan Mission is certainly in transition, the resolution of the dialectic in the habitus at this point seems to produce practices that very few can recognize as legitimate. It is certainly mismatched from the space of West End, broadly, and results in quite insular programming and projects.

Magic City Agriculture Project: Research in Practice

In one of the few works that addresses the way race works in doing research, France Twine and Jonathan Warren (2000) produce an edited volume that tackles the subject in depth. Mostly, they show that the researcher's positionality and therefore perception is shaped by his/her race, and that what the research can accomplish in the field is to a great extent determined by race, among other positionalities such as gender, nation of origin, sexual orientation, and religion. I have discussed my particular

positionality as a Southern, white male and also a dissident bourgeois in Alabama at length above. This positionality shapes how I view the initiatives of Metropolitan Mission and SCD, and helps guide the programming of MCAP.

MCAP is a non-profit organization formed in the summer of 2012. Previously, it was a for-profit consulting firm that tried to do community development by designing gardens for wealthy people and using the money to aid in black communities. The problem with this strategy is that there is no market for garden design, so we transformed the organization into a non-profit. The organization has six members of the board of directors, four of whom are people of color and three of whom are black. The president and vice president are white and the secretary/treasurer is black. Board members are chosen when a member of the board suggests a new member. That member is then elected by a simple majority. Thus far, all board members have been confirmed unanimously. The lack of black leadership at the top is an acknowledged problem. MCAP has three programs – urban agriculture development, Anti-racist Allies Training, and an oral history project for Hillman Station.

When I first began working with SCD, I did not understand why they organized themselves in the manner that they do. What looked leaderless and directionless, was in fact diffuse leadership with a deep commitment to their community. What seemed to be an overly harsh approach to dealing with the poor and downtrodden in the community was a thought out approach rooted in the harsh realities of the real world (though I still believe the overall disciplinary stance is too harsh). The primary impediment to my understanding the programs and goals of SCD were initially the racial stereotypes prevalent in my socialization. Though I espoused a definite anti-racist ethic, I still fell prey to white supremacy during the early portion of my work with SCD.

Miranda Fricker (2007) has called this "epistemic injustice." She basically argues that stereotypes are a necessary part of human interaction; that they provide us information about people that we otherwise would not have. However, these stereotypes are often constructed out of unequal processes like race, class, and gender. In order to do justice to a speaker, the hearer must have flexible stereotypes that can change in the face of new information. While my original engagement with SCD was marked with epistemic injustice, the more that we worked together, the more I was able to interact with blacks justly. Epistemic injustices often happen to black and poor communities because of both the inflexibility of outside organization's stereotypes and because of the habitus associated with those outside organizations, and because of the power behind the definition, use, and exercise of dominant stereotypes.

As noted in Chapter 1, research is a process by which a researcher gains legitimate peripheral participation into a particular community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Analysis of that process is the primary source of written research reports, dissertations, books, and research articles. There is another process that should be added to constructing and participating in a particular community of practice, that of creating stereotypes that function in a just manner, stereotypes that can change in the face of new information, instead of stereotypes that are foist on populations unjustly. As the research moves from peripheral participation to participation in a community of practice, that researcher moves from treating a particular research subject with epistemic injustice to cooperating with a research partner in a just way.

The research methodology behind this project is rooted in the creation of communities of practice, groups of people united into the dedication to one or two types of practices. The community of practice created here through the formal collaboration between MCAP and SCD, and the less formal, but implied cooperation between SCD, MCAP, and SCG is founded on a basis of resistance to white supremacy and community development through urban agriculture. There is, however, a division of labor. MCAP takes the lead in publicly challenging white supremacy while the other organizations support, though not necessarily participate in our interventions. This is not to say that they don't resist white supremacy in some way. In fact, their entire project can be understood as a form of resistance to the white supremacist conditions that structure their neighborhoods, but SCD's and SCG's resistance is more implied than explicit. SWCG operates a community garden of which MCAP provides some of the management, aids in writing grants, and runs the oral history project for Hillman Station. This helps to create commons for the neighborhood by providing support for SCD and SWCG. MCAP does not participate in SCG's garden.

Thus, the community of practice around urban agriculture is, at this point, loosely organized. All of the members of each organization know and are familiar with each other and, at times, they help with other's projects. However, there has been no formal planning between the organizations to attempt to present a unified voice for this underrepresented side of the movement. MCAP has attempted to organize meetings about collaboration and cooperation, but there was generally little desire to "be aligned with a bunch of people just to do it," as one activist in the group put it. I suspect that if there were the opportunity to collaborate with money behind it, there would be more interest in cooperation. So, generally, the community of practice around urban agriculture and resistance to white supremacy is about the shared commitment to transforming individual communities through the practice of urban agriculture, and by supporting each other in a general fashion.

The methodology represented by Paulo Freire's teachings is fundamentally about change, but this change gets worked out in unpredictable ways. The research implemented through MCAP is designed to create a community of practice that can act as an agent of change throughout metro Birmingham and within that community. The community of practice that has been created is, in large part, very loosely organized and oriented to the transformation of neighborhoods through community development. I have found that the single biggest impetus toward people believing that agriculture can be used for community development is a visit to Growing Power in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Some of the members in our community of practice had previously visited Growing Power. They saw first hand how a vision, led by blacks, of integration, diversity, economic development, health, and spiritual healing all through the practice of urban agriculture. For at least one member of our community, Growing Power is a community of people who are very similar to her – like-minded in terms of spirituality and also in terms of what urban agriculture can do for communities. Though MCAP and others have laid the seeds for a vision about urban agriculture, it took a trip to Growing Power for that vision to come to fruition in our community of practice. I believe the main reason for this is that seeing the vision in action showed to the people in the community of practice what is possible.

Probably our most powerful program in pushing transformation and the program that adheres most closely to Paulo Freire's teachings and functions as a democratized theory-building process is the Anti-racist Allies Workshop. We initially tried to partner with local organizations to do the workshop, including Metropolitan Mission, but everyone declined. We decided to go forward with the project by ourselves after being pushed to do it by a member of a local, well-known, economic development non-profit. We designed a curriculum that included reading a book a month for six months, and meeting to discuss the book. The books began with discussions of race from white perspectives (Wise, 2011), from black perspectives (Fanon, 1952), and from a gendered perspective (hooks, 1999). It continued through historical solutions to racial disparities from Malcolm X (X & Haley, 1965) and Martin Luther King Jr. (1967). It concluded with a discussion of race in the food system underpinned by Alison Alkon and Julian Agyeman's (2011) book *Cultivating Food Justice.*

The process began with 9 people in the discussion, including three blacks, one Indian American, and five whites. This first workshop presented a clear opportunity for oppressors and the oppressed to confront and learn from each other. The oppressed in the group spoke clearly and powerfully about the experience of oppression, speaking of how whites do not truly understand what it is like to have to deal with racism on a daily basis and on the weight of racism in their life, on a very personal level. One black woman from Metropolitan Mission divulged a clear theory of white supremacy in which whites get many advantages and believe they deserve them and blacks get many disadvantages and believe they also deserve those disadvantages. In essence, she said that blacks believe they have less power to control their lives than they really have and that whites feel entitled to power to control their lives and the lives of others. The discussion was extremely powerful and weighed heavily on the hearts of many in the room. One of our white board members was crying because she felt a mix of anger and hurt that another of our board members, who is black, expressed doubt that anything could ever change, a palpable sense of despair.

Subsequent meetings were less powerful. The woman from Metropolitan Mission who articulated the theory of race chose not to continue attending. Her reasoning was that the process opened old wounds and that she thought that whites should decide what they thought about race and that blacks should decide what they thought, and then for the two sides to meet. This is common in the urban agriculture movement. The vision articulated by the Growing Food and Justice Initiative, a division of Growing Power, is that whites should talk to whites about white supremacy. While I understand the impetus for this notion, it is important for whites to hear what the experience of racism is like, and it is important for people of color to see that whites can change. It is also important for whites and people of color to learn to have meaningful conversations with each other concerning a subject that is so emotionally charged that often everyone leaves meetings feeling beat up, down, and depressed. Our board member who expressed a sense of despair has rallied behind the cause of racial justice because he has seen real changes in the attitudes and approaches of white board members in our organization and participants in the Allies Workshop. He has seen, however small, changes in the way that whites interact with blacks and he believes in this process. He says, generally, that MCAP is the "most important thing he has ever done."

All was not perfect, however. One black participant said that he felt that black experience was "pornographized" or fetishized because whites reacted with shock and dismay. To combat this, in future trainings, we will use a highly structured method for sharing both about black experience and white experience, and there will be a person of color leading the discussion about black experience. While the process is painful for everyone involved, there are ways to mitigate that pain through structured sharing, using "I" instead of "you" statements, and slowly guiding the group through the concepts instead of unloading them all at once.

Anti-racist trainings were the most formal democratized research process of this project, in the sense that the explicit purpose of the trainings were to develop concepts and ideas about race. Theory building occurred during the conversations, as did data collection and analysis. The subsequent knowledge produced was implemented through a strategy for communicating anti-racism to the broader public described below. Though the process was small, and many voices from the food movement were missing from the table, the process was overall a success because people came away with a better understanding of race as a form of social control and not as individual bigotry and helped change the perspectives of participants. White participants later told me that when the encountered racism outside the training they could better recognize it because of the training. They expressed thanks for having an entire new perspective revealed to them In truth, it could better be titled pedagogy of the oppressors, because the oppressors learned more about themselves and how people of color experience racism than the oppressed learned. The oppressed learned that whites can change, and this gave them hope. Two of our black board members are excited about the potential of the trainings saying that they could "change Birmingham."

The meetings dwindled down to four and five people, with one black person, our board member. Much of the latter meetings were about strategizing as to how the group can carry an anti-racist message to the public. The strategy that was developed was that there needed to be one person, leading the charge, with radical, in your face ideas. This is my job, and a continuation of what I had been doing with my blog. Others were to work within their own organizations and communities starting conversations about white supremacy and institutional racism. The radical makes space for others to operate more freely in terms of how they can talk about racism within their own circle. This has been the strategy of my blog from the beginning. I will return to this in a minute. First, I want to talk about our major failure, the Community Garden Coalition.

MCAP began the process of reviving the CCG in the summer of 2012. One of our members organized the first meeting which consisted of half of our board of directors, 3 people, and about 20 other white, professional urban farmers from Birmingham. This was our first mistake. By not taking diversity seriously from the beginning, we significantly limited the scope of possibility for the CCG. Through subsequent meetings is became apparent that the members of the CCG did not understand that white urban farmers in black communities looks like an "invasion." To rectify this, we pushed that anti-racist training be part of membership in the CCG. After heated debate, it became clear that members of the CCG were not going to accept any form of anti-racism as an integral part of the organization. Members of the CCG stated that we were "acting like they were racist," to which we responded "you are; we all are." Maybe not the best strategy. We pulled out of the group.

The second and most important mistake that we made was that we communicated about anti-racism poorly. After a series of discussions about the departure from the CCG, members of MCAP have decided that it is better to couch our agenda in personal terms instead of throwing theory about the way society is structured at them. In doing this, we can soften the blow for people, and reveal to them how we have changed from a perspective of colorblindness to that of anti-racism. We felt that our communication strategy was too confrontational and was speaking in a language that people in the group could not understand.   For instance, we jumped right into an analysis of institutional racism when members of the CCG thought that racism was personal. This is not to say that the outcome would be any different, but a more personal communication strategy would have made space for more conversation and less confrontation.

Finally, I want to discuss something that I consider to be part and parcel to the agenda of MCAP, my blog, Food Justice Politics. I started Food Justice Politics in the summer of 2011 as a way to communicate about anti-racism and economic development to members of the alternative agriculture movement in Birmingham. While it is hard to gauge the effect of the blog on the food movement, we have seen change in at least one person who was not initially on board with our agenda. This is not to say that this person agrees with me, but that the blog has helped revealed some of the institutional shortcomings in terms of dealing with grassroots, black organizations and communities. The blog has variously been described by some leaders of the food movement and advocates for gentrification as "harsh," "immoral," "race sensitive," and "angry," and I consider these characterizations to be common in anti-racist communications and a sign that I am doing something right.

One member of the statewide food movement called and yelled at me for 15 minutes about one of the posts. Basically he called to yell at me because I claimed that no black had been interviewed for a Grist (2012) article. While he was correct that I made a false claim, it did not change the thrust of the article, that the local food movement is promoting white heroes. I subsequently discovered that the black person that was interviewed for the article is his employee and that his organization has only two people of color in it, one on the board and one on staff. In using his employee to claim that somehow the food movement is diverse, the movement leader tokenizes his staff person, wielding him as a weapon against criticism.

This represents the radical, confrontational side of the social change strategy of MCAP, an approach that creates space for other approaches by making them seem more mundane. By being more radical than what would have been previously considered radical, the confrontational approach makes space for more progressive ideas.

The strategy taken by MCAP and implemented in this research is one in which outside organizations work to aid black communities in their projects and struggles, and then advocate for an anti-racist perspective with whites and white communities. This has developed throughout the research process as a response to the needs of black communities, which don't have the time or the resources to implement a full-on Freirean project. This also conforms to what black activists have said that whites can do to forward the movement. They can help where needed and talk to white people about white supremacy. MCAP contributes to commoning by aiding in the processes already put in place by SCD, SWCG, and the neighborhood association.

Commoning as Alternative to Racialization and Capital Accumulation

In Chapter 3, I showed how the racialization of space led to a food policy council founded on white habitus. The drastic level of residential segregation means that blacks and whites have starkly different habitus, leading to the inability for either to produce practices recognizable to the other. In Chapter 4, I show how economic accumulation, used in conjunction with racialization is displacing black space and creating white space in downtown Birmingham. This produces a white habitus with a taste for trendy local food, a specific type of healthy lifestyle that includes walking, eating fresh fruits and vegetables, and patronizing local foods restaurants. This white habitus works to buttress processes of exclusion in Birmingham and produces new spaces in the place of dislocated black space. The aspect of habitus described in Chapter 3 portrays habitus as a principle that reproduces durable, spatialized structures. In Chapter 4, I discuss a shift in habitus based on physical space, but a shift that reproduces hierarchal social relations. In this chapter, I analyze a habitus and related space that countermands the processes of racialization and capital accumulation.

By combining the system of relations in a way that produces processes of communing, SCD, MCAP, and SCG create spaces and a related habitus that run counter to economic accumulation and racialization. This, however, does not represent a shift in space or habitus, but a continuation of the black tradition of commoning prevalent through Birmingham's history. This commoning is rooted in the black church, civic leagues and the neighborhood association. A habitus that produces practices congruent with a neighborhood culture and ethic, political engagement with powerful bodies, and community service has a long-standing tradition in Birmingham's black neighborhoods. The processes, controlled almost exclusively by whites that produce spaces of deprivation are contested by the black community through processes of commoning, and this contestation erupts every six months or so in some sort of public political spectacle, in which the leaders of the neighborhood associations run counter to (almost exclusively white) growth machine actors in the region. In 2011 and 2012, three such events have been the closing of inpatient services at a hospital for the indigent, the promotion of an occupational tax that only taxed working people, and the fight over the superintendent of the school board, which eventually led to state takeover. The state subsequently enforced an austerity budget on the school system, closing seven schools. Prior to state takeover there was talk of raising property taxes to cover the financial woes of the school system. The power that these neighborhood leaders do have is firmly rooted in black communities and in processes of commoning. The roots of change are rooted firmly in a tradition of resistance to the powerful and alternatives to deprivation and exclusion.

MCAP, however, promotes changes in habitus through its antiracist training. My habitus has been changed over the years by the study of critical race theory, Marxian theory, and my work with black communities. Because of this, I have developed a sort of anti-racist whiteness that I now use to influence other whites to change their habitus as well. My habitus has been inculcated in numerous spaces, from extremely white spaces to almost exclusively black spaces. This gives me a unique positionality of being multi-spatial and enables me to produce practices and interpretations of those practices that can be recognized by a wide swath of groups in the Birmingham area. The result has been a program, developed collectively, for anti-racism in which we are implementing changes in habitus at different levels, individual, community, and institutional. This in turn will promote changes in how dialectics are resolved in space. For SCD and Metropolitan

Mission, the production of common space is a point of leverage that produces a community-based habitus. For MCAP, the specific habitus of individual social agents is a point of leverage, promoting changes in space.

Conclusion

This chapter had documented how community based organizations with the help of outside technical assistance organizations use urban agriculture to do community development thereby creating common pool resources or commons. SCD and SWCG use a network of organizations in the neighborhood, including the Southwest Baptist Church and the neighborhood association combined with outside organizations like MCAP, Tuskegee University, Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network, Alabama A&M, and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System to create food that can be utilized by the seniors and the less fortunate in the area. This is part of SCD's project to create commons for the whole person.

Metropolitan Mission and SCG use a different strategy to create commons for their community, that of Christian Community Development. Rooted in evangelism, and focused primarily on the three R's of relocation, redistribution, and reconciliation, CCD creates a tight-knit, insular community that focuses inward on creating common pool resources for the church community. While Metropolitan Mission does direct service to the broader community, the focus of its community development activities is on members of the church. The garden itself offers employment to youth in the church and a space for mentorship and the development of leadership and responsibility. While the structure of Metropolitan Mission resembles that of the Methodist Church that sponsors it - it is top down and led by whites, there are some democratic structures that allow community members to exert some control over the church and the garden. Overall, SCG and SHC are limited by the apolitical stance of CCD and the insular nature of the organized community. The reason for this is mainly because of how the tension between white funders and black community members gets worked out in space and habitus.

MCAP has attempted to organize these two groups into one, unified community of practice as part of the research methods of this dissertation. To date, the attempt has mostly failed as the groups are supportive of one another, but only loosely organized. The reasons for this failure are complex, but revolve around two intertwined vectors, the lack of available capital to back a project and the lack of political legitimacy in these communities. As of the time of this writing, MCAP is primarily seen as a helper organization in western Birmingham without the political capital to do much by way of organizing. Because of this, we have focused our efforts on anti-racism and helping Hillman Station organizations build commons. The anti-racist efforts have been very transformative, and I can say have been overall successful despite the lack of participation.

Conclusion: The Simple Fact is the Black and Diverse Organizations Have Better Ideas for Birmingham

This dissertation is specifically concerned with the way racialized and classed processes within the alternative food and agriculture movement produce space. This approach is underpinned by a dialectical ontology that sees social processes as constantly in flux, producing permanences or things. I develop a modification of Lefebvrian's (1974) framework for space using the categories organization of power, legitimate culture, and practice. These spatial categories are produced by racial and class processes and reflect these processes.

Race and class have consistently shaped Alabama and Birmingham throughout its history. After the Civil War, planters and industrialists struggled to reconstitute a racial system, and race relations were categorized as *laissez faire* meaning that, though there was no systemized approach (like Jim Crow) to regulations structuring black-white relations, whites generally dominated through a culture of white supremacy. The organized power behind this white supremacy was the planter-industrialist class, backed by both Northern and Southern capital, that was eventually threatened by the populist movement, and the social practice associated with space in Alabama was generally racist and shaped by white supremacy, even permeating the populist movement (Connerly, 2005; Flynt, 2004; Wilson, America's Johannesburg, 2000a).

After the defeat of the populist movement, the planter-industrial class moved to prevent any form of working class solidarity in the future. They ensured this by instituting Jim Crow segregation, which, like slavery, gave working class whites a reason to side with the planter-industrial class. That reason was white supremacy. In Alabama, they instituted Jim Crow first by centralizing all political power at the state level, effectively removing any form of local democracy. Cities forwarded this cause by promoting ordinances designed to draw divisions between white and black social worlds, policies that banned such things as playing checkers and using the same restroom facilities. Jim Crow segregation created a great concern for white racial purity and promoted solidarity among the white working class and ruling elites (Connerly, 2005; Flynt, 2004; Wilson, 2000a; 2000b).

In the 1950s, Fred Shuttlesworth organized the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights to push for desegregation. He organized this group because Governor John Patterson passed a law banning outside the state organizations from operating in Alabama, effectively removing the NAACP from the picture. This may have been a blessing in disguise as the NAACP was focused on litigation, while ACMHR was focused on direct action. The first major initiative was the Freedom Rides in 1961, organized by SNCC. Eugene "Bull" Connor allowed the Klan to beat Freedom Riders for 15 minutes before the local police intervened. The incident was broadcast globally, painting Birmingham as a bad place for business. Segregationist Sid Smyer recognized that segregation was bad for business and began to organize the Birmingham business leaders against Connor (Connerly, 2005; McWhorter D. , 2001; Wilson, America's Johannesburg, 2000a).

In a perfect storm, Connor was deposed and ACMHR and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference organized boycotts in early May 1963. However, Connor sued saying that his removal from office was illegal, effectively

creating two governments of Birmingham for about a month. The tension mounted, and in a moment, Connor created the image that symbolizes Birmingham then and now. He turned fire hoses and dogs on the protestors, most of whom were children. Because of these shocking acts, the boycotts and protest worked, and Birmingham business leaders acquiesced to protestors' demands (Connerly, 2005; McWhorter D. , 2001; Wilson, 2000a).

This marked a shift in the spatial organization in Birmingham. Jim Crow was an obviously spatial project, and the organized power (The "Big Mules," or business leaders including Sid Smyner) behind Bull Connor and the Klan turned on him to back the protestors. Blacks could use public facilities, eat at the same lunch counters as whites, and buy houses in whatever neighborhood they could afford. They also could vote. Whites reacted to this spatial liberation with a spatial strategy of their own – to leave Birmingham. After the Civil Rights Movements, whites left Birmingham in droves, abandoning the city and taking much of the economic activity with them. This process led to the creation of ghetto conditions in many neighborhoods in Birmingham and the creation of affluent suburbs to the south of the city (Connerly, 2005; Henson & Munsey, n.d.).

Over the past ten years, Birmingham has undergone another stark spatial transformation – gentrification. Gentrification is the process by which investors and urban pioneers work in unacknowledged concert to transform a section of a city once abandoned by capital (Ley, 2003; Smith, 1996; 2002). Part of this process is to remove populations deemed undesirable to the new urban pioneers, who are almost always white. These undesirable populations are often poor and people of color. In Birmingham, this process began with the demolition of public housing in downtown Birmingham, displacing hundreds of families and paving the way for new urban pioneers, who moved to the loft district directly adjacent to the Hope VI mixed income housing that replaced Metropolitan Gardens public housing (Connerly, 2005).

Integral to fomenting this transformation is changing the targeted area from one racialized as black and deemed dangerous to one racialized as white and deemed safe and trendy. A culture must be created to support this transformation that, in Birmingham, includes a specific taste for high-end local food. The habitus of gentrifiers produces practices appropriate to the redevelopment of downtown Birmingham in ways that support increased profits (Bourdieu, 1977; 1979; 2005; Ley, 2003). This is both a class and race process in that gentrification seeks to attract the young, new middle class and those people are almost exclusively white. Indeed, the specific narrative of "fresh, local food" is a continuation of narratives on health and well-being that have worked to reinforce notions of racial purity throughout the South's history (Cooley, 2011).

The local food movement in Birmingham has done a nice job of putting issues relevant to small family farms on the table. But they have done this by utilizing racialized narratives and by lending tacit support to gentrification (Alkon & McCullen, 2010; Guthman, "If They Only Knew": Color Blindness and Universalism in California Alternative Food Institutions, 2008; Slocum, 2006; 2007). They have also begun to try to affect policy through the creation of Birmingham-Jefferson Food Policy Council. This process revealed stark divisions along racial lines and the exclusion of points of view not falling in line with the "know your farmer" or "eat healthy" rhetoric.

The process for creating a food policy council began with convening a committee of activists, public health professionals, urban farmers, and others to create a food charter that would lay the ideological framework for the movement locally. However, almost all of the participants in the convening committee were white, and most of the discussion focused on how to package movement narratives in ways that would be palatable to middle class and wealthy whites. The process led to the creation of a food policy council that had only 5 of 21 people of color, striking in a county that is about evenly divided between blacks and whites.

The reasons for this are complex. Certainly, most of the participants are not individually racist, and conversations and interviews revealed such. However, deep seated, implicit bias, produced by a white habitus, created spaces in which black perspectives were either disallowed or tokenized. Again, this is not because of the racist intent of the organizers, but because of the illegibility of black racial capital in white spaces. The habitus functions optimally in spaces that produced it, and black habitus produced in black spaces has trouble producing practices that can be understood by whites. The only option is to produce practices that are legible as black in white spaces, i.e. to speak for blacks at large.

Black and white spaces are produced by a complex mix of racial and class processes. These processes produce spaces, which bear the imprint of those processes – in organization, culture and practice. The characteristics of those spaces are internalized in the habitus that in turn reproduces racial and class processes. The consequence of having a highly segregated metro area is that blacks and whites have difficulty in communicating and otherwise working together because of the stark differences in the spaces in which their habitus is inculcated. The solution to these and other issues is complex, but involves some combination of community organizing, community development, and anti-racist training and practice.

The community development solution to the issues documented in this dissertation begins with community organizing. Community organizing has three major approaches: the Alinskyan approach (Alinsky, 1971), the ACORN approach (Delgado, 1986), and popular education (Horton & Freire, 1990; Freire, 2010; 1998). The Alinskyan approach and the ACORN approach are similar in that they seek to organize the community around a political issue that is relevant to that community. They differ in that the Alinskyan approach utilizes existing community institutions while the ACORN approach creates a popular organization. The popular education approach, the approach that I use, seeks to organize a community of practice around learning about and therefore challenging oppression. These are the heartbeat of community development, which can take numerous directions. The existing communities of practice around urban agriculture were diagrammed in Chapter 5, and I will briefly summarize here.

The community of practice surrounding urban agriculture and resistance to white supremacy involves the loosely oriented collaboration of specifically five local organizations, though others are involved. Those five organizations are Metropolitan Mission of which Southern Community Garden is a program, Southern House Church, the organizing arm of Metropolitan Mission, Southwest Community Development, and Magic City Agriculture Project. Of these, MCAP is an outside technical assistance organization that aids SCD in farm management and grant writing. We also are the only organization explicitly resisting white supremacy with my blog, Food Justice Politics,

and our anti-racist trainings. For the other organizations, resisting white supremacy is implicit, through attempting to elevate their neighborhood through commoning. Metropolitan Mission and SCD accomplish this commoning through markedly different strategies.

Metropolitan Mission's strategy is Christian Community Development, which has 8 precepts. The most important of these are relocation, redistribution, and reconciliation. The organization has a rather strange arrangement in that it is funded mostly by white people and white organizations, has mostly white leadership, but operates in an almost exclusively black neighborhood. Their strategy for community development is markedly apolitical, making it acceptable to Metropolitan Mission's white funders, but severely limiting it in terms of mobilizing people to address their problems through the political system. However, the other programming of SHC, Metropolitan Mission, and SCG is quite capable of producing commons including employment. The church acts as a mentoring body to young people harmed by white supremacy, as does the internship program operated by the garden. They also produce food for the community and give members of the community an opportunity to direct the garden through the garden advisory board.

SCD has a more traditional strategy for community development. They operate a number of programs that provide resources to the community they serve, but they also mobilize politically through the neighborhood association system. They have recently developed plans to build seven gardens in the surrounding area and to hire someone as full time garden manager. This will provide food, economic development, and employment within the region, and fits squarely into their vision of providing for the "whole man," meaning social, cultural, spiritual, physical, and political resources. The church with which they are affiliated, Southwest Baptist Church, funds SCD almost exclusively. They don't resist white supremacy explicitly, but do address the consequences of that way of organizing society.

MCAP aids SCD in managing their farm Southwest Community Garden, operates an oral history project in Hillman Station, and conducts the Anti-racist Allies Training Workshops. In this, we aid in commoning for Hillman Station, both on a physical and cultural level. Our most important program is our anti-racist program, which talks to whites about white supremacy, challenging them to think about their position in a racially organized world. These three organizations form the community of practice around resistance to white supremacy and urban agriculture.

The practice of commoning creates a space alternative to that of capital accumulation and racialization. I stop short of saying that these are spaces of resistance because I do not believe that the people of Hillman Station and West End would characterize it as such. The dire conditions caused by disinvestment, white flight, and racism are addressed by these organizations through their strategy to produce commons through community development. Because of the destruction of the welfare state and the lack of attention paid locally to black communities, these organizations must design their own strategy, their own space to address the needs of these communities. Furthermore, at least one of these organizations, SCD, does so with very little resources and an all volunteer staff. More attention needs to be paid to these organizations, but particularly to the strategy of commoning and anti-racism, by local funders and foundations. This is how I will conclude the dissertation and the topic of the next section.

Future Directions

Future directions for research go down three roads. The first road is more research on gentrification in Birmingham, specifically in the neighborhood of Avondale. The second road is media research documenting how white perspectives are disproportionately presented in the Birmingham media community. The third road is research on the statewide food policy council that is repeating the same mistakes of the Birmingham-Jefferson Food Policy Council.

Avondale is an up and coming neighborhood in east Birmingham. In the past five years, it has seen the creation of a trendy brewery and pub and the development of a local foods grocery store. The neighborhood is majority black and low-income. Future research needs to determine the effect of these developments on property values and to ascertain is there is demographic transition in the neighborhood. Furthermore, it should investigate the role of local foods both in economic development and in lending cultural legitimacy in the transition of the neighborhood. Anecdotal research suggests that there is some increase in property values and demographic transition.

Black leaders are routinely dismissed and denigrated by local media outlets. One journalist, convinced of his own perspective, stated to me that he wondered "why these leaders continue to get elected" and how to change the opinions of the people electing these leaders. One leader, John Rogers, is firmly rooted and legitimate in the black community, but is reviled by whites. Rogers has consistently supported policies that favor poor and working people, such as blocking the occupational tax and standing against the closing of Cooper Green, an indigent hospital. However, the white media treat him like he's an evil, manipulative destroyer of Jefferson County. New research needs to systematically document the way that black leaders are portrayed as opposed to white leaders.

The last line of research that needs to be undertaken is an investigation of the statewide food policy council. The committee choosing the council is made up almost exclusively of whites, and the main organizer is the same person who organized the Birmingham-Jefferson Food Policy Council. Preliminary research shows that the organization of the council is curious in that it does not seek to represent the interests of its constituents, but to forward a legislative agenda congruent with the mission and vision of a few agricultural non-profits. The reason that this is curious is because there is no reason why those non-profits can't just advocate for policy changes on their own. Why start a council, particularly if the process is not going to be representative of Birmingham at large? It does not seem to be a secret that this council is not representative and that it has a clear ideological agenda since it is housed at one of the statewide non-profits. (There are three major non-profits associated with this, and the ED of one is the chairman of the board of the other). While it is unlikely that I would ever get access to this process because of my reputation, there needs to be an in-depth analysis of how this FPC works, who it speaks for, and what its purposes are.

A Different Vision

There has been a lot of negativity from the academic perspective toward the idea of diversity (Rodriquez, 2007), the argument being that just having different faces at the table does not necessarily mean that there is a justice perspective. I understand this

criticism and agree that in some ways it is valid. The argument is that we should have an anti-racist perspective instead. Anti-racism and diversity are not competing paradigms – diversity is a result, anti-racism is a process. What is needed is an approach that sees diversity as the goal, to be accomplished through anti-racism. Surely no one would argue that our board would be fine with all white people, so long as they were anti-racist. In some way, that would indicate exclusion and not inclusion or expansiveness in Carolyn Finney's words (2010). In the language of this dissertation, anti-racism is a key process in the transformation of particularly white habitus founded on notions of colorblindness.

For me, anti-racism is the key to moving the alternative agriculture movement in the direction of justice and away from interventions that are ineffective or lend credence to the initiatives of the powerful such as gentrification. It is key in transforming space and habitus overwhelmingly shaped by processes of racialization and capital accumulation. I say this because anti-racism has been the tool of my decade-long transformation from a generally racist auto-mechanic to a radical anti-racist academic. As a mechanic, I lived in black neighborhoods, but because of my lack of experience and my relatively privileged upbringing, I really did not relate to those around me. To contradict Slocum (2007), closeness and desire did not work to dissolve or renegotiate my whiteness. In fact, it probably reinforced it, since I believed that being in the same place as blacks made me equal to them. I needed critical race theory and anti-racism to show me my own privilege and reveal to me how I benefitted from racism. Most of this happened in college and during my first years of graduate school. The process of this research pushed me to a new sort of resolve and a deeper, more personal understanding of race and its effects.

Teaching the GED class was quite eye opening for me. It was a situation in which I saw how blacks have been failed at every level of education from day one. Some of the students, who were usually between 20-35 years old, had third and fourth grade levels of educations, and a few had such poor computer skills that they were likely unqualified for a job at McDonald's. I realized, quite quickly, that there was very, very little that I could do for these people. I tried to teach them about current events and about black history, but I genuinely felt that I was failing them in the same way that the schools system had failed them. I used to give a couple of them rides to and from their house and just listen to their stories. Mostly, they wanted what everybody else wants – a good stable job, love, and opportunity, but I recognized that these students by and large were structurally excluded from stable jobs (though some of them worked at fast food restaurants) by white supremacy in general and the poor education system specifically. Getting a GED, while it does increase opportunities, does not increase opportunities that much, and the options with a GED are not that much better than options without a GED. The students understood this, as there was little seriousness about attaining a GED judging by the lack of consistent attendance. These people had been beaten down so much by white supremacy that they only saw the immediate future – they didn't know how to plan a career or organize themselves to be successful. They looked only to the next day. The head teacher, executive director, and I struggled to find ways to maintain attendance and interest in the GED class, but it was fruitless.

I became aware that the only way to truly rectify this situation was to end white supremacy. While there are piecemeal reforms that could help the schools, like a real dedication to integration of black and white schools at all levels beginning with the

creation of a metropolitan school system, the underlying processes, racialization and capital accumulation, that create an environment of despair cannot be addressed without seriously addressing white supremacy and the habitus founded on it. This begins with having real conversations, founded on anti-racism that can move us to a place of action. I'm not an expert on schools by any stretch, but it seems that, in order for schools to get better, all the other negative processes happening in the community also have to improve. This starts with resistance to white supremacy.

Our anti-racist training classes are one way that we are resisting white supremacy. Out of this process, I have developed a friendship with a young, black engineer named Austin Dada. By all measures, Austin is quite successful. He has a degree in engineering from UAB and is pursuing his Masters' in the same subject. He also hails from Pratt City, an almost exclusively black neighborhood in Birmingham. Pratt City was hit by a tornado in April of 2011, and as a result numerous volunteers flocked to the area. Austin said that this felt like an invasion since white people didn't really know how to act and didn't do much productive while they were there. Because of Austin, and because of anti-racism on which our friendship is founded, I have been given a window into the daily struggles of a successful black man.

Austin talks to me in detail about his oppression. He notices when people cross the street because they are scared of him. He notices parents pulling their children away from him. He notices that because he is a black professional, he has very few dating options. He says that if it weren't for his parents who told him what was going to happen to him as a black man, he would be dead or worse. Sometimes, he stays up all night angry about how unfair white supremacy is, feeling desperate at times, he wants to give up on everything, MCAP included. He tells me that he thinks about race all the time and constantly worries about talking about race in public because he's afraid that he will be characterized as "angry."

What I've learned from Austin is just how personal racial oppression is and how blacks have to do everything right and have the perfect familial situation in order to succeed in a world stacked against them. I've learned that, while I can attempt to understand this, I can never quite have that experience. In a way, I had a similar experience as an auto mechanic, in that people saw the dirt underneath my fingernails and my greasy clothes and immediately judged me as less than intelligent. But, I could stop being an auto mechanic; Austin can't stop being black. In fact, compared to Austin, I was generally a screw up at his age, something he doesn't have the luxury of doing. And I'm not sensationalizing any of this. As Austin told me, any black person on the planet has had numerous experiences just like these – they are the normal condition of everyday life for blacks. Whites often reacted to Austin in our anti-racist trainings with a mixture of shock and sadness, and in some ways this reinforces the experience of inequality for blacks by making injustice dramatically visible. He says that he tries not to think about and to be as successful as he possibly can. Austin has shown me that my white privilege and black oppression is real and powerful, something that I knew only theoretically prior to this research.

All of these experiences profoundly changed my relationship to blacks in Birmingham. I recognized the need to listen and listen closely to what they have to say, because their strategies for attacking inequality are deeply rooted in real world experience and the desire for community development. My relationship with the people that I

worked with in my hometown reinforced and strengthened my resolve by giving me a window into the micro-power of racial oppression. It also helped me to push my friends to speak honestly about their oppression because people, especially white people, need to hear how race is still real and powerful. It made me more dedicated to the anti-racist project as a strategy for dealing with historical and current injustices, and it helped me to recognize that my anti-racist perspective prepared me to understand the experiences of the students in the GED class and Austin. In retrospect, I would use the skills that I have gained teaching college students to develop a more interactive and fun class and not concentrate so much on my "teaching." I would focus on learning. It allowed me to place those experiences in context.

This is why anti-racism is the key for the alternative food and agriculture movement in Birmingham. As documented in Chapter 3, the movement has little participation of people of color and is founded on a culture that reinforces white supremacy. There are blacks participating in the movement, addressed in Chapter 5, but they get very little attention from the moneyed parties in the movement – wealthy donors and foundations. The fundamental divide here is the habitus, or the fact that blacks can't produce practices that whites recognize as legitimate and whites can't produce practices that black recognize as legitimate. What is needed is a place for whites and blacks to start to build solidarity towards addressing current and historical injustices. That foundation is anti-racist, a perspective that understands that the world is hierarchically organized on the basis of race and that, because of this, whites get many unearned privileges and blacks get the lion's share of unearned disadvantages. This perspective opens up the possibilities that begin real conversation not this "dedication to racial reconciliation through depoliticized friendship," and those anti-racist conversations, at least have the potential, to transform into radical political action.

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