5-2013

Negotiating Neoliberalism: Community-Based Organizations and the Production of Urban Place

Caroline S. Devany
Macalester College, cdevany@macalester.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/geography_honors

Part of the Human Geography Commons, Political Economy Commons, Urban, Community and Regional Planning Commons, and the Urban Studies and Planning Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/geography_honors/37

This Honors Project - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Geography Department at DigitalCommons@Macalester College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Geography Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Macalester College. For more information, please contact scholarpub@macalester.edu.
Negotiating Neoliberalism:
Community-Based Organizations and the Production of Urban Place

Caroline Devany
Macalester College
Geography Department
Advised by Professor Dan Trudeau
Defended on April 25, 2013
Negotiating Neoliberalism: Community-Based Organizations and the Production of Urban Place

Caroline Devany

Abstract..............................................................................................................................4

Forward..............................................................................................................................5

Introduction: Negotiating the Tipping Point .................................................................8

Chapter 1- Review of the Literature: ........................................................................15
  1.1 A review of the New Urban Politics.................................................................16
  1.2 The Shadow State .........................................................................................17
  1.3 The Urban Growth Machine..........................................................................19
  1.4 Everyday Life and the Production of Space......................................................22
  1.5 Theoretical Overview......................................................................................27

Chapter 2- Methodology...............................................................................................30
  2.1 Case Study Selection.......................................................................................31
  2.2 Research Methods..........................................................................................36
  2.3 Data Analysis..................................................................................................39

Chapter 3- Organizations and the Negotiation of Land Use.................................41
  3.1 Frogtown Gardens..........................................................................................42
  3.2 Juxtaposition Arts..........................................................................................52

Chapter 4- Spatial Practices and the Production of Place.....................................62
  4.1 Spatial Practices and the Production of Place..................................................62
  4.2 From Consumer to Producer.........................................................................68
  4.3 Returning to the Tipping Point.......................................................................73

Conclusion.....................................................................................................................76

Acknowledgements.....................................................................................................80
Appendix- Quantitative Neighborhood Data.............................................................81
Bibliography...................................................................................................................82
Tables

4.1 Lefebvre’s Triad of Moments........................................67

Figures

1.1 Lefebvre’s Triad ....................................................25
2.1 Case Study Geographies..........................33
3.1 The Imagined Farmstead..........................43
3.2 A View From the Top of the Parcel..............46
3.3 Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Map...........47
3.4 Green Space per Child Map.......................50
3.5 Juxtaposition Arts Campus.......................54
3.6 Juxtaposition Arts Students......................56
3.7 2007 Emerson Ave ..................................60
3.8 Juxtaposition Art’s Campus II....................60
3.9 A Rendering of Proposed Expansion...........61
4.1 Amir’s Garden.................................................66
Abstract

Focusing on two community-based organizations’ roles in producing urban place, this thesis contributes to the “New Urban Politics” literature that explores the neoliberal governance of space. Synthesizing participant observation, informant interviews and ideas introduced in Henri Lefebvre’s *Production of Space* my thesis explores the possibility of aesthetic practices rooted in everyday life to create alternate subjectivities of people and place. While both organizations engage urban governance in ways that do not directly contest neoliberalization, they each affirm participants as agents in the production of urban place in ways that can destabilize the marketization of everyday life.
Forward

In early June of 2012 I found myself looking out of the window of an informant’s apartment unit at the construction of a light rail line below. The intersection of Dale Street and University Avenue was occupied with construction vehicles whose commotion filled the heavy summer air with particles and loud noisemaking it difficult for my informant and the other seniors in her high rise to make it to the library across the street. My informant began to recount the demolition of her childhood neighborhood to make way for Interstate 94, explaining: “[the plans for the freeway] were made on paper as architects do and they didn’t put people in it and so it was messed up...so we had to deal with it” (C, 2012). While these “architects” understood the construction of a freeway as an abstract creation of an arteriole on a map, for my informant and other residents of her neighborhood, the construction process and creation of a freeway meant the division and rupture of a tightly knit community. Throughout the process of working on this thesis, I have often thought back to this interview with mixed feelings of hope and despair. While in her quote my informant claims the agency to recover damages to her neighborhood and community, how can we ever reconcile the losses that were unrecoverable? More generally, what are the real possibilities for us, as urban residents, to control the constant metabolism of urban life happening around us?

Over the past four years, through the lens of geography, I have come to understand the project of social justice as an inherently spatial one. The making and remaking of urban place, which I understand as a location’s material and social attributes, plays a central role in the management of people’s lived experiences from the perspective of both quantifiable phenomena: such as access to resources and the more abstract: such
as feelings of belonging. Thus, the ability to claim one’s self as an agent in managing urban place is a claim to self-determination and greater political agency. While management of bodies through space has been more blatantly evident in other times and places, through processes such as colonization or segregation, it is critical that we acknowledge the production of space as a medium for violence and oppression and in particular how contemporary development processes that we might consider to be objectively economic, such as the construction of a light rail, are necessarily social and engage with power dynamics of race, class, gender and sexuality.

Assembling informant stories of place and its production, the task of the proceeding thesis is to consider the role that community-based organizations might play in creating a more inclusionary production of urban place. While this project began as an effort to understand how organizations might participate in processes of urban development, I have come to understand that the pursuit of spatial justice is not solely contained within the transformation of material landscapes, but also a negotiation taking place through the site of the body via processes of everyday life. This is particularly evident when I think back to many of my own experiences in collaborating with one of my case study organizations, Frogtown Gardens, for the past several years. Throughout the time I have spent in Frogtown I have intersected with a dense social network built around activities of gardening and food. I have been handed a thick handful of fennel from a resident’s garden, offered extra items recently obtained from a trip to the food shelf, biked and walked by numerous backyard garden plots, and listened to numerous stories of residents, from detailed descriptions of making a batch of kimchi in one’s backyard to recollection of childhood memories of growing cucumbers by the railroad
ties. It is through these experiences that I have come to understand this project as an ode to actors and practices of everyday life and the spaces of hope that they might create. While these experiences might not be obviously transformative, it is these experiences rooted in everyday life that might serve as radical interventions in how we conduct ourselves.

The process of writing this thesis has greatly informed my approach to understanding that around me. In particular it has been impactful in helping me mobilize critique in a more nuanced way. While I continue to grapple with the balance between reformism and radicalism, the ways in which I see each organization find redemption in the contradictions and complexities of its work is of great inspiration to me.

I have tried to respectfully represent the work that I understand each of my case study organizations to be engaged in, and their relationship to the pursuit of spatial justice. I take full responsibility for any misrepresentations of people or concepts. I welcome any question, concern, critique, or comment you might have of this project. Contact me at caroline.devany@gmail.com.
Introduction:  
The Tipping Point

“I hang out on West Broadway at times. I’m missing my coffee shop that used to be in the urban league building, Tatta Buna, it’s been gone for five or six years now. I have the luxury to go anywhere that I want to go. I’d like to be able to hang out on a spot on Broadway. I’d like very much for the Avenue Eatery [a new coffee shop on Broadway] to become my third place, but it doesn’t have the feel. I went in there one day and there was country western music playing. There was a woman sitting there working and she asked me ‘Do you like the music? Why don’t we ask them to change it?’ The people who were working there at the time…that was their music. They were not aware that they were in a place where the music should be of a place and not of them. They were carrying their place with them. I wrote to myself: ‘From this position, I think I can see the tipping point’” (B 2012).1

In this quotation, a North Minneapolis resident identifies a complex set of social politics connected to the economic changes occurring in his neighborhood. He describes the ways in which a new coffee shop, one that he wishes to become a community space, fails to reflect the culture of his own neighborhood and instead carries with it that of

1 Throughout this thesis I will refer to informants by an assigned letter of the alphabet for
another. With the mention of tipping point he signifies an understanding of this experience as part of a larger transformation taking place in his neighborhood. While revitalization promises to furnish North Minneapolis with amenities that have long been missing, the articulated idea of a “tipping point” raises the critical question of how new economic relationships formed in revitalization processes might create new boundaries of social inclusion and exclusion.

My informant’s experience is situated within a greater paradigm shift in the political and economic governance of place in US cities. Welfare reforms initiated in the 1980’s, giving shape to the contemporary neoliberal state, that have shifted state responsibilities from the managerial provision of services to a more entrepreneurial role in catalyzing growth and development, have had significant impact on how urban place is developed (Hackworth 2007; Harvey 1989; Newman and Lake 2006). These Neoliberal reforms stem from a revival of liberalism, a political ideology that emerged during the Enlightenment emphasizing natural rights to life, liberty in property. Informed by these tenants, Neoliberalism advocates for decreased state regulation of the market as a means to realize greater freedom (Hackworth 2007). Geographers have referred to these new urban governance conditions and their connection to the treatment of urban land as the New Urban Politics (NUP) (Macleod 2011; Macleod and Jones 2011).

Literature describing the New Urban Politics has concluded such reclamation of land by private capital is disenfranchising inhabitants as actors in shaping urban place, or the social relationships and attributes of built environments in cities. Scholars of the New Urban Politics have framed participation in urban life as increasingly dependent upon one’s ability to participate as a consumer, or property owner (Ibid). Geographers Dear
and Dahmnn (2008) go so far as to compare the contemporary importance of property ownership to that of occupation during the middle ages in determining one’s status as a full member in society. This increased privatization poses serious threat to inhabitants’ ability to participate in claiming autonomy in and over space. In order to destabilize such marketization as natural or all pervasive, it continues to be crucial to recognize and explore new actors and processes continually taking shape to negotiate a privatized production of urban place, particularly in communities such as North Minneapolis.

Shortly after my informant shared his story of the tipping point, he showed me a photo (See Figure 1.1) he had taken from inside of the Avenue Eatery, the coffee shop in his story. Across the street a colorful mural of a face stares in. Explaining that he enjoys capturing the tensions of place in his photography, he jokingly described the mural, created by a community-based youth arts organization, as keeping its eye on the misplaced coffee shop (B 2012). My informant’s comment highlights the ways in which urban place are constantly being produced at a number settings and inspires my own consideration of the role that community organizations, increasingly common actors in urban governance processes, might play in contesting marketization of urban place and ultimately provide urban inhabitants with alternative ways of living.
In my thesis I approach this question by exploring the roles of two different community-based non-profits, a neighborhood based greening organization- Frogtown Gardens based in Saint Paul and the youth arts organization that my informant alluded to- Juxtaposition Arts, in transforming space in disinvested neighborhoods experiencing selective reinvestment. As an intermediary between residents and formal government and market actors, these organizations are uniquely positioned to negotiate alternate governance over urban place. I first approach these organizations’ role in urban place through the lens that the NUP has used to understand the production of urban place, one that is focused on the ways that top down actors engage in urban development processes.

Figure 1.1 (B 2012): A photograph taken by my informant depicting a mural through the window of Avenue Eatery
Finding that New Urban Politics places too much emphasis on the role that landholding elites play in the production of urban place and not enough on that of residents, I draw from critical and feminist geographies to explore an alternate setting for the production of place: everyday life. With the understanding that place is not only constituted through built environment, but also through the social, I investigate the ways that each organization uses the aesthetic practices of greening and public arts to give residents greater agency in reproducing or contesting neoliberalism.

I find that organizations are constantly negotiating the ways that they intersect with and respond to conditions of the NUP and the marketization of urban place. While these organizations’ involvement in urban development often flanks existing spatial governance, through engaging participants in aesthetic practices these organizations are transforming subjectivities of people and place. These seemingly contradictory relationships with neoliberalism ultimately seek to reframe neighborhood residents as producers. Organization emphasis on residents as producers rather than consumers of place challenges the NUP’s focus on landholding elites as the main actors in producing urban place. I argue that while the work that these organizations do does not call for a radical overhaul of capitalism, their emphasis on producing place through processes of everyday life provide residents greater autonomy in and over space, allowing urban inhabitants the potential to create meaningful alternatives.

In Chapter 1, “Review of the Literature”, interpret a selection of literature that assists in exploring how the community-based organization might participate in negotiating alternatives to the marketization of lower income neighborhoods. I incorporate the shadow state concept, which situates community-based organizations as a
potential liminal space for contestation in the context of neoliberal governance of cities. I proceed to explore the ways that geographers have understood the production of urban place. I analyze a text explaining urban development and land use as driven by urban elites seeking personal profit, followed by a feminist critique that emphasizes the ways in which urban politics are rooted in our everyday lives and the ways in which residents shape cities in their everyday lives. Bringing these literatures together, I investigate how my case study organizations are involved in challenging dominant narratives of the production and consumption of urban place and creating life outside of market structures.

In Chapter 2, “Research Methods”, I explain my rationale and interest in selecting each of my case study organizations and explain the qualitative methods I use to investigate my research question. Frogtown Gardens and Juxtaposition Arts are both community-based organizations based in lower income neighborhoods experiencing selective revitalization from state and market actors. These organizations participate in the production of urban place through their roles as institutions engaged in formal governance processes and in their empowerment of residents to produce place through greening and the arts. Using several qualitative research methods and interpretive data analysis I explore how these organizations might produce alternate spatial governance.

In Chapter 3, “Organizations and the Negotiation of Land Use”, I describe each organization in greater detail and discuss their visions for spatial transformation in their neighborhoods. I explore how each organization is engaged in brokering urban development processes. Frogtown Gardens is involved in the negotiation of turning a 13 acre undeveloped parcel of land in to a park and farmstead. Juxtaposition Arts is a significant actor in revitalizing the commercial corridor it is headquartered on. While
these organizations make significant contributions to increasing social use they often perpetuate processes of land commodification, perhaps paving the way for gentrification.

In Chapter 4, “Spatial Practices and the Production of Place”, I explore how both organizations also are involved in promoting aesthetic practices rooted in everyday life to give residents increased means to participate in producing urban place. I suggest that these practices reframe participants as producers rather than consumers of urban place. While some scholars have argued that the subjectivity of producer perpetuates neoliberal ideology, I interpret these new identities as movement towards greater autonomy. These discursive practices are part of what I call a politics of the inhabitant, which refer to a movement toward a larger role of neighborhood residents, regardless of their housing tenure, in shaping urban place.

In my “Conclusion” I synthesize my findings and identify how they contribute to existing conversations around urban politics, and suggest directions for further research. This thesis seeks to intervene in current scholarly and praxis-based conversations through emphasizing the production of place, or built environment and its interconnected social relationships, as a necessarily political process negotiated by both top down and bottom up processes. I seek to locate practices rooted in everyday life as a means to create alternate representations of place, and the community-based organization as a space where these practices take shape.
Chapter 1: Review of the Literature

I begin my literature review with a more detailed explanation of the concept of New Urban Politics, which I understand to contextualize my research question. I proceed with a selection of literature that expands upon existing conversations taking place in New Urban Politics around the actors and processes of urban politics. I begin by looking at a body of literature referred to as the shadow state, which concludes community-based organizations’ relationships with the state position them as liminal actor in urban politics. I subsequently explore ways in which scholars have understood the production of urban place. I start with the analysis of a text, Logan and Molotch’s Urban Fortunes, which has informed NUP’s the production of place as a territorial phenomenon controlled by top down development interests. I follow with an exploration of Melissa Gilbert’s feminist critique of Logan and Molotch’s work that suggests that place is not solely produced by the land-based development politics described in Urban Fortunes, but also takes shape through the practices of people in their everyday life. I utilize the work of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre and several other feminist and cultural geographers to weave these two understandings of place together. I conclude that community-based organizations are uniquely positioned actors for negotiating alternates in the New Urban Politics and that these organizations might use both understandings of urban politics to negotiate alternatives to neoliberal spatial governance.
1.1 A Review of the New Urban Politics

The New Urban Politics is more broadly informed by a political economy perspective. This approach challenges a neoclassical narrative of the market as a naturally occurring process, confronting processes of economy as tied to socially constructed ideology and politics. Geographers have utilized the perspective of political economy to understand how different economic regimes have shaped urban development and governance. This approach, which has been referred to as the political economy of place (Logan and Molotch 1987), analyzes the ways in which land use and urban development are tied to these constructed economic ideologies. Political economy of place refutes the idea that the ways our city exists is the result of any “putative ‘sickness’ of society” (Lefebvre 1991, 99) and instead is the result of concrete political, economic and social processes of late capitalism.

Scholars of the New Urban politics are concerned with the ways in which welfare reforms initiated in the 1980’s, transitioning the Keynesian state to a neoliberal state, have impacted governance processes of the production and consumption of urban place. These reforms, first characterized as a “rolling back” of social spending have evolved into a more refined “rolling out,” utilizing the market to regulate processes of social life (Boyle 2011; Peck and Tickell 2002). David Harvey (1989) has explained these governance shifts as the movement from a managerial agenda primarily concerned the provision of welfare to more entrepreneurial concerns of attracting local growth and development. The result of this shifting state agenda has been the marketization of neighborhoods previously relegated to the edge of the market post World War II (Ibid;
Brenner and Theodore 2002; Newman and Lake 2006). Harvey (1989) suggests that governments have begun to focus on catalyzing urban development that builds tax base and maximizes the circulation of capital at the expense of public amenities. Such commodification and privatization of these neighborhoods has resulted in a significant disenfranchisement and marginalization of many existing residents. Moving forward I explore the role that community-based organizations might play in negotiating alternate governance of urban place and explore how and where the negotiation of such urban politics takes place.

1.2 The Shadow State

While discussions around the political economy of place have often focused on an analysis of the shifting relationship between state and market actors, a critical omission has been the consideration of how not for profit actors might engage in contemporary urban land politics.

Greater understanding can be drawn from literature in geography that engages with the evolving and complex relationship between non-profit and neoliberal government known as the shadow state. Jennifer Wolch (1990) first used the term “shadow state” to describe the devolution of state responsibilities to the non-profit sector initiated by welfare reforms taking shape in the 1980’s. Wolch suggests that non-profits have come to occupy a unique position within municipal government, functioning both within and against the state in their provision of services. Today there are over 2.3 million non-profit organizations in the United States (Roeger et al. 2011). Between 2000 and 2010, the number of registered non-profits increased by almost 25% and public
charities, or non-profits that participate in service provision and development have grown by 40% (Ibid). These conditions suggest increasing relevance of the non-profit as an actor in negotiating urban politics.

Literature that examines the shadow state concept suggests differential impacts of the growing non-profit sector in urban governance. In her initial exploration of the shadow state, Wolch (1990) expresses concern that the non-profit might be vulnerable to state cooptation. Other geographers have since corroborated these concerns in their work, finding that non-profits’ missions are often compromised by a neoliberal state agenda and are used to ease and make possible further roll back of state provided social services (Fyfe and Milligan 2004; Rosol 2012). As service providers, non-profits are often unable to provide sufficient or even coverage to urban inhabitants resulting in increased societal inequity (Lake and Newman 2002). Additionally, through their work to mitigate market failures these non-profits often work to affirm neoliberal logic and roll back of state services (Mitchell 2001). In contrast to the idea that nonprofits are coopted by state agendas, an alternate narrative offers that non-profit organizations might allow for a more effective provision of services. Returning power to the local communities and allowing more personalized ties to people and place, these non-profits might resist or even shape state agendas (Kirkpatrick 2007; Roy 2011).

Rather than conclude a single trend in non-profit state relationships, one might adopt a relational view that understands non-profit-state relationships existing on a continuum distinguished by different arrangements of power between organization and state and engaged in an ongoing negotiation process. Therefore, we might think of the non-profit as a liminal space for any permutation of potentially contradictory
relationships, rather than conclude final outcome. Relationships between state and non-profit can take on multiple directionalities and scales, opening new spaces of negotiation that we can think of as existing on a continuum governance (Martin 2011; Trudeau 2008). To understand how organizations might be involved in negotiating alternate power arrangements in urban governance, I turn to an analysis of ways that geographers have conceptualized the urban place and the processes and politics of its production.

1.3 The Urban Growth Machine

Foundational to understandings of urban development in the moment of New Urban Politics is John Logan and Harvey Molotch’s book, *Urban Fortunes* published in 1987. Prior to their urban growth machine thesis, many had conceptualized growth and urbanization patterns as inevitable. Through explaining urban place as “the outcome of social activities and constructions seeking to stake out a living or otherwise a monetary return, from a piece of land” (Rodgers 2009, 2), Logan and Molotch emphasize urban development of place as a socially constructed and political process.

**Urban Place as a Commodity**

Logan and Molotch’s (1987, 1) thesis explains that in the Unites States “place is not only a basis for carrying on life but also an object from which to derive wealth”, or a commodity. A commodity is a product or service created by human labor that is offered for sale in the market place. A commodity takes on two values. The first, use value, is the utility gained from using a product. The second, exchange value, is a commodity’s value in the marketplace relative to other goods. Exchange value is not intrinsic or natural to a
good, and is often assigned through social contexts (Marx et al. 1906). The negotiation of this dual value is constantly producing the outcome of place. For example, an apartment provides tenants with a home and rent for the owner. These use and exchange values often come into conflict as a producer’s exploitation of exchange value often compromises use value to the consumer. Maintaining the apartment as an example, a landlord might choose to renovate an apartment to extract higher rent and displace a tenant. The heightened exchange value compromises the existing tenants’ use value. The conflict between use and exchange value can exist at many different scales of place creating a dense network of actors and agendas (Logan and Molotch 1987; Rodgers 2009).

**The Growth Machine**

Exchange values are pursued and manipulated by place entrepreneurs, or those with an economic stake in place. Place entrepreneurs include actors ranging from corporations to politicians that not only act as land owners, but also take on an active role in changing greater conditions or relationships that might alter the value of a place. These entrepreneurs unite in a common interest to maximize profit from urban land development, forming alliances that Logan and Molotch refer to as growth coalitions. Throughout the history of urbanization, growth coalitions have worked to promote value free growth, or that unfettered by regulation framing it as a public good. The authors suggest that these growth coalitions, rather consumer pursuit of use value, have dictated the boundaries and logic of growth patterns that have defined cities (1987). For example Logan and Molotch explain the city of Chicago’s growth in the mid to late 1800’s as
heavily connected to the mayor’s personal economic relationship with the Union Pacific Railroad. Given these relationships between urban development and personal agenda Molotch suggested that we might conceptualize the city as a growth machine.

**The Post-Suburban Growth Machine**

Growth interest strategies continually evolve to pursue increased exchange values, altering the distribution of wealth in urban areas. After World War II growth machine interests played a large role in facilitating mass suburbanization (Hayden 2004). Since the mass movement of capital to city periphery, through suburbanization, growth coalitions, or allied growth interests, are currently are in a position to benefit from extraction of wealth in urban areas previously relegated to the edge of the market. Geographer Gordon Macleod has referred to these shifting growth patterns taking place in contemporary city as the “post-suburban growth machine” (2011).

Although it is clear that growth interests have been present throughout the urbanization process, the state’s regulation of land use has changed over time (Polanyi 1957). In the era of New Urban Politics the state has consented to exchange value playing a larger role in determining how urban land is utilized (Newman and Lake 2006; Macleod 2011; Macleod and Jones 2011). Contemporary growth coalitions, or allied growth interests, are not only characterized as actors taking over the roles of the rolled-back state, but as part of the remodeled state (Macleod 2011). Through processes such as rezoning, development of place-based amenities, and the creation infrastructure growth coalitions have catalyzed the market reclamation of disinvested neighborhoods. (Harvey 1989; Newman and Lake 2006). The power of these growth actors is particularly
threatening to lower income residents. While processes of value-free growth often align with wealthy residents' value of place, they rarely align with lower income uses. (Logan and Molotch 1987) The in-motion of residents with greater social and economic capital is displacing these residents. Logan and Molotch conclude little possibility of a grassroots defense of existing use value in these neighborhoods, ceding the fate of these spaces to growth interests and their pursuit of economic value.

**Resisting the Growth Machine**

While Logan and Molotch (1987) offer several historical examples of the environmental movement in inhibiting growth processes, they hinge the preservation of use value on the formation of alliances with a number of growth interests, resulting in little tolerance for defending use, if not in hand with increasing exchange value. The difficulty in interrupting these exchange driven agendas, has informed some scholars’ characterization of the contemporary city as post-political, or governed by processes of synchronized consensus that cater to elite interests (Macleod and Jones 2011; Swyngedouw 2011). Logan and Molotch’s (1987) understanding of urban politics, suggests that the creation of a more just city is situated reclaiming use value and rejecting the idea of place as a commodity.

**1.4 Everyday Life and the Production of Space**

While Logan and Molotch (1987) capture important territorial conflicts present in the context of the New Urban Politics, their approach has since been critiqued for its relatively narrow definition of urban politics (Jonas and Wilson 1999). In this section I
introduce a feminist critique of the growth machine thesis that suggests an alternate set of actors and processes involved in shaping urban place.

Melissa Gilbert (1999) uses a post-structuralist lens to illuminate the production of place outside of elite land ownership processes. Building off of her own research analyzing the survival strategies of African-American women in Worcester, MA (1998) and other explorations in feminist geography, she explains the ways in which a political economy of place is reproduced and contested through processes of everyday life. Given the fundamental relationship between space and an access to the means social reproduction, such as childcare, housing and services, the shaping of place is not confined to landownership, or to explicit activism. For example, Gilbert understands the way that lower income women form social networks to mitigate a lack of access to amenities as an alternate production of place. While the relationship that Gilbert identifies between place and social reproduction has been used as a tool of oppression, it opens up the potential for people to negotiate the social boundaries of place in their everyday lives through the site of the body. Gilbert’s critique challenges the idea of place as a static material space, suggested by Logan and Molotch’s work and the idea of the post-political. The meanings of space are constantly being maintained and challenged through everyday practices. Gilbert’s alternate understanding of place, suggests that in spite of increased privatization characterized by the NUP people are constantly involved in creating new permutations of urban place to accommodate their needs.

Other feminist and cultural geographers have similarly asserted everyday life as an arena for shaping urban place and contestation (Dutton 2009; McCann 1999; Miewald and McCann 2004; Mitchell et al 2004; Secor 2004; Vallance et al. 2005). In a historical
analysis of the way in which mill workers produced political spaces through everyday practices feminist geographer Megan Cope (1996, 201-202) explains: “[T]here are significant iterative negotiations in establishing and reestablishing the balance of power that occur everyday and involve acts and actors that, although perhaps marginalized from formal political practice, none the less inscribe their identities and power on the terrain of local work, community, and household relation”. While we most often think of politics taking place through formal channels, the potential for the political exists in everyday life. In their analysis of the impacts of economic restructuring on coalfield communities in Appalachia Miewald and McCann (2004), focusing on gender roles, highlight the significance of the microsites of social relationships in producing place. The authors suggest struggles for control over space extend beyond land conflicts, and to the scale of the body. How might the production of place explained by these authors interact with Logan and Molotch’s explanation of place produced through top down land use politics?

**Lefebvre’s Production of Space**

Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space* (1991) further elaborates on the social dimensions of space and how this social understanding of space interacts with a more material production of place described by Logan and Molotch. Seeking to conceptualize space not as a container for social life, but an active force in shaping social life, Lefebvre explains the production of space as taking place through three overlapping three moments (See Figure 1.1): representations of space, spaces of representation, and spatial practice. Representations of space are top down discourses of space created by elite actors such as planners, architects, and real
estate developers that dominate the discourse of space, much like the creation of place described by Logan and Molotch. Spaces of representation are personal imaginations of space built off of an individual’s lived experience in space. Spatial practices are everyday actions in space that allow us direct understandings of space and thus mediate the relationship between spaces of representation and representations of space (Lefebvre 1991; Merrifield 2006; McCann 1999; Vallance et al. 2004).

Figure 1.1 (Gronland 1998): an illustration of Lefebvre’s Triad of Moments

Lefebvre’s interpretation helps to build on Gilbert’s analysis of space. Place is not solely an objective reality that can be described by its physical characteristics, but one based in mental and social experience. Particularly important to the questions I consider in this thesis is the moment of spatial practice. Through everyday spatial practice the inhabitant has the ability to reproduce or challenge discourses imposed in space and distance or unite spaces of representation and representation of space. Powerful examples of the way that everyday spatial practice might interrupt hegemonic productions of space are acts of civil disobedience employed during the Civil Rights
Movement. Utilizing the material and social construction of segregation (representation of space), actors were able to use the simple spatial practice of sitting down on a bus to assert an alternate imagination of space and society (spaces of representation) (Swyngedouw 2009).

While Lefebvre’s triad (See Figure 1.1) suggests infinite routes of analysis of the role that everyday life takes on in shaping place, moving forward in my own empirical research, I focus on how the everyday aesthetic practices of greening and the arts might create new representations of place. I draw from several authors’ analyses of aesthetic practices as forms of political expression. In their book Landscapes of Privilege the authors James Duncan and Nancy Duncan (2004) make the assertion that landscape aesthetics play an important role in the production of identity and place. While Duncan and Duncan’s case study focuses on the way in which construction of a landscape maintains exclusion, cultural geographer Tim Cresswell (Cresswell and Warren 1998), looking at the practice of graffiti deployed in New York city in the 1980’s, draws attention the ways that spatial practices might call attention to and challenge spaces of exclusion. While the NUP would frame urban residents participation in shaping place as largely passive or existent through their relationships to property, the work of feminist and cultural geographers suggests otherwise. People through the site of the body have an inevitable relationship to the construction of place.
1.5 Theoretical Overview

While literature of the NUP has characterized the contemporary city as post-political, I believe that this description narrowly conceives of what urban politics look like particularly as they relate to governance of urban place. Such conversations are heavily informed by Logan and Molotch’s *Urban Growth Machine Thesis*, which works to explain the regulation of urban place as dominated by urban landholding elites whose own economic agendas increasingly trump realization of greater social value. Geographer Melissa Gilbert’s feminist critique intervenes in this top down explanation, emphasizing agency in the site of the human body through describing the ways that people in their everyday lives are producers of urban space.

I mobilize Henri Lefebvre’s triad of moments in the production of space to understand how Logan and Molotch and Gilbert’s explanations of a production of space are in conversation with each other. In order to conceptualize the production of space Lefebvre describes place as the ongoing negotiation between three moments: representation of space, spaces of representation, and spatial practice. Representations of space are infrastructures and social meanings imposed on space from top down forces. I associate this moment to the dominant production of space that Logan and Molotch’s describe. Spaces of representation are understandings of space resulting from our own lived experience in space, often subaltern to understandings produced in representation of spaces. I connect the exploration of this moment to the scholarship of Gilbert and other feminist geographers. Lefebvre positions the body, through the moment of spatial practice, as mediator between these two moments in space. Drawing from Marx’s discussion of commodity in Capital volume 1, in which Marx suggests that imposed
social values often obscure an object’s actual utility, Lefebvre suggests that representations of space often obscure spaces of representation, or our own lived experiences in space. Through everyday acts we can discover and reclaim our own understandings or alternate imaginations of space. While the current focus on land use as a conduit for urban politics, often leads to oversimplified conclusions of politics, Lefebvre’s incorporation of the body allows for a more complex and ultimately hopeful interpretation of alternatives.

Moving forward, this thesis investigates how community-based organizations, simultaneously working within and against the state, are involved in the creation of an alternate spatiality. I understand my case study organizations to engage in the production of urban place both as institutional actors in land development processes and through engaging residents in spatial practices. How do organizations balance working within the system for material gain and contestation in each of these productions of place? In their efforts, how might these organizations enable existing residents to stay in their neighborhoods, even as neighborhood positionality in the market changes? In the following chapter I explain in greater detail how I investigate organization roles in the production of place.

Before moving onto “Research Methods” I would like to make a distinction between the concepts of place and space. In Logan and Molotch’s Urban Fortunes, the authors talk about a production of place, while Lefebvre’s work explains the production of space. Noting that neither Logan and Molotch nor Lefebvre are geographers I want to clarify the different meaning that these terms take on specific to the discipline of geography. Geographers have connoted space with material form and place with both
material form and social quality. The distinction of space versus place can be though of as analogous to the relationship between the concepts of house versus home. Moving forward in my case studies and analysis I use the word place to emphasize the material and social dimensions of the spaces that organizations are producing.
Chapter 2:
Research Methods

In this project I ask how community-based organizations, through their involvement in negotiating and producing urban place, might contest the neoliberal marketization of lower income neighborhoods. By focusing on community-based organizations, and exploring the setting of everyday life as a venue for political negotiation, I understand my research to intervene in ways that literature of the NUP has conceptualize actors and processes of contemporary urban politics.

In order to pursue my research question I employ a comparative case study that utilizes several qualitative methods. A case study method is well suited for my research question, rooted in understanding how certain social processes play out, as it accommodates analysis of different forces and contextual factors (Yin 2003). I focus on two community-based organizations, Frogtown Gardens and Juxtaposition Arts, and explore the ways in which both of these organizations are involved in producing and negotiating urban place. Within my investigation I employ a selection of qualitative methods, including participant observation, informant interviews and document-based research. Data collected from these various methods are focused on perceptions and experiences related to the production of place in each neighborhood, as well as conversations around each organization’s engagement in these processes. In the
following chapter I will explain my rationale for case study selection and expand upon my research methods.

2.1 Case Study Selection

In the following section I explain my rationale for case selection. I highlight three reasons why I have chosen Frogtown Gardens and Juxtaposition Arts as case studies:

1. Both organizations were founded by residents of the neighborhoods they serve.
2. Both organizations are located in neighborhoods experiencing selective reinvestment typical of the NUP.
3. These organizations are actors in top down urban development processes and also use spatial practices to empower participants as agents in the production of urban place.

Given the complex relationships between organizations and the state suggested by the literature the shadow state, organizations are important actors to understand contemporary processes of urban politics. The structure “organization” includes a wide spectrum of actors. Merriam-Webster loosely defines organization as “an administrative and functional structure” encompassing both grassroots organizations and corporate entities. My research specifically focuses on community-based organizations. I believe by looking at such organizations we might better understand the potential for organizations to be used as a grassroots tool in the production of space. While I recognize that use of the word “community” is potentially problematic, this is a label that both of my case study organizations would use to describe themselves. In this context, I understand “community-based” to make the distinction that these organizations were both
founded by neighborhood residents seeking to realize a different relationship between people and place in their own neighborhoods.

Juxtaposition Arts is a non-profit urban-youth-focused visual art and design studio based in North Minneapolis founded in 1993. Its mission is to empower youth and community to use the arts to actualize their full potential. The organization engages youth through various hands on art and visual design programs, which more recently have shifted to emphasize vocational training and entrepreneurship. The organization estimates that it engages around 650 youth participants in its programs each year and several thousand attendees through community-based events.

Frogtown Gardens is a non-profit neighborhood-based organization in Saint Paul, focused on promoting a greener and healthier Frogtown neighborhood through the protection of green space and advocacy for sustainable neighborhood development. The organization was formally created in 2007 in a grassroots effort to transform undeveloped parcel of land into a public park and farm in the Frogtown neighborhood. It has engaged hundreds of residents in its effort to create a new city park and spread greening practices throughout the neighborhood. While these organizations are unique in their agendas and practices my investigations and analyses can be extended to understanding other community-based organizations.

**Organization geography**

Organization geographies also played a role in case study selection. Frogtown Gardens is situated within the Frogtown neighborhood of Saint Paul and Juxtaposition Arts identifies as serving North Minneapolis, a collection of several neighborhoods in the
city of Minneapolis. While New Urban Politics has largely focused on redevelopment of downtowns (Hackworth 2007; Macleod and Jones 2011), I am interested in exploring the way that welfare state reforms have impacted inner city neighborhoods beyond downtown. Both neighborhoods have a higher concentration of minority residents and much lower income distributions than the cities they are located within². After decades of disinvestment, Frogtown and North Minneapolis both are experiencing selective reinvestment from private and public actors.

Figure 2.1(Plummer 2013): A Map depicting each organization’s geography. Each case study’s geography is represented by a dark grey polygon. Downtowns in each city are called out with a lighter grey hue.

² Please see appendix for more detailed quantitative information on each neighborhood.
North Minneapolis takes on characteristics of an exclusionary black ghetto (Marcuse 1997), a racialized space that has been divested from and isolated from resources and economic opportunity. Originally a Jewish and black enclave in the mid-eighteen hundreds, the neighborhood experienced population flight and disinvestment after World War II (Twin Cities Public Television 2011).

More recently the consequent rent gaps resulting from historical disinvestment are being realized as a growth opportunity for Minneapolis as a whole. In a 2012 speech, “One Minneapolis Growing North,” Minneapolis Mayor, R.T Rybak, emphasizes the strategic role that North Minneapolis might play in bolstering Minneapolis as a whole, explaining, “So if we want to grow as a city… the key will be North Minneapolis”. Rybak emphasizes his administration’s agenda to increase the population of North Minneapolis and announces the rolling out of Green Homes North, an initiative for the building of 500 new green homes on vacant city lots (Sudheimer 2012). Rybak’s speech and Green homes north clearly emphasizes an aggressive development agenda present in revitalization (Mehta 2012).

Frogtown, since its initial settlement, has served as a gateway for immigrant and working communities within the Twin Cities metro area; first settled by eastern European immigrants followed by a Vietnamese immigrant community in the 1970’s and Hmong and Somali refugee communities in the 1990’s. The neighborhood has experienced patterns of urban disinvestment typical to urban neighborhoods in the second half of the 20th century, following patterns of suburbanization and deindustrialization (Historic Saint Paul 2011).
While the neighborhood currently faces challenges related to the 2008 foreclosure crisis, the simultaneous construction of a light rail line along the neighborhood’s southern edge creates huge uncertainty in the neighborhood’s future. While it is ultimately unclear what the exact impact of the LRT line will be, it represents a significant and intentional reorganization and infusion of capital that will impact urban place in Frogtown. The project has been critiqued for serving commuters over resident’s transportation needs. Local businesses have been particularly vocal about the impact that the construction will have on them. Over $6.78 billion dollars have been invested in the corridor’s construction thus far. Land values within a quarter mile of station areas have risen on average by 8% since 2007 and it is estimated that 7,000 new residential units will be built around station areas by 2030 (Malekafzali and Bergstrom 2011). While some residents are excited about the prospect of rising property and home values others are concerned that the construction will result in gentrification.

**Organization Production of Place**

In their missions each of these organizations indicate a different approach to shaping space. Juxtaposition Arts seeks to use the arts to empower youth and community members to actualize their full potential and Frogtown Gardens seeks to create a greener and healthier Frogtown. Frogtown Garden’s mission is more concerned with a territorial approach described by Logan and Molotch, working to secure material green space at a territorial level. Juxtaposition arts, through its programming, engages more heavily in a production of place emphasized by Melissa Gilbert through everyday practices. Despite the articulated foci in their missions each organization has come to produce place both
through practices and negotiation of land use. Frogtown Gardens has been involved in the transformation of a 13-acre undeveloped parcel to a city park and Juxtaposition Arts has been involved in the revitalization of Broadway Avenue, a historical commercial corridor in North Minneapolis. Additionally, both organizations seek to empower residents as agents in producing urban place through the use of everyday practices. Frogtown Gardens promotes resident based greening and gardening practices and Juxtaposition Arts uses the arts to create an outlet for youth participation. Given the universality of greening and the arts among different cultures and places and these practices’ recent popularity in community development programing, my analysis is applicable to a wide range of cases.

2.2 Research Methods

To better understand lived experience and representations of spatial politics in each organization and corresponding neighborhood, I employed several qualitative research methods. The college’s Social Science Institutional Review Board approved all methods utilized. In the following section I will introduce each method I used, describe information it yielded, and limitations I experienced.

Participant observation

Participant observation is a field-based research method that involves the researcher acting as a participant within their case for a prolonged duration of time, allowing for a holistic understanding of a case study as it allows for the observation of everyday life unmediated by what respondents’ narrations. While I had a two-year collaborative relationship with Frogtown Gardens, my relationship with Juxtaposition
Arts was initiated with the intent of carrying out this research project. Thus participant observation served as an important way to establish my own understanding of organization activity and make connections with potential informants. Over the course of three months I spent around 15 hours a week at each organization. Typically, I would spend one day a week involved in office functions and a second weekday shadowing programming and events. As a participant in the office, I was able to understand organization engagement in more formal growth processes and through my participation in programming I was able to understand how the organization employed everyday practice to transform space.

My experience as a participant observer was contextualized by my identity as researcher and white woman. At times these circumstances impacted how organization participants interacted with me, and likely had an influenced on the content and way that information was shared. In an effort to mitigate these gaps I pursued several other research methods that would yield a diverse collection perceptions and points of view.

**Informant Interviews**

Informant interviews also served as a significant research method. Through various networks at the organizational and neighborhood level I invited people to participate as informants in my research process. Informants included community members, organization participants, organization staff and a variety of stakeholders involved in growth processes in each community. These interviews were semi-structured in format and typically took 45 to 90 minutes. In an effort to minimize my impact as a researcher I asked informants to choose an interview location. My invitations yielded
interviews that took place in people’s homes, coffee shops, at each organization, public spaces such as a park or library, and by phone. These location choices were useful data for understanding informant relationship to place (Elwood and Martin 2000). I interviewed 14 informants associated with Juxtaposition Arts and/or North Minneapolis 12 informants associated with Frogtown Gardens and/or Frogtown. These interviews focused on lived experience relating to perceptions of power in and over space at organization and neighborhood level. Occasionally I employed mental mapping exercises, in which I asked informants to draw their neighborhood, to help bring out stories of place and space. These interviews were particularly critical for obtaining an in-depth perspective on lived experience, and played a large role in a case specific understanding of how residents situated political processes in their everyday lives. It should be noted that data collected through informant interviews will be sited by initials for purposes of maintaining informant anonymity, with the exception of organization cofounders who have consented to use of their full names in this thesis.

As I utilized organization and neighborhood association networks, there was a response bias in informants. Most informants were active community or organization members and are not necessarily representative of the average neighborhood resident. Due to relatively small network sizes, I expect there was a stigma against critique of Juxtaposition Arts and Frogtown Gardens, as complete anonymity was not possible. This limited my understanding of community perceptions of organization activity. Additionally, due to Institutional Review Board limitations I was not able to formally interview informants under the age of 18. This was particularly limiting in the context of Juxtaposition Arts, as most participants are under the age of 18.
Document-Based Research

I drew upon different media sources to get a sense for how others in the greater Twin Cities community were framing conversations around each neighborhood and organization. I utilized various forms of written media, including newspapers, blog posts, neighborhood forums and archival materials. Publications I frequently used included Minnesota Public Radio, E-Democracy Neighborhood Forum, the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, and Minneapolis Star Tribune. These sources allowed me to tap into conversations that I was not otherwise connected to through my relationship with each organization. Document based research was particularly crucial to understanding historical processes, and outsiders perception of neighborhood and organization.

2.3 Data Analysis

After collecting data, I used an interpretive research method called coding to analyze my findings. The coding process involves a researcher analyzing how selected themes manifest in different data sources they have collected. This method allowed me to engage in discourse analysis, or an investigation of the role that power structures play in shaping the ways that people understand the world (Berg 2009). I found coding particularly useful in exploring how and why my informants approach and understand urban politics.

In this chapter I have focused on explaining the relevance of my case studies and the research methods I chose to employ to investigate each organization’s engagement in negotiating neoliberal spatial governance. Both organizations are based in
neighborhoods that have experienced decades of disinvestment and more recently are experiencing selective reinvestment processes from state and private actors. I understand each of these organizations to engage with production of place at two levels: as actors in neighborhood development politics and in the ways that they employ spatial practices rooted in everyday life offering an empirical opportunity to understand how Gilbert’s understanding of urban politics engages to that of Logan and Molotch. I’ve employed participant observation, informant interviews and document based research to accrue a holistic and comprehensive understanding of each organization’s work. Moving forward I offer my own analysis of the understanding yielded from my primary research, informed by critical and feminist approaches to the political economy of place.
Chapter 3: 
Organizations and the Negotiation of Land Use

I introduce each case study by providing a description of each organization’s alternate imagination for neighborhood space, explaining how I came to connect with each organization, and giving a description of organization history and evolution. I proceed to explore how each organization intervenes in the negotiate land use in their neighborhood. Both of these organizations work to increase use value that has been depleted by disinvestment processes, largely working within the framework of a neoliberal political economy. In these processes both organizations are complicit in reproducing the commodification of place. In the case of Frogtown Gardens, the organization’s work allows government to further recede in its responsibility to set aside urban land as a public amenity and the case of Juxtaposition Arts raises concerns about how increased material gains claimed by each organization might be co-opted by outside growth agendas. I conclude that these are incomplete descriptions of the ways in which these organizations produce neighborhood space and suggest a feminist intervention in exploring these organizations as actors in the production of urban place.
3.1 Frogtown Gardens

In their strategic plan Frogtown Gardens offers a comprehensive reimagining of neighborhood space, centered around the creation of a community park and farm and a greener neighborhood:

“Everywhere you look in Frogtown, there are gardens. The neighborhood’s main avenues are dotted with fruit trees. Community garden plots have blossomed near high-rise apartments, at recreation centers and in residents’ back yards. An unused 13-acre parcel of land in the middle of the neighborhood has been transformed into a park and a demonstration site for urban agriculture, known as Frogtown Farm. Frogtown Park and Farm is the nerve center of all this neighborhood greening. Perched on a hill overlooking the city, this bustling urban park is the site of a variety of activities, all of which demonstrate green and sustainable approaches to inner-city living. At the top of the hill, neighbors come to tour and to help maintain garden plots that demonstrate the health and economic benefits of a backyard vegetable garden. Each garden plot showcases the food traditions of one of Frogtown’s many ethnic cultures. Children shout and play on an adjacent slope. Families picnic in a whimsical pavilion nearby. Nature lovers stroll through a tranquil oak savannah, admiring rain gardens, native plantings and birds. A deserted parcel is changing from a desolate landscape— where
prostitutes and drug dealers once plied their trade and a local teen was murdered — to a lively, safe and beautiful amenity. Simultaneously, an inner-city neighborhood is evolving from a repository of vacant lots and abandoned houses to a place of hope and new growth. A citywide attraction, Frogtown Park and Farm is a neighborhood source of pride and a Saint Paul treasure. It serves as a touchstone for a greener, healthier neighborhood (Ohmans et. al 2011).”

Frogtown Gardens envisions a new material and social landscape in the Frogtown neighborhood of Saint Paul, contrasting with dominant conceptions of Frogtown as a blighted, impoverished, and dangerous neighborhood. Through the creation of a new park and farmstead and other community-based green spaces, Frogtown Gardens envisions the collective cultivation of social and cultural wealth in its neighborhood.

*Figure 3.1 (Weeks 2011): The imagined farmstead rendered by landscape architect Sarah Weeks*
I began collaborating with Frogtown Gardens in spring of 2011. I had just returned from an academic seminar in New Orleans that explored the ways in which several different communities were engaged in cultural resistance strategies in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Inspired by the ideas of residents carving spaces of difference, I sought out such a group looking to do this in the Twin Cities and ended up connecting with Frogtown Gardens. Over the past two years I have seen the organization evolve from a grassroots set of several individual residents’ visions to a more unified and professionalized effort to a new city park and farm.

Frogtown Gardens is the formalized outgrowth of a neighborhood-based gardening group that began meeting in 1999. In 2007 four of these gardeners and longtime residents, met over dinner and ended up discussing a recently vacated 13-acre parcel across the street. By the end of the meal they had come to the decision that the parcel must be preserved as a neighborhood amenity: a new city park. Their vision for the park comprised of three parts: a grassy recreation space, a contemplative tree grove, and community-based farmstead. In an effort to realize their vision, the residents formed an organization, Frogtown Gardens, and adopted the mission to make the neighborhood healthier and greener through protecting green spaces and gardens.

Since its founding, Frogtown Gardens has undergone evolution and growth. The organization has pursed non-profit incorporation, formed a board of directors, lucrative partnerships with the Frogtown Neighborhood Association, a neighborhood organizing body and the Trust for Public Land, a national non-profit land conservancy. The organization has successfully worked to purchase the parcel that inspired its formation, securing over three million dollars from public and private sources started several
satellite community garden projects throughout the neighborhood, hosted many community meetings and celebrations.

**The Creation of Frogtown Park and Farm**

When Frogtown Gardens initially proposed the creation of a new park and farm in their neighborhood, St. Paul’s Mayor Coleman laughed the idea off, allegedly responding “We are not Detroit”, suggesting that the idea of a farm in downtown Saint Paul as out of place (Ohmans 2013). Four years later Coleman has committed 1 million dollars to the park and farm in his 2013 Mayor’s Budget. How, over the course of four years was Frogtown Gardens able to convince Coleman and other state and market actors of Frogtown Park and Farm’s belonging and value?

In the following section I use Logan and Molotch’s urban growth machine thesis to analyze how Frogtown Gardens has participated in the negotiation of land use in its efforts to create a new park and farm. I suggest that by mobilizing public discourse around the social and economic value of transforming an undeveloped parcel into a park and farm, Frogtown Gardens intervened in the way that the parcel would be dealt with in the context of a neoliberal political economy. The negotiation of Frogtown Park and Farm yields an example of the community-based organization as an actor in formal processes of land use negotiation. While the park will greatly heighten the land’s use value, public conversation around the realization of this park do not frame this realization of use value in contradistinction to its exchange value. The public-private partnership formed to bring the park into existence is consistent with a trending roll back of state services and reproduction of neoliberal spatial governance.
The future site of Frogtown Park and Farm is situated in a residential portion of the neighborhood several blocks away from the neighborhood’s main commercial corridor. The parcel was most recently the headquarters of the Wilder Foundation, a nonprofit health and human services provider. The foundation vacated the site in 2007 to relocate to a larger and more accessible site and razed all built infrastructure on site in 2009. Since then a thick covering of urban prairie has reclaimed the site (See figure 3.2).

![Figure 3.2 (Devany 2012): A view from the top of the vacated parcel](image)

Short of the resources necessary to purchase the property, appraised between 4.5 and 5 million dollars in value, the organization began its efforts with grassroots approaches to acquiring the site. Organization members wrote to the Wilder Foundation about their idea, held community meetings at a nearby library bringing the park into public imagination, and launched a post card campaign in which residents sent postcards to the Wilder Foundation expressing their interest in a park and farm. Frogtown Gardens
reasoned that as a social services organization headquartered in Frogtown, the Wilder Foundation should be willing to prioritize community-oriented use of the land. These efforts received little acknowledgement from the Wilder Foundation. The organization additionally attempted to engage with the city with little success. While the parcel was located in a zone that the Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation has identified as in need of a new park (See Figure 3.3), the city was firm that it did not have sufficient financial resources to purchase or maintain the park.

![Figure 3.3](image.png)

*Figure 3.3 (Ohmans et al. 2011): A map created by Saint Paul Parks and Recreation indicating new desired locations for a park.*

In December of 2011 Frogtown Gardens was approached by a national non-profit land conservation organization, the Trust for Public Land (TPL), interested in increasing its involvement in urban land conservation. Through this partnership the campaign
quickly escalated to more formalized processes. The Trust for Public Land was able to submit a bid to the Wilder Foundation, offering 3.5 million dollars for the site. On March 6th of 2012 the Wilder Foundation accepted TPL’s bid and a purchase agreement was negotiated giving Frogtown Gardens and the Trust for Public Land 18 months to fundraise sufficient funds to purchase the site, compensate TPL for its services, and initiate the creation of an endowment for Frogtown Gardens. The organizations has pursued public and private funding sources in its fundraising efforts, securing $1 million from the mayor’s budget, $1.5 million from the Minnesota Legislature, $1 million from the city council, and over $75,000 in grants from private foundations. A purchase agreement was signed between TPL and the City of Saint Paul, ensuring that the site will be developed as a public park.

**A Negotiation of Use and Exchange Value**

Throughout the process of securing the parcel, explicit arguments for the use and exchange value of a park took shape. The campaign to create Frogtown Park and Farm started with an argument for the need to create use value and over time a second narrative around economic value developed. Ultimately, the organization has come to frame these two values as compatible.

Initial discourse around need for the park emphasized the neighborhood’s right to use values. In Frogtown Park and Farm’s strategic plan the organization explicitly points to the public loss that would ensue if the parcel were to be treated as a commodity: “Wilder could sell off the land and let it go to whatever use the market determines — a housing development, a corporate campus, maybe a school of some sort. That’s business
as usual. For the Wilder Foundation such a transaction turns land into money. But do any of those solutions speak to the actual needs of Frogtowners? We believe the answer is no” (Ohmans et al. 2011). The organization suggests that the role exchange value has taken on in determining land use has created an inequity in the distribution of amenities. Organization cofounder, Schmitz, explains: “If you look at how people who have money organize their lives, they organize their housing and their lives around proximity to beautiful things… I think everyone in the city is entitled to proximity to something that is beautiful and that is simply not here right now”(Schmitz 2011). The organization often emphasized that the unique size and natural qualities of the parcel merited intervention. A board member emphasized: “We really hope we can take this place back… to have a place you can look up to and know that it is yours to reclaim it as everybody’s. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. This is the largest tract of land that will be available for a long time…[The land has] always had a purpose, now it can meet a need for the social good of our time” (S 2012). Perhaps one of the most potent arguments launched by the organization was the finding that Frogtown has the lowest ratio of green space per child in the city. Figure 3.4 shows a map created by Frogtown Gardens intern Sarah Horowitz, utilized throughout the campaign that visually depicting the lack of green space in Frogtown. While these arguments resonated with community members, the organization found that particularly in the face of the 2008 financial crisis it was going to have to construct an economic argument to win people over.
As the campaign to create Frogtown Park and Farm matured and gained support from urban land elites such as The Trust for Public Land more emphasis was put on exploring potential exchange value present in the creation of a park. As an intern, I participated in the preparation of a document that summarized some of the quantifiable values of a park. Many of the benefits I worked to calculate, such as healthcare savings, can be understood as a translation of use values, into the currency of exchange value.

The organization began to frame Frogtown Park and Farm as a companion real-estate asset to an incoming LRT line being constructed in the neighborhood, coupling it with a divisive large-scale development project. The language of park as a form of economic development was reflected back by Mayor Coleman’s language in announcing the Mayor’s 2013 Budget:

Figure 3.4 (Horowitz 2010): A map prepared to illustrate distributional inequality across Saint Paul.
“In a city known for its parks, it is important all of our neighbors and residents have access to green space. With that in mind, I am committed to funding the Frogtown Farms project. But Frogtown Farms isn’t just another project to bring more parks to the city. It is an investment in the Frogtown community. Through this project, we are leveraging additional private sector investment in an under-invested area of the city. We know that access to green space spurs this economic investment, and we plan on utilizing that knowledge” (Coleman 2012).

In this statement, Coleman acknowledges importance to the parks contribution to both use and exchange value, but ultimately seems to suggest the market, rather than state intervention is a more sustainable solution for elevating residents of Frogtown. Coleman’s quote suggests that government can best ally with neighborhoods through catalyzing private market growth rather than a continuous regulation of urban space.

**Land Development in the Neoliberal Context**

The way in which Coleman framed the purchase of the park dissolved potential tension between the pursuit of exchange and use in the creation of the park and farm. Reflecting on the effort to secure Frogtown Park, an organization member explains: “We elevated the use value, so that the people talking about exchange value, already demoralized by the economy and by the lack of buyers and everything else, thought: ‘what the hell we will get some political points by seemingly recognizing this use value,’ but I don’t think anyone will do anything different next time” (V 2013). Ultimately while Frogtown Gardens influenced the creation of an incredible community amenity, my
informant’s reflections suggest that it did not challenge any deeper structural logic of neoliberal political economy in Frogtown. Despite identifying the need for a new park at the exact location of the vacant parcel (Figure 3.3), the city was initially reluctant to engage with the organization. The public private partnership, a governance structure increasingly common in the creation of public amenities, formed between Frogtown Gardens, TPL, and the City of Saint Paul, through private fundraising and countless hours of work has significantly lessened the economic burden of park creation on the city. The work of Frogtown Gardens is consistent with literature of the shadow state that suggests organizations are taking over previous state provisions of public services and amenities. Frogtown Gardens is creating an amenity that mitigates the inequity that marketization of urban space in doing so it might allows the state to further deregulate land use. Conversely, through taking on park and farm development the organization has had to compromise much of its programming for the at least through the park’s planning phase. In the next section I further speak to complications in achieving use value.

3.2 Juxtaposition Arts

Organization Cofounder, DeAnna Cummings, offers a vision of the North Minneapolis she would like to see realized:

“I envision [a] locally rooted [North Minneapolis], meaning culturally rooted in the Northside. High quality for sure: good food, well designed spaces, walkable streets, but still a little rough around the edges…not sterile, I think that is destroying this country. I can go to Cleveland, Chicago, New York, Kansas City, and if I so choose I could have the same
experience in every city by what I choose to eat, where I choose to stay, and the entertainment I choose to partake in. That is the opposite of what I envision for the community. You want an area that has charm, character, and beauty that seems to emanate from the people nearby…and I think when you come to JXTA [Juxtaposition Arts] I think that’s what you see and feel (See Figure 3.5) … I think you kind of go, ‘Oh, this is really beautiful in a rough kind of way’. There’s a MacDonald’s bag over there in the pocket park and if you look in the alley way it looks a little raggedy, but that it’s still beautiful and that it’s rooted here…That this is a stage and there’s something else coming…and I can’t wait to see it” (Cummings and Cummings 2012).

DeAnna’s vision pinpoints an evocative tension between the realization of revitalization and homogenization in her community. She envisions increased capacity, in her words the “ability to develop, withstand, recover, and produce” (Haft 2011, 6), but not at the expense of loss of unique culture in historically black set of neighborhoods. Cofounder Roger explained to me that they ultimately seek to create a community in which the residents “can see themselves in space” (Cummings and Cummings 2012).
I began to work with Juxtaposition Arts for the purposes of taking on a comparative case study for my research. I was drawn to the organization’s reputation for creating subversive pieces of public art, as many youth arts organization create relatively apolitical work. Over the summer I was a participant observer in the organization’s office and with one of organization’s summer programs. I shadowed a group of youth charged with the task of creating public art for a city park. They carried out a critical investigation of the connection between deficits in built environment and residents’ ability to fully utilize the park. Using their own findings and incorporating residents’ opinions the students designed furniture, such as benches, lighting, and shelters, that might amend some of the greater social issues in the park. Simultaneously spending time...
in the office, I came to understand the organization as an institutional actor in
development politics along Broadway Avenue.

Juxtaposition Arts was originally founded in 1993 by three North Minneapolis
residents as an after school arts program for an affordable housing development in North
Minneapolis. The organization’s mission is to empower youth and community to use the
arts to actualize their potential. The organization incorporated in 1995 as a non-profit
organization and has since become a well-known youth arts program, serving youth
throughout the North Minneapolis area. The organization currently has six office staff, a
board composed of Northside residents and allies, and a team of around 15 teaching
artists that facilitate programming and has formed relationships with many funders and
allies.

Programming focuses have shifted over time. While the organization originally
focused on fine arts training, it has adopted an arts for social change approach. The
organization currently utilizes a social entrepreneurship model, or socially conscious
business model, to employ youth as artists. Students receive training through the
organization’s intensive Visual Arts Literacy Training (VALT) course and then have the
opportunity to be employed as apprentices within the organization’s specialized youth
apprentice labs: Environmental Design, Contemporary Arts, Graphic Design and
Textiles. Additionally in an effort to engage the larger North Minneapolis community the
organization hosts a variety of art events for the public.
Securing Community- Based Use Value?

The founders have been successful in using the organization as a mechanism with which to participate in top down growth politics and catalyze development that they would like to see in their community. Over the course of its tenure the organization has become a rentier and speculator in North Minneapolis. Juxtaposition Arts is based in a small storefront off of the intersections of Broadway and Emerson, two historic commercial corridors of North Minneapolis. When the organization originally moved into the space, most of the surrounding storefronts were vacant. These spaces have since been occupied, primarily by various non–profit actors (Cummings and Cummings 2012). While Juxtaposition Arts is not as explicitly involved in mediating use and exchange value as Frogtown Gardens, its involvement in revitalizing a historic commercial corridor reveals the complexity of creating use value and the potential limitations of top down productions of place. While the organization has created a number of community
amenities along Broadway Avenue, questions remain about how one might produce spaces accessible and representative to and of the community.

In 2001 Juxtaposition Arts purchased and rehabilitated a small storefront space to headquarter itself in. Since the initial move, the organization has expanded its presence along the intersection. In 2012 the organization secured funding from several foundations to embark on a 13 million dollar expansion that will eventually triple its campus size. Most of the infrastructure completed, Juxtaposition Art’s campus includes a small pocket park, expanded program space, a storefront to sell clothing produced in their textiles lab, and a cooperative studio space for community-based artists. Juxtaposition Art’s campus has attracted positive attention as an example of locally grounded and unique development (Cummings and Cummings 2012).

The organization’s presence is also understood to have contributed to greater revitalization along Broadway Avenue. A former board member explained, “Juxtaposition Arts has made its presence known in the community. The neighborhood has changed since they landed” (H 2012). Northside residents I interviewed consistently spoke to the positive impact that Juxtaposition has had along Broadway (B 2012; D 2012; E 2012). As a non-profit, Juxtaposition Arts has been able to develop and maintain space in an unconventional way that prioritizes use over exchange value. They create amenities, such as a park that might not exist if they were dependent on generating a profit. Such developments help to reverse processes of historic disinvestment.

Describing the organization’s trajectory as a landowner DeAnna Cummings (2012) explains, “We took two years to rehab the building. From there, we started impacting the physical space around our building as well as redeveloping other properties
on that corner. As our programs grew…the community said, ‘We are interested, we need more of what you’re providing,’ we expanded to the other buildings”. This description suggests that Juxtaposition Arts acts as a place entrepreneur with consent from the residents of North Minneapolis. Cumming’s positioning of the organization as an advocate for local communities raises important questions of how these amenities engage the communities that Juxtaposition Arts seeks to reach out to.

Through my own observations and conversations with others it became clear that there are still barriers to Northside residents accessing these amenities, more specifically to lower income and minority residents that the organization seeks to empower. In an interview with DeAnna and Roger in November of 2012 the founders recounted a recent event in which a girl had walked into their office, expressed her interest in the work they did around the community and then quickly and uncomfortably left. DeAnna and Roger’s interpretation of the situation was that the girl didn’t feel as though Juxtaposition Arts was accessible to her (Cummings and Cummings 2012). In some cases these resources that Juxtaposition Arts creates seem to be disproportionately accessed by exterior communities, who in the context of their privilege feel completely comfortable with the arts. At an annual North Minneapolis arts crawl, I noticed that attendance at Juxtaposition Arts stop was predominantly attended by a white demographic, while the rest of the event seemed to more proportionately represent neighborhood demographics.
The Organization as a Growth Interest?

The three images below offer perspective on the evolving role that Juxtaposition has come to play in the production of urban place. While few would dispute the transformation of the initial vacant building to the present Juxtaposition Arts campus as positive, the third image, a rendering of Juxtaposition’s proposed campus expansion is a bit more provocative and seems to deviate from Cumming’s previously articulated reimagination of North Minneapolis. The building is a much greater scale than anything else occupying the streetscape. The existing landscape is barely discernable next to the proposed structure, including Juxtaposition Art’s building to the right. The only person depicted in the landscape, a young white man riding by via bicycle seems like a particularly ominous representation for what is to come.

While Juxtaposition Arts has undoubtedly played a positive role in initiating transformation of the commercial corridor it is situated in, these spaces seem to be most utilized by more mobile populations, might more readily access the spaces. In *Urban Fortunes* Logan and Molotch (1987) suggest that alliances with growth machines in combination with normative goals for revitalization might ultimately compromise existing residents’ use value. They explain that once the transformation of space is divorced from grassroots processes, it becomes challenging not to reimagine the successful transformation of space entailing the in-movement of residents with greater social and monetary capital. A similar challenge exists in Frogtown Garden’s work once the park is developed.
Figure 4.3: An image of 2007 Emerson Avenue prior to the organization moving in

Figure 4.4: An image of Juxtaposition Art’s current storefront
Both Frogtown Gardens and Juxtaposition Arts have catalyzed positive forms of urban development in their neighborhoods. Frogtown Gardens has initiated the development of a 13-acre city park and farmstead and Juxtaposition Arts has helped to revitalize its commercial corridor, creating a campus complete with several storefronts, a pocket park, an artist coop and art work along the corridor. While these amenities provide residents with a greater quality of life they do not contest the marketization of place, and in some cases might pave the way for gentrification processes. Ultimately, I find that Logan and Molotch’s framework of use and exchange value provides a deceivingly straightforward and limited understanding of the role that these organizations might play in the production of place. I suggest that by taking Melissa Gilbert’s critiques (1999) into consideration we might come to a more complex and ultimately hopeful understanding of the work that these organizations are engaged in.
Chapter 4:
Spatial Practice and the Production of Place

While these organizations work to secure distribution equity through acting as brokers in urban development processes, they are simultaneously mobilizing spatial practices that challenge dominant understandings of who and how urban place is produced. Through the use of aesthetic spatial practices rooted in everyday life these organizations emphasize residents as producers of space. Employing Henri Lefebvre’s triad of moments, I analyze how each organization produces alternate subjectivities of people and place. Ultimately, I understand the creation of these new subjectivities to be movement toward a politics of the inhabitant, or governance driven by residents, that enable meaningful possibilities outside of private ownership structures in the production of urban place.

4.1 Spatial Practices and the Production of Place

Within the framework of Logan and Molotch’s Urban Growth Machine thesis, urban residents are primarily understood as participants in the production of space through their subjectivity as consumers. Geographers Miraftab and Wills (2005, 4) observe: “[That the Neoliberal city] increasingly exclude[s] urban citizens who are not deemed “good-paying customers: an ideology that claims to equalize through the promotion of formal political and civil rights yet, through its privatization of life spaces, criminalizes citizens on the basis of their consumption abilities”. In both of my case study geographies I found that homeownership was a significant form of membership
into participation and governance processes. One community organizer in Frogtown explained to me: “[To succeed] you need to fit it into the [housing] system. This dynamic needs to change. It has brought down a big chunk of this neighborhood!” (P 2012). Particularly given the disproportionate impact of foreclosure on the neighborhood, I found that residents felt as though they had little say in governance processes in their neighborhoods (C 2012; L 2012). More generally, youth, as non-property owners are excluded as stake-holders in community building. Roger and DeAnna spoke to the particular lack of opportunity for young people to participate in their community. They emphasized that given disparities in the education system lower-income students are prepared for low-level service jobs, while students at suburban and private schools are being prepared for ownership and management roles.

Through the spatial practices of greening and art these organizations seek to enfranchise urban residents in producing alternate imaginations of space and as meaningful agents in the production of urban place. DeAnna suggests that the creation of art is an accessible tool for people to engage in complex issues and communicate with others. She explains:

“A lot of what we’re faced with today regarding various social challenges are that the issues appear to be so complex. For the average person, it’s challenging to get your mind around what you can do about it, or how you can truly have an impact or make a difference. I think that arts and culture are powerful tools to make visible and clear things that can often seem really complicated and impossible” (Cummings 2012).
While Frogtown Gardens does not have as clear-cut an ideology of gardening as a form of participation in urban politics, informants and organization members did speak to the agency to be gained through everyday practices such as gardening. Cofounder Patricia Ohmans (2012) explains:

I don’t know if it [the significance of gardening] has to be grander than growing things with your own hands to feed your own children… There are so many threats psychic and real threats that to regain… that to talk about land permanence and have things where you can see them essentially allows you to feel like you are more in control and that is sort of the essence of politics…You use politics to be self determining.

Each of these organizations engages residents in these practices of greening and the arts through their programming. Frogtown Gardens has hosted many seed swaps, community workdays and celebrations, and even launched a neighborhood cooking show mini series. Juxtaposition Arts, through its public art and environmental design programs, works to engage students in small scale interventions of built environment from the installation of pocket parks to the creation of murals. These organizations both emphasized the importance of such programming to their work. Roger explains, “We are different than 501c3 social services. We succeed through producing, creating, and supporting each other” (Cummings and Cummings 2012). I interpret Roger’s comment to suggest that through engaging in these tangible practices of creation, Juxtaposition Arts differentiates itself from operationalized and more generic organizations. In the Production of Space Henri Lefebvre (1991 137) articulates similar weight to he setting
of everyday life: “It is in the realm of this everyday life where knowledge exists and where genuine change can occur”. In the following section I use Lefebvre’s triad of moments to unpack the way in which these organization spatial practices create alternatives.

**Employing Lefebvre’s Triad**

I begin by narrating spatial practices I witnessed as a participant observer at each organization over summer 2012 and then use Lefebvre’s triad of moments to organize the meaning behind these experiences (See Table 4.1). Lefebvre’s triad positions spatial practices as mediating dominant conceptions of space with our own subaltern lived and imagined understandings of space. Lefebvre’s triad explains the way in which everyday spatial practices are in conversations with hegemonic productions of space.

Over summer 2012 Frogtown Gardens transformed a vacated lot, the former site of arson, into a permaculture teaching garden called Amir’s Garden (Figure 4.1). As a burnt out lot, the site exemplified dominant representations Frogtown as a blighted and dangerous neighborhood. Despite residents vocalizing the need to focus resources on making existing homes more livable, the city has responded to a large number of vacancies resulting from the foreclosure crisis by maintaining and constructing new housing stock (Marault 2012). In the simultaneous effort to respectfully commemorate the death of toddler Amir Coleman in the arson and to create spaces that better serve community needs, the organization reimagined the space as a permaculture-teaching garden. Through the spatial practice of gardening and remediating and cultivating the lot, participants engaged with the space in new ways that affirmed the site as a garden and
community space, over a dangerous space, or even a site necessarily for housing real estate.

Figure 4.1: An Image of Amir’s Garden

Over summer 2012 the youth program that I shadowed at Juxtaposition Arts as a participant observer also worked to produce an alternate representation of space. Commissioned to create a work of public art, the class took on the task of designing small furniture interventions that would make the park accommodating to a wider range of visitors. When we arrived at the park site for the first time we found little infrastructure beyond a skate park. A large concrete slab remaining from a recently razed community center ominously occupied a large portion of the site. The only shaded space we found to work at was the overhang of the park’s bathrooms. Through discussions around the people and activities that the park failed to serve, it was decided that the students would
design a series of small furniture such as benches, streetlights, and shade structures that would make the park more accommodating. Although these pieces of furniture were not actually created, the work brought the idea that parks should cater to a wider range of residents and uses to the youths’ imaginations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moment</th>
<th>Lefebvre’s Triad</th>
<th>Frogtown Gardens</th>
<th>Juxtaposition Arts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation of Spaces</td>
<td>Dominant emotional and cultural meanings imposed on space by top down forces</td>
<td>A site of arson subscribing to a larger narrative of Frogtown as a blighted and dangerous space</td>
<td>A park site for solely accommodating skaters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaces of Representation</td>
<td>These are subaltern imaginations or understandings of place built off of personal lived experienced</td>
<td>Garden site that pays tribute to the loss of Amir Coleman and serves as a learning space for community</td>
<td>A park that through as a public space that should cater to a wide variety of people and activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Practice</td>
<td>Engagement of space at the level of the body that negotiates representations of space and spaces of representation</td>
<td>The act of neighbors remediating and cultivating the site and engaging with its qualities as a gardening space rather its qualities as a blighted space or piece of real estate</td>
<td>Designing park furniture that would open the park up to a wider variety of activities and residents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: A breakdown of the production of space into each of Lefebvre’s moments.

While these new representations of space, may seem like relatively mundane reimaginings, they serve as a launching off point for creating meaningful alternate to market determination of urban place. Through creating spaces that are produced and sustained through everyday practices, such as a garden, participants are enabled to affirm their own experiences in space. In an interview with a former participant at Juxtaposition
Arts, my informant explained that through the time he spent at Juxtaposition Arts as a youth he came to better understand his community and overcome its sensational and violent representations in the media (M 2012). The choice to engage with one’s own interpretation is a meaningful destabilization of hegemonic space and brings about new spaces of representation.

4.2 Producer to Consumer

These new spaces of representation are significant in the way that they reframe subjectivity. They assert urban residents as producers of place. In explaining one of her driving motivations of her work at Frogtown Gardens an informant explains organization activity as an outlet for alternate subjectivity: “[Frogtowners] have an identity as violent, crime ridden, hapless and sick. We need an alternate identity to the point of being viewed as citizens by ourselves as much as outsiders” (V 2013). Through the reappropriations, or “hidden production” of dominant meaning, French philosopher De Certeau (1984) explained spatial practices, or in his words, tactics, to transform consumer into producer. A former board member of Juxtaposition Arts spoke to this transformation, offering: “A lot of people really don’t know what they are good at. [Juxtaposition Arts] gives kids a chance who think they want to try the visual arts…all of the sudden you’re somebody who did the mural on the wall, you’re somebody…you’re somebody in your own mind … you matter in the community” (H 2012). DeAnna elaborates: “the public art that JXTA does, gives young people an ability to stake their claim in the community and express their
own voice and aesthetic what they need to say and what their community is about” (Cummings and Cummings 2012). While less explicitly political in orientation many of my informants involved in gardening projects frequently connected the day to day work done in the garden as a way to claim agency in larger issues such as wellbeing, soil contamination, and the continuation of family tradition.

Some scholars have critiqued projects that work to emphasize the subjectivity of “producer” as they understand the emphasis on self-sufficiency to affirm processes of neoliberal roll out. In her writing about community gardens, community studies scholar, Mary Beth Pudup (2008, 1229), writes that these gardens are “spaces of neoliberal governmentality, that is spaces in which gardening puts individuals in charge of their own adjustment(s) to economic restructuring and social dislocation through self help technologies centered on personal contact with nature”. Pudup explains that the space of the community garden stresses the idea that productive members of society should be self-sufficient. Pudup’s critique raises questions about the transformation of subjectivity under the institution of organization. For example, through by work at both organizations I saw the possibility of art and agriculture being used to create sanctioned forms of minority representation and conduct. In an interview DeAnna and Roger expressed frustration with the commodification, or marketization of the hip hop aesthetic and the idea of “black art”, telling me a story about two of their teaching artists getting commissioned to create artwork for black history month. When the artists brought their work to the venue, the client was disappointed that they had not created a more obvious representation of black art, such as an image of Martin Luther King or aerosol art.
(Cummings and Cummings 2012). In a recent conversation with a white member of Frogtown Garden’s board, I was told that the organization was thinking about creating a food-processing center on the farm site and that perhaps Hmong residents, with their experience preforming ritual slaughters, might be able to capitalize on these skills for on-site employment (W 2013). These two anecdotes suggest a potential danger of the institutionalization of tactics, transforming expressions of alternate representation into mechanism with which to safely incorporate minority representation into the mainstream political economy.

Most organization members that I spoke to did not see the subjectivity of producer as problematic, but empowering. Similarly, poststructuralist and feminist geographer J.K Gibson- Graham (1996; 2003) understands these alternate subjectivities as part of an evolution toward an alternate form of capitalism and greater autonomy. Gibson-Graham explains the identity of producer as a way to challenge structural inequality and for communities to determine their own place in the economy. Roger affirmed this sentiment explaining: “We want to actualize our own interpretation, not [anyone else’s] interpretation, of what our community’s morals are; or what are mission of our culture is” (Juxtaposition Arts 2006). Frogtown Gardens has expressed interest in establishing a wealth-building project on the farmstead for similar interest in local autonomy. While I believe that Pudup offers an important critique of self-sufficiency narratives, I understand these organizations’ work in forming new subjectivities to be a movement towards an alternate capitalism that allows for increased freedom.
Ultimately I found that neither organization was particularly preoccupied with its seemingly contradictory engagement in economic systems. In a conversation about the organization’s relationship to economy, Roger explained to me: “I am aware that the revolution will not be funded, but I want everyone to have caviar if they so choose” (Cummings and Cummings 2012). I understand this prioritization as a commitment to a politics of the inhabitant, a term I borrow from geographer Mark Purcell (2002). Rather than perusing any one vision, Purcell emphasizes that a movement towards a more just production of place is based in achieving a collective right to difference. Purcell concedes it is likely that few residents would pursue radical Marxist spatial agenda. That being said, I see the spaces that each organization carves out as enabling residents to cultivate creative ideas that demand for a right to difference in space. For example Frogtown Gardens board member Susanne Moua (2010) talking about an upcoming organization campaign, suggests the potential collective power to be accessed through spatial practice “if we were to each grow a bean plant [on our chain-link fences], we would have 1,000 pounds of beans to give to our local food shelf. Particularly inspiring to me was one teaching artists explanation of how one of his students used micro scale furniture to engage with more abstract ideas of justice. “[Liz]³ was fascinated by [the infrastructure] fencing. Using her experience of fencing, she started to think about public and private space, and even possible openings”(T 2012). Both of these imaginations assert residents’ agency in the production of differential urban place, extending beyond an economic relationship.

³ Student’s name has been replaced with a pseudonym for purposes of anonymity
Comparative Tactics

While I have equated these practices as similar in their potential to create new urban places that implicate people as agents in built environment, I often thought about the differences between two media as a means to produce space. In particular, I spent a lot of time thinking about how each medium serves as a political expression. Initially, has interpreted Juxtaposition Art’s use public art as having more political potential as a tool to produce place. Art seemed to allow for a more nuanced articulation of messaging than greening did and I consistently found that Juxtaposition Art’s has a much more explicitly political vocabulary for describing its work. While gardener participants at Frogtown Gardens generally did not articulate their work as relating to processes of political economy, what I found to be powerful was the garden as an intermediary between place and the body. Informants framed the growing of food as a way to engage with large issues of wellbeing rooted in the body such as spirituality, physical health, and family history. The universal relationship between body and food seemed to be powerful in attracting participants. More so than the creation of art, the act of growing food is strengthened by its role as a daily practice. Ultimately I think that the differential ways that these two media produce place are less a result of the media themselves and can be explained by organization conduct.

I believe that two important variables in explaining these differences are organization age and geographical context. Juxtaposition Arts, incorporated in 1995, has gone through many different iterations of political positionality and thus has had more time and experience to situate itself as a political actor. Founded in 2009, Frogtown Gardens is still in the process of defining its role in the neighborhood. Additionally, I see
overarching neighborhood political discourse impacting the way that these organizations mobilize political discourse. North Minneapolis as a historically black enclave has a more unified and charged discourse around identity politics, whereas Frogtown as a historically transient neighborhood seems to have less of a cohesive story line. I see Juxtaposition Arts mobilizing the arts to elevate marginalized voices, while Frogtown Gardens uses greening as a means to unify neighborhood voices.

4.3 Returning to the Tipping Point

I am mindful that I have left the question of how these organizations might protect residents from processes of gentrification unanswered. While I don’t know that I can provide a direct answer through my research, it is clear to me that the production of place created through spatial practice holds the power to challenge such processes. I return to the streetscape of North Minneapolis that my informant, B, first brought to my attention through his story of the tipping point.

In our conversations about North Minneapolis two informants, (B 2012; F 2012) offered unprompted critiques for a new decorative bus shelter titled “Blooms of Hope” built at the intersection of two commercial corridors. One suggested, “It looks like it wants to be somewhere else” (B 2012). He explained that this bus shelter emphasizes not what is unique about North Minneapolis, but all of the ways in which North Minneapolis could potentially be like another upper middle class neighborhood (Ibid). He took offense in the object’s blatant failure as a useful object. He explains: “From a functional standpoint it’s a bus stop, right? It doesn’t have lights, benches...there is no heat. What
is that saying? Don’t hang out here!” (B 2012). He explained the shelter to epitomize the blatant marketization of space. Informant F (2012), a community organizer, elaborated, “We need to build for those who already live here, not to attract those we would like to live here”.

In a recent blog post, John Hoff, an active blogger and white resident that self identifies as part of “an incoming population involved with North Minneapolis’s revival,” comments on several art pieces created by Juxtaposition Arts. He describes them as “cringe inducing chaotic celebration of urban dystopianism” (Hoff 2010). Juxtaposition Arts has received similar critiques from other audiences. In Better Towns and Cities Magazine, journalist of the New Urbanism, Phillip Langdon, suggests that art produced by organizations like Juxtaposition Arts is problematic in that it “disturbs the public”. He suggests that Juxtaposition Art’s pieces allude back to the “pervasive visual rudeness that made many sections of America's cities hard to live in not long ago and that would threaten communal well-being if it were to become widespread again” (Langdon 2012).

While not directly so, I find these two commentaries to be in conversation with each other. I find my informant’s explanation of “Blooms of Hope” extremely troubling, but am left with hope that the work of Juxtaposition Arts might have the power to create equivalent transgressions to those such as Hoff and Langdon seeking a more contained and sterile and undeniably racist urban existence. DeAnna aptly emphasizes “I think that we have the right as citizens to express ourselves in public space just like the people with a lot of money have the opportunity to put up a billboard or a building without asking what I thought about it” (Cummings and Cummings 2012). While I don’t know that such disruptions have the power to stop the marketization of space I believe that they have the
power to complicate narratives of ownership over space. I think that in both cases residents’ production of vibrant spaces that mobilize alternate capitalisms make the marketizations of place and subsequent displacement of peoples increasingly challenging to justify.
Conclusion

In my thesis I have explored how two community-based organizations, Frogtown Gardens and Juxtaposition Arts, are involved in contesting shifting governance over space taking place in the context of the New Urban Politics. I find that these organizations are constantly negotiating solutions to the commodification of urban land that both seek to shield residents from the impacts, and provide an alternative. I understand these organizations to produce urban place both through the negotiation of alternate land uses through the use of spatial practices to elevate residents as actors of spatial governance. Ultimately, I find that these organizations seek to elevate residents as producers of urban place as a means of moving toward a politics of the inhabitant, or a collective right to self-determination and difference.

My work contributes to several existing conversations in geography. Foremost, my work rejects the idea of a post-political city. While it is clear that neither of my case study organizations radically contests capitalism, these organizations are constantly negotiating different relationships to state and market actors to best engage participants’ needs. Additionally, while the New Urban Politics emphasized land use as the crux of urban politics, I find that each of my case study organizations is able to mobilize spatial practices as a means to carve out alternate productions of urban place. The work of my case studies suggests these practices hold significant power in producing new subjectivities of people and place. Therefore, I would like to emphasize that it is insufficient to understand urban place solely produced through urban land elites and
ownership structures, but is actively being reshaped by inhabitants in their everyday lives, as urban place exists not just as a material space, but as mental and social space as well. Through their contribution in negotiating land use and engaging residents in spatial practices I understand that community based organizations to be crucial actors in the production of space. While it is ultimately unclear whether these organizations have the power to protect their neighborhoods from marketization, I believe that these organizations have the capacity to complicate agendas of marketization.

Given constraints of this thesis, I have identified several areas for further research. Originally invested in understanding how these organizations were involved in the production of place as described by Logan and Molotch, my research around everyday practices is quite exploratory. In particular I would be interested in further talking to organization participants about their engagement in spatial practices and how they understand these practices to actualize power. I am particularly interested in the way that new spaces created through spatial practice might create important spaces of neighborhood outside of the structure of homeownership. Of particular interest is the way that power structures such as race, gender, and sexuality take shape in these spaces in similar or different permutations to those we see through conventional ownership structures. A notable limitation in my research was the Institutional Review Board restriction of formal interviews with youth participants, leaving me largely unable to explain how they understand the work that they engage in.

Ultimately this thesis was inspired by questions about the fate of working class neighborhoods in the face of assertive marketization characteristic of the New Urban Politics. Over the course of this work I have come to realize that while distributive
understandings of equity take on an important role in actualizing spatial justice, most
important is the continuous process of confronting who can participate in the production
of place. I have also come to a more nuanced understanding of the ways that we might
simultaneously work within and against hegemonic processes in claiming a right to
difference. I challenge myself in my own work to move away from binary distinctions
between the reproduction and contestation of neoliberalism, but to engage with the
production and possibility that might exist in the cracks.
Acknowledgements

I owe a primary thanks to my Advisor Dan Trudeau, who has offered an incredible amount of support and thoughtful feedback throughout this process. Your insights and literature recommendations continue to push me to approach the world in a critical, but compassionate way.

Thank you to Patricia Ohmans and DeAnna Cummings for allowing me to engage with your reimaginings of place and community in my thesis. I am consistently inspired by the creativity and honesty that you approach your work with.

I owe endless thanks to my informants who invited me into their homes and third places and openly shared their stories and thoughts. Without your generosity this project would not have been possible.

I would like to thank my mom, Sarah, for helping me organize my thoughts.

An additional thanks to Professors Katie Pratt and Molly Olsen for serving on my defense committee.
Appendix

Race and Ethnicity (Minnesota Compass 2011)

Frogtown and Saint Paul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Other Race</th>
<th>2+ Races</th>
<th>Latino/ Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frogtown</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Paul</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jordan and Minneapolis\(^4\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Other Race</th>
<th>2+ Races</th>
<th>Latino/ Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income Distribution (Minnesota Compass 2011)

Frogtown and Saint Paul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Less than $35,000</th>
<th>$35,000-$49,999</th>
<th>$50,000-$74,999</th>
<th>$75,000-$99,000</th>
<th>$100,000 and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frogtown</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Paul</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

North Minneapolis and Minneapolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Less than $35,000</th>
<th>$35,000-$49,999</th>
<th>$50,000-$74,999</th>
<th>$75,000-$99,000</th>
<th>$100,000 and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^4\) I use Jordan, a neighborhood within North Minneapolis as a proxy due to a lack of aggregate data for North Minneapolis
Informant Interviews

Cummings and Cummings, 5 December 2012.
Ohmans, Interview, 16 January 2013.
A, Interview, 29 May 2012.
B, Interview, 02 June 2012.
C, Interview, 05 June 2012.
D, Interview, 08 June 2012.
E, Interview, 08 June 2012.
F, Interview, 16 June 2012.
G, Interview, 22 June 2012.
H, Interview, 23 June 2012.
I, Interview, 25 June 2012.
J, Interview, 25 June 2012.
K, Interview, 06 July 2012.
L, Interview, 09 July 2012.
M, Interview, 12 July 2012.
N, Interview, 15 July 2012.
O, Interview, 23 July 2012.
P, Interview, 28 July 2012.
Q, Interview, 02 August 2012.
R, Interview, 08 August 2012.

Informants were assigned an alphabet letter in chronological order of interview date.
S, Interview, 1 November 2012.
T, Interview, 14 November 2012.
U, Interview, 2 December 2012.
V, Interview, January 16 2013.
W, Interview, 7 March 2013.
Bibliography


Clement , Ted, Sophia Giebultowicz, and Matthew Wicklund. 2006. Mortgage Applications Filed by Whites. Gentrification in North Minneapolis. Macalester College. http://www.macalester.edu%2FdotAsset%2Fd44ea141-578d-4479b46fc9a7a6acd017.pdf&ci=2EIUZeFMZTtyAHN6oDgDA&usg=AFQjCNExwo2PC_Jq1wBCEmPddl3VtbXcoSA&sig2=kCCIkZHShw7PbkhvTuXO3g&bvm=bv.45960087,d.aWc


