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Crafting Local Food Narratives with Immigrant Voices: Participatory Ethnography Among Somali Bantu Farmers in West Denver

Abstract

In 2013, a non-profit, Re:Vision, established the Ubuntu Farm to work with the local Somali Bantu refugee population. It was supposed to improve access to fresh produce, offer educational opportunities, skill training and more. Early on in 2014, it became clear Re:Vision was not delivering on its promises, and by 2015 the farm had ceased to exist. Using participant observation, interviews with farm participants and staff and a review of publicly accessible financial documents, I argue that Re:Vision maintained a conflict of mission, which contributed to their farms' failings, despite their ability to grow plenty of vegetables. From there, I attempt to identify which shortcomings were singular to Re:Vision and which were influenced by neo-liberal governance. My findings suggest that non-profits often have to choose between serving funders and their target communities. This choice can disadvantage the community, while the non-profit reaps the benefits of association with wealthy foundations and donors.

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Crafting Local Food Narratives with Immigrant Voices: Participatory Ethnography Among
Somali Bantu Farmers in West Denver

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the Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Raymond A. Pang

March 2018

Advisor: Richard Clemmer-Smith

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Title: Crafting Local Food Narratives with Immigrant Voices: Participatory Ethnography
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Abstract

In 2013, a non-profit, Re:Vision, established the Ubuntu Farm to work with the local Somali Bantu refugee population. It was supposed to improve access to fresh produce, offer educational opportunities, skill training and more. Early on in 2014, it became clear Re:Vision was not delivering on its promises, and by 2015 the farm had ceased to exist. Using participant observation, interviews with farm participants and staff and a review of publicly accessible financial documents, I argue that Re:Vision maintained a conflict of mission, which contributed to their farms' failings, despite their ability to grow plenty of vegetables. From there, I attempt to identify which shortcomings were singular to Re:Vision and which were influenced by neo-liberal governance. My findings suggest that non-profits often have to choose between serving funders and their target communities. This can disadvantage the community, while the non-profit reaps the benefits of association with wealthy foundations and funders.

Key words: Urban Agriculture, Non-Profit, Neo-liberal, Social Capital, Political Economy

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Chapter 1: Introduction

When this project was conceived in 2013, I had spent the previous four years cultivating a personal garden, teaching cooking, and gardening classes, and developing an interest in urban agriculture as an educational tool for bringing people closer to food production. I stumbled upon Re:Vision, a local non-profit while conducting some research into a local food policy council, and I was curious about their claims of using an urban farm project to empower a community of Somali Bantu refugees.

Using a framework of political economy, I set out to gain a better understanding how community driven projects can identify and address food insecurity, as well as determine how Re:Vision, a Denver based non-profit organization, tailored their programs to reach more people and improve food access for low-income residents. From this initial query, I contacted Re:Vision and secured a farming internship that offered full exposure to the daily workings of the farm, as well as the opportunity to get a little bit of soil underneath my fingernails.

As my muscles became used to the toll of farm labor and my skin tanned, the investigation I had initially imagined began to look less viable. While the two urban farms were productive, they struggled to fulfill their promise. Little did I know I was witnessing the last year Re:Vision would grow food with the Somali Bantu on Ubuntu Farm. At the midway point of the growing season, my focus shifted from the Somali Bantu as the central focus, to the farm itself, and the non-profit's struggles to fulfill even its fundamental goal of getting food to the community. The farm flourished, filled with rows and rows of beautiful produce, but frustrations continued to build as the reality set in that the farms and the food were not helping nearly as much as they could. The central research questions that this paper attempts to answer are below.

Central Research Questions

1. Did Re:Vision utilize the Somali Bantu's refugee narrative to garner support?
2. What capacity did Re:Vision's deliverable goals, as outlined by funders conflict with the farm's mission to positively impact the immediate community?
3. Which shortcomings were attributable to structural obstacles influenced by neo-liberal governance?
4. Which shortcomings were attributable to Re:Vision?
5. What happens when a non-profit fails, and what can be learned?

Thesis Statement

To answer these questions, I first argue that the conflict of mission surrounding the farms, along with Re:Vision's stretched organizational capacity contributed to the farm falling far short of its lofty goals, despite the fact that it was brimming with vegetables and promise.

Second, I examine which shortcomings were singular to Re:Vision, and which were structurally influenced by neo-liberal governance, and consequently, the urban agriculture landscape.

This thesis explores the events, circumstances, and decisions that occurred between May and November of 2014, which led to the failure of Re:Vision's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, and of Ubuntu Urban Farm, the farm associated with their partnership with the Somali Bantu. The proceeding chapters make a case that the farms' mission was unclear. The projects had many goals without a clear path to achieve them, which hindered the success of Re:Vision's urban farm projects, and complicated efforts to fix things during the season. This confusion was augmented by the rapid growth of their organization, which stretched their staff to capacity. The wider implications of this case study are related to the question of which failures of this project are individual to Re:Vision, and which are structurally related to the general infusion of neo-liberal ideology and policies into non-profit work.

Thesis Overview

Chapter Two, “Background,” is divided into four subsections. The first section provides a historical background for the larger Somali Bantu community in America by chronologically following the events that preceded their arrival as refugees in the United States. The second section describes the Somali Bantu community in Denver, their participation on the farm, and their goals in regards to the farm. The third subsection examines the other major players on the farm. The fourth subsection discusses the research questions that served as a foundation for this project, and it concludes with the introduction of the thesis statement.

Chapter Three, “Research Design and Theoretical Framework,” contains two distinct sections. The first explains my use of participant observation as the basis of this investigation, techniques I used to process and analyze the data, a description of how informants are coded, and the limitations of my research practices. In the second section, I present political economy as the central framework for this thesis, explain the use of Bourdieu’s (1986) social and cultural capital to evaluate the farms’ performance, and present case studies of urban agriculture and non-profit organizations that begin to offer a contextual understanding of the intersections urban agriculture and non-profit work in a post-neo-liberal world.

Chapter Four, “Results and Findings,” presents the findings of six months of participant observation, formal interviews, informal conversations, and available organizational documents. Chronologically, I start with my observations of Re:Vision’s farms early in the season and I track how my regular fieldwork, as well as specific events, coincide with my changing perception of Re:Vision’s urban farms. Early on in the chapter, Re:Vision’s vision for their farm and their declared goals are discussed and problematized. The farms began the season filled with promise, but as the season progressed, it became evident to other interns, the farm manager, and myself, that the CSA was not serving the Hispanic community, the Somali Bantu were not bringing much food home, and the farm was struggling financially. By the season’s end, Re:Vision decided to shutter the Ubuntu Farm,

which left many the problems revealed unsolved, and presented more questions than answers.

Chapter Five, "Discussion," makes sense of the findings shared in Chapter Four, and provides a systematic breakdown of the events observed during the growing season. In short, Re:Vision did not have the proper systems in place to fulfill their goals, and they lacked culturally inclusive management procedures. Most of this could be attributed to under planning, and the under-allocation of resources.

Chapter Six, "Conclusion," restates the purpose and intention of this thesis project, and reintroduces the research questions and thesis statement. Later in the chapter, the implications of the research, limitations of the investigation, and questions for future researchers are discussed. In short, my findings reveal an organization that sold the idea of an urban farm that would revitalize the surrounding community with affordable produce, economic opportunities, education, and an intercultural space to foster cross-cultural interaction. However, Re:Vision was more committed to creating a viable model of urban agriculture than in finding creative ways to get food to the Somali Bantu and Hispanic communities, creating a cooperatively run farm, fostering community engagement, or utilizing the farms' educational potential.

Chapter 2: Background

In this chapter, I introduce the Somali Bantu, and provide a summary of historical events that have displaced them, and brought them to the U.S. After that; I familiarize the reader with the Somali Bantu in Denver, as well as introduce the other significant actors from Re:Vision's urban farm projects. Following the establishment of that background, I explain my initial research questions and give a brief overview of some of the problems that arose at the farms. The chapter concludes with the introduction of my thesis argument, which offers the primary argument of this thesis paper.

National Portrait of the Somali Bantu: A History of Marginalization

Before immigrating to the U.S., the Bantu in Somalia were religious and ethnic minorities who faced slavery, indentured servitude, persecution, and exclusion from many aspects of traditional Somali society, such as clan affiliation and protection. While some Somali Bantu are indigenous to Somalia, many Bantu were brought to Somalia as slaves. Some have integrated into Somali society, while others have maintained their ancestral culture, Bantu language, and a regional sense of southeast African identity (Van Lehman & Eno 2003). The maintenance of a distinct culture, combined with a recent history of slavery and displacement, contributed toward their political and ethnic marginalization, in spite of two-centuries of geographical occupation within modern day Somalia.

As much as ninety percent of Somalia is arid, non-arable land, and does not have access to irrigation or consistent rainfall. Without reliable water, agriculture has not been practiced intensively in that ninety percent, but it was historically practiced in the South where the Bantu lived. Traditionally, many of the clans and sub-clans of Somalia have practiced pastoralism, rather than long-term sedentary agriculture. In the 18th century, the Sultanate of

Zanzibar administered a significant portion of the East African slave trade and began to forcibly transfer Bantu tribes from the coast of South Eastern Africa to the Juba River valley in Southern Somalia (Van Lehman & Eno 2003). Unlike the rest of Somalia, the Juba River valley is one of the few zones where regular water is available, and where surplus production can be expected.

Many of the current Somali Bantu refugees within the U.S. originate from the lower and middle Juba River valley. Due to a growing demand by the regime to consolidate natural resources into the hands of the few, and the South's position as the most productive and lush land, Barre's government began to focus on development for the Juba River Valley. However, before development plans could begin, the Bantu occupants were displaced from the land they had farmed for over a century.

Clans

The Somali Bantu have been distinguished from indigenous Somalis by phenotypical classifications such as hair, and superficial facial characteristics. In the 1960s, the pastoral Somali clans were championed as the ancestral, or legitimate, inhabitants of Somalia. This wave of post-colonial nationalism sparked a new era of institutional discrimination against the Somali Bantu, led by governmental policies. In conjunction with language and cultural differences, superficial physical distinctions were used to identify the Bantu and subject them to further institutional discrimination within Somalia. This discrimination ranged from political exclusion to the prevention of intermarriage between Bantu and the traditional clans. Much emphasis has been placed on the role ethnic identities, and clan differentiation played in the eruption of the 1991 Civil War because these have been the most visible differences to outside observers. However, it is essential to consider that political and economic conflict can come first, and preceded the exacerbation of clan differences between 1960 and 1990.

During the period of Italian colonial occupation, many Bantu peoples lost their farms to administrative confiscation, and the colonial authority forcibly conscripted the Somali Bantu to slave-like labor on plantations (Van Lehman & Eno 2003). After the British defeated the

Italians in 1941, the British abolished the practice of conscripted labor, and the Bantu were allowed to farm with minimal interference until Somalia's independence in the 1960s. At this time, state-sponsored identity policies were established to present a homogenous Somali nation, and those policies prevented Bantu peoples from engaging in social, political, and economic development. Throughout Siyaad Barre's military dictatorship in the 1980s, government-owned agricultural corporations utilized unscrupulous land laws to displace many Bantu from their farmland and acquire this land for the propagation of cash crops, rather than food (2003).

The 1975 Land Law threatened to displace the Bantu in the South from their farmland thoroughly, and the law privileged those with access to administrative centers and resources, where ownership was registered (Cassanelli 1995). That law also allowed the state to transfer all collectively owned land to state property. Shortly after this law was passed, the government began accepting proposals, and plans for a hydroelectric dam to deliver cheap electricity to the capital. Also, the dam would irrigate farmland for Barre's kin and friends, who acquired agricultural land in the wake of the 1975 Land Law (1995). While the legal theft of property from those who occupied it was part of a larger plan of consolidating state resources, it is also important to note that agricultural development is often attractive to international investors, and can attract foreign aid. By the end of the 1970s, Southern Somalia was in the sights of many elites. It represented an untapped frontier, which could draw aid money, and investment. Also, control of the South was necessary for the Barre Regime to gain a stronger monopolistic hold on the country's resources. The Land Law was part of a long-term struggle for political power. An acknowledgment of the presence of nepotism and clan preferences is significant to understanding the political environment that led to the civil war and the Somali Bantu's displacement.

Language

The declaration of Somali (Af-Soomaali) as the official language of Somalia in 1973 was another step towards further marginalizing Bantu because it became the sole language

of formal education. While Somalia underwent a series of public literacy projects to improve on one of the world's lowest literacy rates, these efforts did not effectively reach the Maay-Maay speaking Somali Bantu. As a result, the Bantu in Southern Somalia continued to remain highly illiterate, as well as unqualified to work within local government, where they could have expressed some political agency.

The lack of political capital, high illiteracy rates, and a disposition towards collective group-sufficiency left the Bantu particularly vulnerable to the 1975 Land Law. Without representation in government agencies, most Bantu farmers faced language-based discrimination and were unable to gain deeds to the land they farmed.

Cassanelli (1995) asserts that before to the mid-1970s, the economic and geographical marginality of Southern Somalia offered a form of security from centralized state interference and cronyism, and fostered a culture of self-sufficiency. After the imposition of the Land Law, the illusions of fostering geographical isolation from elite land grabs and intentional marginalization disappeared (Cassanelli 1995).

Displacement

With the outbreak of the civil war, the agricultural marketing networks, which the Bantu depended on for selling produce, began to fail. Without traditional clan affiliation, many Somali Bantu were targeted during the war, and as a result, many farms were consistently raided for food, or taken by different groups. Due to their historic persecution and a history of resistance, many Bantu communities in Southern Somalia were semi-autonomous out of necessity. Until the late 70s, the Somali state did not take a strong interest in the fertile South, and there was not a strong state presence in the region. Although Somalia received the most foreign aid in all of Africa through the 1970s and 1980s, the South was politically underrepresented within the Barre regime and received a tiny portion of the aid dollars (Besteman & Cassanelli 1996).

In the face of destructive state policies, and without state support, the Bantu farmers functioned as an adaptable and fairly self-sufficient group of farmers. This constituted

keeping large food stores in case of a bad growing season. While many communities kept some form of weapons for protection, groups in the south did not have the same access to modern weaponry as groups with ties to foreign suppliers in Kenya, Ethiopia, and the Middle East (Cassanelli 1995). On a more pernicious level, disconnecting Bantu farmers from their land hinged on challenging their ability to be self-sufficient. Consequently, destroying their food stores was an effective method to reduce the productivity of their land, which in turn forced them off their land. Also, many of the warlords who currently lay claim to large strips of territory in Southern Somalia had begun to make attempts to legitimize their claims of this territory as early as 1975 by obtaining government registered land deeds. While land grabs in the fertile Juba river valley became commonplace after 1975, the situation was still fluid at the outbreak of the war and culminated in many groups violently defending their claims of land ownership (1995). Lost in the many claims for personal ownership, many smallholder Bantu farmers collectively lost their farmland in one fell swoop. As one of the last frontiers of, allegedly, unclaimed natural resources and a place not yet monopolized by the government, Bantu farmland became an arena for different political groups to fight proxy battles for resource control in future post-war Somalia.

In the absence of clan protection, the Somali Bantu were also the target of many acts of physical violence, and bandits, rogue militia and government forces targeted their large stocks of food. The lack of modern weapons left the Bantu, and other farmers disproportionately vulnerable to violence, because they could not effectively defend themselves or their land (1995). During the Somali Civil War, many were killed in attacks by both sides and targeted in a scorched earth campaign by the former dictator, Mohammed Siyaad Barre. In the wake of the 1991 civil war, over 15,000 Somali Bantu resided in refugee camps located in Kenya, Somalia, and Tanzania, where they continued to suffer from persecution and abuse at the hands of other refugees, and warlords who looted the camps' food supplies (Besteman 1999). Many of the Bantu refugees, who had fled Somalia, expressed a desire to settle in a new country, and not return to Somalia.

This process of resettlement would take the better part of a decade to resolve, and much of the social stigmatization they suffered within Somalia was reproduced in refugee camps. Bantu groups often lived at the outskirts of the refugee camps, which left them open to night raids by bandits, while Bantu women were exceptionally vulnerable to rape due to their exclusion from traditional clan protections and the consequent lack of inter-clan agreements. Although clan membership was not always enough to prevent violent acts, inter-marriage between clans acted to hinder violence between clan groups

As fighting began to tone down during the later years in the 1990s, the remaining Bantu in Somalia began to resume farming. However, the valuable agricultural area in Southern Somalia had become the focus of armed bandits and warlords, who extorted unarmed occupants of the land. According to Cassanelli and Besteman (1996), the post-civil war economy of the late 90s in the South was primarily based on the extortion of surpluses from the unarmed to the armed. While over two decades have passed since the breakdown of Somali civil society, the Bantu who remain in Somalia have been targets of violent attacks by the terrorist group Al-Shabaab (Minority Rights Group International. "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Somalia: Bantu", May 2011, accessed March 3rd 2015) and are still routinely discriminated against from social, economic and educational standpoints.

Relocation

Although the political situation in Somalia was unresolved over ten years after the outbreak of the civil war, many Somali Bantu were stuck in different East African countries due to political roadblocks. Beginning in 1993, groups of Somali Bantu started to seek resettlement in other East African countries, such as Tanzania, and Mozambique, however, this initial attempt was unsuccessful and led to consideration for asylum in the United States in 1999 (Van Lehman & Eno 2003).

The events of 9/11 shifted U.S. foreign policy and stalled the relocation of 12,000 Somali Bantu refugees to the U.S. until 2003. With the help of various U.S. based non-

governmental organizations (NGOs) and governmental agencies, the Somali Bantu received approval for political asylum, and refugee status in 2003 (Revision International, "Urban Farms", 2013, accessed February 10th, 2014). However, thousands of Bantu still live in Somalia and the refugee camps. After initially resettling in major cities, such as Columbus, and Atlanta, some in the Somali Bantu community had trouble adjusting to the high living costs, high crime, and poor public schools associated with large urban centers. As a result, some Somali Bantu refugees chose to relocate to smaller towns where they feel safe, and do not have to deal with all the maladies of urban living (Colby College Students, "The Somali Bantu Experience: From East Africa to Maine", 2008, accessed February 9, 2014).

While the majority of relocated Somali Bantus moved to the U.S., many have ended up in Tanzania, despite their initial rejection for asylum. In 2003, the Tanzanian government granted citizenship to 3,000 Bantu refugees, and more in the proceeding years. Some Somali Bantu refugees claim Tanzania as their ancestral homeland, still speak Tanzanian languages, and identify with different cultural communities across the country.

Although the Bantu have traditionally been subsistence farmers in Somalia, many have moved to urban settings to avoid being subject to targeted acts of violence and extortion. While many of the Bantu still in Somalia continue to farm, those who have become city dwellers are subjects to other forms of social discrimination. Since Somali Bantu communities have been able to adapt to urban settings in Somalia and other East African countries, they overwhelmingly live in larger metropolitan areas within the U.S., such as San Diego, San Antonio, Atlanta, Minneapolis, and Seattle, among others.

Somali Bantu in Denver

Beginning in 2004, the first members of the current Somali Bantu community began to arrive in Denver. Many of the Somali Bantu who have ended up in the U.S., and Denver have experience farming. Within my interview with Informant #2-0204 (Interview 1, 2014), he spoke of understanding the soil and learning the soil in Colorado. Understanding the soil

seems to be a metaphor for the process of developing a deep understanding of the skills associated with successfully managing the farm ecosystem.

While many of the Bantu have experience and knowledge of how to grow certain plants, they developed their knowledge base in East Africa. In informal conversations, Informant #2-0204 and a number of the other Somali Bantu volunteers mentioned their expertise with East African agriculture but did not consider it transferrable to Colorado's mountainous and snowy climate. Although much of Denver's Somali Bantu community have been here for a decade now, the turbulent and often temperamental weather of Denver is still an adjustment, and it fundamentally influences their perceived gap of the regional knowledge necessary to farm in Denver.

Currently, there are between 42 and 45 Somali Bantu families in the Denver area, equating to somewhere between 450 and 500 individuals (Interview 1, 2014). These families range in size, from three children in the smallest to around ten in the largest, and this is counting members of the extended family (Interview 1, 2014). As a result of having large extended families and children of many different ages, it is not uncommon for adolescent children, and their adult siblings to occupy the same household. The majority of Somali Bantu refugees are practitioners of Islam and their children often receive some form of regular religious education. All of the Somali Bantu women I encountered on the farm, including very young children, wore an open-faced variation of the traditional hijab garment. Their hijabs were often very bright, colorful, and contained complex sets of patterns. Discussions on the farm revealed that the Somali Bantu community in Denver seems to take great pride in the expression and maintenance of their Muslim identity, especially in light of many Americans' secular identification. While working alongside the Bantu on the farm, I overheard some discussions that revolved around the secular outlook many Americans maintain, and many of the men were worried that this would negatively influence their children.

Informal discussions on the farm revealed that many of the Somali Bantu families still organize by gender and familial roles that have traveled with them from East Africa. While some men professed to cook at home, many attributed cooking responsibilities to their wives

or mothers. A variety of culinary and housekeeping knowledge is transferred to daughters through active participation within the household. While young girls learn how to do activities traditionally considered “woman’s work” from their mother, many of the girls also take part in athletics, such as soccer, and many of the families place a firm emphasis on the importance of educational attainment, and upward mobility (Interview 1, 2014).

Within Denver, the Somali Bantu Farming Council of Colorado (SBFCC) urges refugees to use their agricultural knowledge, and experience to become the next wave of organic farmers in America. The Somali Bantu farm plots at DeLaney Farms, part of the Denver Urban Gardens program, as well as at the East 13th Avenue Community Garden, and formerly at Re:Vision’s Ubuntu Urban Farm.

Somali Bantu on the Farm

In an urban environment, *understanding the soil* is not as useful for getting a job, and as a result, many of the members of the Somali Bantu community are employed in the service industry and do not utilize their farming experience outside of gardening as a hobby. However, some of the volunteers expressed that this knowledge and expertise is being squandered by not being used. One solution to this involves passing on agricultural education to their children.

It is more about the older men and women, but now we are trying to educate the young people. It’s like, this is where the fruit is come from, this is where the vegetable comes from. For example I am a school assistant teacher, when you ask the kid, it’s like where does the apple come from, “no clue”, they will only tell you King Sooper, Walmart, subway, this, well that’s not the place where the fruits come from (Interview 1, 2014)

It was somewhat common for the Bantu volunteers to bring their children to the farm. They sometimes helped weed, but usually played with the dirt, became enamored with different insects, and sampled vegetables fresh from the ground. There were generally between four and eight Somali Bantu volunteers on the farm on any given weekend. The

Bantu who regularly worked at the farm were men, ranging in age from their mid-thirties to late sixties. Their fields of employment ranged from being a mechanic, working within the public school system, as well as professions within the service industry. During casual conversation, most of the men did not define their social participation by their form of employment, but rather by their community engagement. The few men who participated at the farm identified themselves, and each other, as community leaders, and often spent a good portion of their time discussing how to address current issues within the community. The caveat lay in the fact that the Bantu view much of their knowledge as regionalized, and specific to the climate of southern Somalia. This perceived lack of experience, and their desire to learn the local skills and the expertise needed to farm in Colorado successfully motivated their relationship with Re:Vision.

I rarely saw adult Somali Bantu women stop by the farm, although many of the men brought their young children to the farm. Occasionally, one of the men's wives would accompany him to the farm, survey the farm and pick vegetables to bring home. Like many of the older men I observed, the women who stopped by had limited English language skills, which limited my ability to converse with them.

Of the adult Somali Bantu participants, most stated that they worked at least one job, which in concert with their community commitments, and possibly school, limited their availability to work on the farm. As a result, I rarely saw the Bantu men there on any day but Saturday or Sunday. Saturday mornings were often a collaborative effort between the farm manager, two to three interns, four to five Bantu, and sporadic volunteer groups from churches, or health-based organizations within Denver. This division allowed the Bantu men to work in their alternating style, which was personified by one or two men working while the other two sat on the ground and conversed in Somali Maay-Maay. In contrast to the multi-team Saturday workdays, the Somali Bantu were the only volunteers I observed at the farm on Sundays, and there were generally between two and five volunteers. More details on the happenings of an average Saturday harvest day are shared in Chapter 4.

Somali Bantu Goals

Teaching others in the community was a central goal of the Somali Bantu involved in urban farming. While many white Americans are one or two generations removed from living in more rural areas, the Somali Bantu at the farm felt a closer connection to farming for a livelihood (Interview 1, 2014). The continued displacement of rural peoples to more tightly populated urban areas has led to the underutilization of many people with developed farming skills. Although many people leave the country because they no longer want to farm, or have experienced agricultural marginalization, this generational forgetting is often portrayed as a cultural loss by those nostalgic towards our shared agrarian pasts.

In the initial years of relocation, the Bantu faced a noticeably steep learning curve and struggled to adjust to urban life in Denver. Many of the older Somali Bantu have developed different skill sets throughout their life, which may not transfer towards their current occupations in offices, and service industry jobs. In my formal interview with Informant #2-0204, he expressed the sentiment that many of the adults who were fully into adulthood when they moved to the U.S. struggle to find meaningful work, which engages their skills, intelligence, and experiences. Instead, they work in menial jobs that can be perceived as degrading, or not gender appropriate, and they draw meaning from their community engagement (Interview 1, 2014).

The Somali Bantu seem to have a strong desire to pass on their agricultural knowledge to children and educate them about food (Interview 1, 2014). This desire was also expressed during informal discussions on the farm, and I observed this when they brought their kids to the farm. One way to educate their children about food is through garden or farm education. Beyond merely teaching kids which food is what, Informant #2-0204 wanted to help them understand where it comes from. This desire stems from the belief that many American children believe that fresh produce comes from the grocery store, rather than from the ground.

Access to chemical free, or organic, produce is one of the Bantu's goals as well. This comes from a want to know where their food is produced, and a general lack of information at

many stores, with exception to Whole Foods and other more expensive grocery stores. Their desire for organic foods is related to many associated values and benefits, such as food that tastes better, that is healthier for you, and that is ethically sourced. However, different Somali Bantu volunteers mentioned that they do not always associate these values with all organic produce, and they seem to have a more nuanced method of characterizing food: by the flavor, the labor input, the feel of the fruit, and by the soil itself.

Major Players

While working on the farm, I identified five core groups of actors. They included: eight farm interns, the farm manager, the Somali Bantu, the diverse factions of volunteers, and the two co-founders of Re:Vision.

Beginning with the interns, I will give a brief introduction of each core actor, and provide further elaboration later in chapter three. During the 2014 growing season, Re:Vision hired eight part-time interns to work with the farm manager and to provide the majority of the farm's labor. Each intern was from a different part of the country, and their experience levels ranged from none to multiple seasons of organic farming experience. The group of interns was highly educated with all but one holding a bachelor's degree, and one was working towards their bachelors. All of the interns were white, except for myself, and none were from the neighborhood.

The farm manager at Re:Vision was the critical intermediary between Re:Vision and the interns, as well as the immediate community. After leaving a previous career in an unrelated field, she began her foray into farming by completing an intensive season-long internship with a large organic farm in Colorado. Her job with Re:Vision was her first experience as a head farm manager, and she had a plethora of responsibilities. She organized weekly to-do lists for interns and volunteers, created season-long planting schedule, managed both of the Ubuntu and Kepner farms, interacted with the immediate community, established relationship with local restaurants who carried produce grown on the farms, and she also ran the two weekly CSA harvests and pickups (Interview 2, 2015). While

she had more experience farming than all but one intern, she chose the individual interns based on their diverse range of skills and experiences and planned to utilize this diversity of experience to cover up for potential labor shortcomings on the farm.

As weekly volunteers, the Bantu were an essential part of the labor on the farm and often colluded with the interns and other volunteer groups to get as much work done on the weekends as possible. Outside of merely contributing labor to the farm, the Bantu were a justification for its existence, and the farm supposedly existed to address issues of community food insecurity within the Bantu community. Later in the discussion in chapter 5, I will examine where Re:Vision's vision of the farm and reality did not match up.

In addition to the interns and the Somali Bantu, there was a constant stream of volunteers, who primarily showed up on Saturdays to work. At the start of the season, Re:Vision employed two full teams of AmeriCorps service members, who worked five days a week on the farm. They provided the majority of the spring prep work to get the farm ready for summer. Their undercompensated labor was crucial to the farm's success, even though they did not work through the end of the season. About once a month, I observed a small group of volunteers from local faith-based organizations many who were repeat volunteers. They often arrived on a volunteer-day, which specified that group members should volunteer somewhere in the city. Many of these volunteers had very little experience gardening but had an interest in learning and a belief in the farm's goals to improve food access. Also, some standalone volunteers would show up once or twice a month. Some were college students from around Colorado; some were professionals with some affiliation or relationship to Re:Vision's funders and others were random volunteers who stopped in on their own. A wide range of volunteers was essential to Re:Vision's ability to run the farm and their contributions are discussed later in chapter three and four.

Lastly, the two co-founders of Re:Vision played a very significant role in the relational dynamics on the farm and were the architects behind much of the farm planning. As an intern, I rarely saw the two of them at the farm, and outside of a handful of casual-short conversations, I had minimal extended interactions with them. Beginning in 2007, after

graduating from college, the two of them decided to create a non-profit focused on addressing issues of food access. While well-meaning, there were issues of communication between administration and the farm, which led to a few misunderstandings and frustrations on the farm. As the only salaried employee often at the farm, the farm manager relayed much of the founders' farm-related input to us, and she often received much of their farm-related criticism. The stress of this relationship was very evident to me, and it was often a topic of discussion on the farm.

Research Questions

Over the six months I conducted fieldwork at the farm, my initial questions changed considerably, and I left the field with more questions than I walked in with. My pre-fieldwork research questions are below.

Preliminary Research Questions

1. How are those who work at the farm food actors? What motivates them to be so?
2. What do community members want to know about the effect(s) of the farm?
3. What was produced on the farm, besides food, and what are the consequences? Are relationships, partnerships, shared histories, agricultural skillsets, or other things created? How?

Coming into the growing season, I was interested in how the farm participants were food actors. My earliest discussions with Re:Vision, and their farm manager revealed their awareness of an unforeseen gender gap in farm participation. During my first trip to the farm, I worked with the farm manager to prove my ability to do hard farm work with an experiential interview, and she expressed a desire to understand why more women did not participate in the farm. Also, employees at Re:Vision mentioned that the Somali Bantu did not bring home as much food as predicted, so they wanted me to look into why.

Lastly, I was very interested in what was produced on the farm, outside of fruits and vegetables, because although a lot of food was grown, it did not go where Re:Vision said it would go. With the uncomfortable fact that the food we grew was not truly reaching many members of the community, I became more interested in examining the benefits the farm did offer to the community. My original thesis statement predicted that the farm would act as a social space for specific members of the community, in addition to its role as a center of food production. While produce was abundant, there was not an effort by Re:Vision to make the farm a social gathering place, but dispute this, it did act as a kind of social space for specific Somali Bantu men. In the discussion in Chapter 5, I will further investigate the type of social space that was created, and dive into what was produced on the farm. As I witnessed the lack of planning and effort on Re:Vision's part to distribute the food or to utilize the farms' potential as community spaces, my thesis statement and this investigation shifted. This investigation went from being a study of the Somali Bantu on the farms, towards a study of Re:Vision from how they were managing the farm to what precipitated the shortcomings of this project.

Central Research Questions

The research questions that this investigation attempts to answer and that have informed my thesis statement are:

1. Did Re:Vision utilize the Somali Bantu's refugee narrative to garner support?
2. What capacity did Re:Vision's deliverable goals, as outlined by funders conflict with the farm's mission to positively impact the immediate community?
3. Which shortcomings were attributable to structural obstacles influenced by neo-liberal governance?
4. Which shortcomings were attributable to Re:Vision?
5. What happens when a non-profit fails, and what can be learned?

Thesis Statement

From these questions and the breadth of the fieldwork gathered during the 2014 growing season, I argue that the conflict of mission surrounding the farms, along with Re:Vision's stretched organizational capacity contributed to the farm falling far short of its lofty goals, despite the fact that it was brimming with vegetables and promise.

Second, I examine which shortcomings were singular to Re:Vision, and which were structurally influenced by neo-liberal policies, and consequently, the urban agriculture landscape.

In the next chapter, I will explain my research methodology, as well as the theoretical framework that has guided this investigation.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Theoretical Framework

Research Design

Site Selection

The research reported here is the culmination of six months of ethnographic fieldwork, conducted for my master's fieldwork. This fieldwork was conducted at two different urban farms in Denver, Colorado from May-November 2014. I chose to conduct my work at Ubuntu Farm and Kepner Farm because Re:Vision (formerly: Revision International) operated both. In short, their work with refugee populations, food insecurity, and participatory urban agriculture, drew my interest. Also, the proximity to my university offered me the opportunity to research in the city I lived in. At the time, Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) ran one of the most extensive centralized community garden networks in the country, which suggested that the City of Denver was somewhat friendly towards urban agriculture projects, if not supportive.

Before submitting my project proposal, I met with one of Re:Vision's founders, who gave me a tour of the facilities and discussed the prospect of researching with them. After a follow-up discussion with the organization, they suggested I apply for a summer internship, which offered full immersion at the farm sites, and access to volunteers, interns, employees and community members. Early on, we agreed that it seemed like a good fit for my project, as well as for them, due to my extensive gardening knowledge, my experience teaching growing classes and my passion for the subject.

Site Description

The farm itself was located in a residential neighborhood of Denver. It was about 50 feet wide and 150 feet deep, squeezed in between two small rambler-style houses.

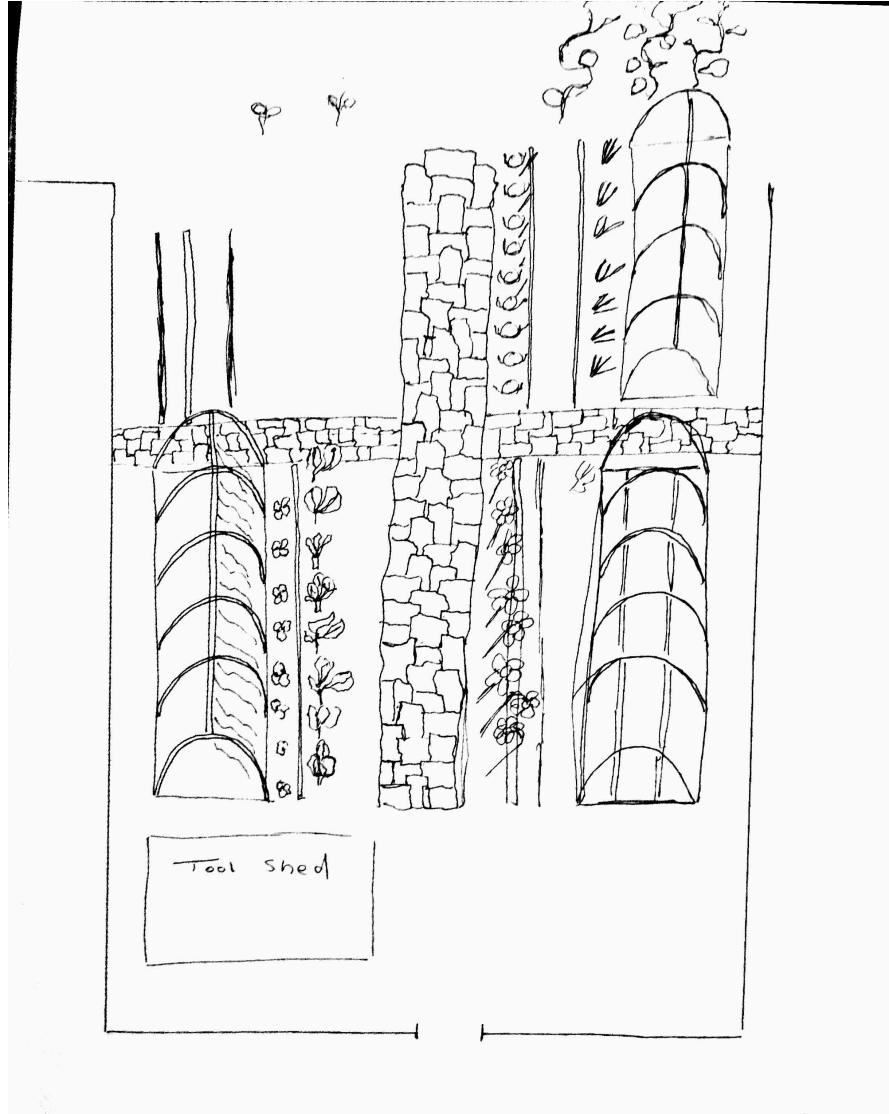


Figure 1: Hand drawn diagram of the farm

The majority of my research data was collected through participant observation at the urban farm, where I was a paid farm intern and worked between 16 to 35 hours per week from June until September. My participation at the site was substantially smaller during May, September, October, and November, due to my class schedule. I conducted participant observation for a total of 75 days, between May and November 2014, with the majority of

days being between June and August. I documented informal conversations with around 30 people, including the seven paid interns, farm manager, 7 of the regular Bantu volunteers, and 15 one-time volunteers, or community members.

Population

At the farm, Re:Vision employed seven interns and one farm manager, and there were between six and eight regular Somali-Bantu volunteers. The Somali Bantu community was included in my study because Re:Vision presented the Bantu as the farms' primary beneficiaries. Re:Vision employees were included because they were operationally in charge, and could elaborate on the inner workings of the organization. The research population I drew my sample from was operationally defined as a bounded population, because their inclusion in the study was dependent on their participation, and interactions related to the farm (LeCompte & Schensul 2010:161). Of the broader Bantu community of 450 to 500 individuals in Denver (Interview 1, 2015), 6 Bantu volunteers came weekly, as well as 6 to 10 more inconsistent Bantu participants. The majority of my research was drawn from farm work and conversations with the six Bantu volunteers, seven part-time farm interns, one farm manager, and two founding directors of Re:Vision.

Although I had aimed to interview all of the Bantu volunteers formally, only half of the adult Bantu participants spoke English at a conversational level, and there was a significant language barrier between us. As a result, I formally interviewed one Bantu participant but took part in many informal discussions with the rest of the Bantu participants while working on the farm with them. After the completion of my interview, one of my informants mentioned that it would be better to have future discussions with other Somali Bantu participants on the farm. We discussed the time constraints many of the volunteers balanced, and decided it would be more ethical to use time on the farm to host informal conversations with the other Bantu volunteers.

Due to our regular hours working together, I conducted informal interviews with the farm interns in the form of casual conversations during our three to four weekly workdays.

These conversations never included a recorder and often came up organically as we talked while picking weeds, or other labor-intensive tasks. Since I spent upwards of thirty hours a week at the farms with the other farm interns, the manager, and the Somali Bantu volunteers, much of my data came from participant observation and informal conversations. Also, I interviewed a graduate student from the University of Colorado, who regularly volunteered on the farm, and who also interviewed me.

Data Collection

I collected data through semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and participant observation. Between September 2014 and April of 2015, I conducted three in-depth semi-structured interviews, one with a Bantu participant, and two separate interviews with two different employees of Re:Vision. The informal conversations happened between May 2014 and April 2015, and at different times, included discussions involving the seven farm interns, the farm manager, and 7 Somali Bantu participants.

I also observed interactions between the interns, volunteers, community members, Re:Vision employees, as well as other regular activities on the farm. Also, there were two large events I attended and took notes on. One event was a board member social for the non-profit, and the other a large community harvest party. The board member social was a relatively small social gathering of the non-profit's employees, their board members, a few local politicians, and business people. There was food provided, and the founder gave a small speech and a walking tour of the newly acquired property earmarked for the cooperative grocery store.

I attempted to take field jottings during and after each day of fieldwork. Later, I typed these field notes up and created more descriptive and fleshed-out field notes from my jottings. These fleshed-out notes resembled narrative descriptions of the daily happenings and included some analysis. I ended up with 29 typed pages of field jottings, and 67 pages of more in-depth field notes.

I conducted three semi-structured interviews. These interviews took place at a coffee shop, the Re:Vision office, and in one of the interviewee's homes. I let the interviewees choose the location of the interview to fit their comfort level and availability best. For each semi-structured interview, I brought a small notecard with crucial issues or questions I wanted to bring up, and I include this at the end of Appendix B. also, I audio-recorded these in-depth interviews while taking conversational notes.

Research Ethics

I received approval for this study from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Denver. All participants gave written consent (in-depth interviews), or verbal consent (unstructured interviews and observations), before the beginning of the interview or observation. The written informed consent form is located in Appendix A. I did not compensate participants. Due to the nature of Re:Vision and their work with vulnerable populations, I have changed the names of all the participants mentioned and coded informants, to offer a measure of protection.

Data Processing and Analysis

I took field-notes during the interviews and observations, primarily with a pen and notebook, and occasionally with my cell phone. With my articulated field notes, I broke them down into descriptive units, and analytic units, separating descriptions, analysis, and methodological questions, to better organize my observations and identify themes. Following the interviews, I transcribed verbatim and listened to each interview between two and three times following the transcription. Using printed copies of the transcripts and my field notes; I used colored markers to identify similar themes. Initially, I used *open* (or initial) *coding*, which refers to the initial step of labeling and categorizing phenomena as a means to open up lines of inquiry, to identify emergent themes within my field notes. I followed that process up with *focused coding*, which refers to the identification of the most salient categories with the goal of developing a more focused set of key groups to use as a framework for analysis, to produce some thematic codes (Saldana 2009). After I identified a set of primary themes, I

discussed my findings with my key informants, and from those discussions, I refined the groups of themes I had developed with their feedback.

Coding Informants and Pseudonyms

During my field research, I interacted with more than 30 participants, including interns, AmeriCorps volunteers, Re:Vision employees, neighborhood volunteers, and Somali Bantu volunteers. To protect individuals' identities, I use a scale from 1 to 10 that indicates an individual's level of experience with the farm and organization, where 1 represents a high level of experience, and a 10 represents practically no experience. Also, I use a second number between 1 and 10 to indicate the frequency and intensity of site contact.

For example, an informant who I had the most contact with and who also had a high level of site knowledge might be coded as, "Informant #1-0101", while a neighbor, whom I spoke with once and never stepped foot on the farm might be coded as "Informant #2-0910".

Limitations

Throughout the process of conducting my research, I encountered some obstacles that limited my research aims in some manner or another. The primary limitation I came across was the language barrier between the Bantu and myself, stemming from my non-existent Somali May-May language skills and many of their limited English abilities. This limited the number of participants I could effectively converse with in the kind of casual manner allowed by continuous farm work, and also limited my ability to listen to conversation among the Bantu quietly. When I reached the time to schedule interviews with the Bantu participants, the number of participants I could individually interview was very few, due to the language barrier. I had also hoped to avoid overburdening their limited time outside of the farm.

Finding open time to interview the other farm interns was also problematic, as many of them worked multiple jobs and did not have much free time. However, I believe the lack of formal sit-down interviews was more than compensated for with regular informal conversations on the farm. Among the farm interns, the farm often transformed into a forum

for current events related to social inequality, farming, architecture, strategies to better engage the surrounding community, environmental theories, and more. While I did not use a recording device to document these informal discussions, I often took notes with my iPhone, or my pocket notebook, immediately after leaving the farm.

While I interviewed fewer individuals than I had initially envisioned, I hope to have made up for this with an extensive amount of data gathered from informal conversations, participant observation on the farm itself, and continued discussions with many of the farm participants well past the growing season.

My time limitations affected my ability to be on the farm as often as I would have liked during August because it became necessary for me to acquire a second job to supplement the stipend I received on the farm. Once I began working at a restaurant in August 2014, my time at the farm dropped from five days a week to three or four days a week. My experience finding a second job was similarly shared among the other interns', and it speaks to the potential downfalls of relying on underpaid labor.

Theoretical Framework

Political Economy as an Essential Framework

As a theoretical framework, political economy is concerned with the relationships between economic systems, their supporting institutions, and the rest of society. This framework acknowledges the influence of non-economic factors such as political and social institutions, morality, and ideology in determining economic events (Sackrey & Schneider 2002: vii). Further, this framework assumes that the material conditions and the lived experiences of individuals are central in shaping cultural processes. As a result, political economy is a paradigm often employed by anthropologists seeking to examine the impact of broader institutions, such as political and economic systems, on human behavior and culture. This theoretical framework employs a materialist perspective of human behavior and culture. That is a perspective that assumes culture is shaped primarily by the material conditions and lived experiences of human beings.

As a method of analysis, political economy can be traced back to Adam Smith and David Ricardo, economists of the Scottish Enlightenment. Modern political economy focuses on economics as the driver for historical change, social organization, and ideology. Political economy uses Marxist frameworks to study globalization and to create a sharp criticism of the capitalist economic system, which Marxists have perceived as exploitative, and rooted in inequality and class conflict. According to Marxist thought, 400 years of capitalism has fostered a capitalist class, who use violence (through wars of impoverishment against poorer nations), and subjugation (of workers, consumers, and the political process) to monopolize the means of production (from raw resources to the factories and equipment necessary to transform them into goods, and sell them) (Sackrey & Schneider 2010).

This economic domination can take many forms, but at its heart, it enables powerful groups and individuals to take advantage of the less fortunate and less wealthy majority. In turn, this working class, referred to as the proletariat, becomes dehumanized as a cog in a machine, and their lives become commoditized into their potential for producing wealth for the more powerful. This process called *commodification* refers to workers who are exploited, demeaned, and devalued in the name of economic profit, which they never enjoy. As a result, one of Marxism's most powerful criticisms of capitalism exposes how competition leads capitalists to treat their workers as *things*, or commodities that can be traded and discarded. The maintenance of an underemployed-impoverished class of people, who are willing to work harder, and for less, is a key safeguard against full-scale revolt because if one or thousands of workers quit, there are often many more desperate people waiting.

Early Marxist theory predicted that economic imperialism would spawn from capitalism. Economic imperialism relies on the idea that countries would be divided into two groups: countries who have a monopoly on capital, and countries who act as colonies, whose resources are extracted by those with capital. As the 20th century progressed, political economics saw many of earlier theorists ideas come to fruition and continued to develop evolving theories.

In *Europe and the People Without History*, Eric Wolf (1982) deconstructs how the world has been conceived and presented as the sum of self-contained societies, rather than a “totality of interconnected processes and inquiries” (1982:377). He argues that the disconnection of ourselves from *the other* has occurred in the failure to connect “their past” with “our past,” by historians, economists, political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists. By drawing on *world systems-theory* (Wallerstein 1974) and André Frank’s theory of the development of underdevelopment (Frank 1967), Wolf works to create a theory that recognizes the historical connections many “isolated” societies have maintained with the outside world for hundreds of years, drawing on examples such as the slave trade in West Africa, which preceded colonialism and the French-Native American fur trade in North America, which preceded the U.S.-Indian wars and conflicts (Wolf 1982). Wolf argues that these histories must be connected in comprehensive texts that recognize *their* history as part of *ours* and vice versa. The inclusion of political and economic context offers the flexibility to identify structures of power that may have emanated from historical, cross-cultural interactions. Just as studies in West Africa cannot simply focus on the present without acknowledging the political and economic consequences of slavery and colonialism; an analysis of efforts to address unequal access to food without including the discriminatory history of U.S. agricultural, as well as the political and economic climate that has led to the rise of non-profit urban agriculture would create what Wolf terms, “a false reality” (1982).

Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) developed *World Systems Theory*, which defines the global economic system as a similarly two-tiered system, with the developed, industrialized countries residing in the core, where they extract resources from less developed countries at the periphery. One of the core pillars that uphold the core’s sense of moral superiority is that much of the human cost is drawn from the periphery. There, those who see it as necessary either obscures the cost from those who reap the benefits or ignore it. While the core is dependent on the periphery for providing raw resources, laborers, and consumers, the periphery becomes dominated, and increasingly dependent on an economic system that subjugates and dehumanizes them. This framework allows for a more global analysis of

economics in action and has been crucial to the development of political economy as a tool for examining the power dynamics that influence countries on a macro, and individuals on a micro scale.

By examining the relations between peoples lived experiences, their economic realities, and the political sphere's they occupy, anthropologists often employ a political economy framework in concert with embedded ethnographic research. For example, Philippe Bourgois (1995) dives into the world of homelessness and drug addiction, Seth Holmes (2013) offers a glimpse into the world of seasonal migrant fruit pickers, while Deborah Barndt (2002) follows a tomato's journey from a field in Mexico to a table in Canada. The inclusion of political and economic context offers the ability to identify structures of power that may have emanated from historical, cross-cultural interactions. Consequently, it empowers anthropologists seeking to examine the influence of broader institutions, such as political and economic systems, on human behavior and culture, as well as organizations. A theoretical framework centered on political economy can offer an effective, if not comprehensive, lens to view the relations of power that shape our political systems, our communities, and the economic wheels that remain somewhat obscured yet keep the system moving in a steady direction.

Political Economy of Urban Agriculture

Using a framework grounded in political economy theory will help contextualize the farm as part of a larger agricultural ecosystem, as well as shed light on the circumstances that led to the creation and disappearance of the urban farm. While the farm was designed to bring local foods to residents, its existence relied on a multitude of local, national, and global processes. In short, establishing the political climate that has led to communal disparities of food access and economic opportunity could help provide further insight into how food activism may, or may not, empower individuals. Likewise, labor exploitation is a central focus of Marxist theory, and integral to agricultural production across much of the U.S., as well as

within the non-profit world. Non-profits can be quite dependent on underpaid employees, AmeriCorps service members, and internships that pay below the minimum wage.

A Brief History of American Agriculture

Beginning in the early twentieth century, millions of Southern African-American migrants and European immigrants began to retire their plows, and head for American cities in large numbers. There, many worked in manufacturing, and many of their fates were welded to their industry's fate.

As shown below in table 1, participation in the agricultural sector has decreased by over 95% between 1900 and 2000/02. While 30% of farmers in 1930 performed an average of 100 days of off-farm work, in 2002 that number had reached 93% of farmers (Dimitri, Effland, Conklin 2005). Simply put, farm work has changed drastically. While small and diversified farms that depended on intensive human labor defined agriculture in early 20th century, much of 21st century American agriculture has been characterized by highly mechanized and highly productive operations that specialize in a few commodity crops, and smaller farms that earn most of their income off-farm. The authors connect mid-century changes in consumer demand for cheap products as a driver in supply chain changes that may have sped up the decline of the small family farm.

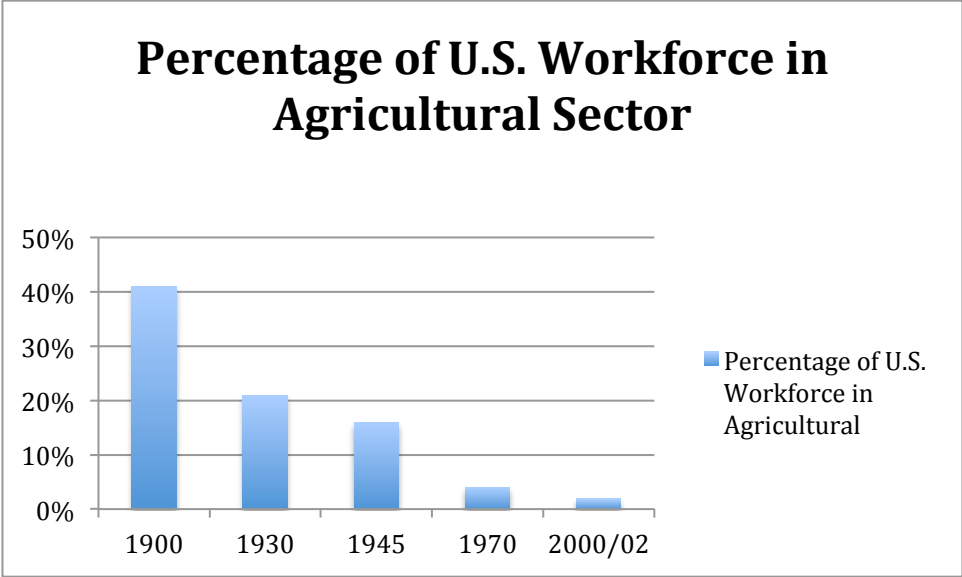


Table 1: Changes in U.S. Agricultural Workforce (Dimitri, Effland, and Conklin 2005)

Pennick (2011), Billings & Cabbil (2011) assert much of our current food system, which is characterized by a lack of choices for many people of color, can be traced to pre-civil war American norms that greatly favored white ownership at the expense of non-white residents. While most 160-year-old societal norms come off as objectionable and offensive to many in today's America, a historical perspective on race exposes how many of the tenets of white supremacy are still alive today, just in other forms. Pennick (2011) furthers that historical perspective by contextualizing Jim Crow terrorism in the U.S. South and the subsequent Great Migration to the North as the primary driver of a large-scale land transfer from endangered African-Americans to white farmers or land developers. This kind of institutionalized terrorism prevented Blacks from reaping the benefits of New Deal Agriculture policies because the system did not guard against racial discrimination by the enactors of policy. While African-American farmers are not the focus of my study, historically, discrimination against ethnic minorities has often been used as a pretext to grab their most valuable asset and accumulation of wealth: their land. Exploitation has been the standard for African-American Farmers as recent as the 1980s and 90s, Japanese-American agriculturalists during the 1940s, or Hispanic-American farmers, and foreign-born laborers up through today. It is impossible to understand the movement for food justice without having

substantial knowledge of how land ownership and industrial food systems have been leveraged to disenfranchise and destabilize communities of color. For racial minorities, gaining more control over your food system entails more than just making the market more efficient for your community or starting new businesses, it involves deftly navigating existing racial politics and their recent violent histories.

When dealing with structural inequalities in the U.S. industrial food system, race is an unavoidable factor that has been woven into the very fabric of our landscape of choice. Further, understanding how institutional racism has been braided into historically present forms of economic and social marginalization is essential to accurately identify the root cause of what produces injustice in the food system.

In *The local-food movement and the anthropology of global systems*, Donald Nonini (2013) ties the reasonably recent fad of local foods and local politics in the U.S. to the decline of U.S. industry and a growing distrust of global political systems. He draws heavily on Kasja and Jonathan Friedman's (2008) writings on hegemonic decline in the west to present the local foods movement as a response to neo-liberal globalization and the food produced it. Neo-liberalism signifies the late 20th-century resurgence of the ideas associated with economic liberalism and free-market capitalism. Neo-liberal governance refers to the deregulation of the private sector, the widespread dismantling of government safety net programs in the U.S. and Britain during the 1980s, and these actions have resulted in widening economic disparities. This first wave of neo-liberal policies in the U.S. in the 1980s fundamentally changed the needs of many communities, altered the relations of power, and shifted responsibility from the state to a quickly growing non-profit sector. The emergence of neo-liberal governance also fostered competition among organizations, decentralized accountability, and ultimately moved non-profits away from a community-oriented focus and towards a market-based business model (Evans, Richmond & Shield 2005).

Cultural hegemony is strongly associated with Antonio Gramsci (Gramsci & Forgacs 1988), who used hegemony to represent the ways by which those who govern stay in power by convincing their subjects to consent to their rule. On the world stage, *hegemonic*

dominance is attained through social, political, militaristic or economic might. Hegemonic decline is associated with shrinking industrial production, the growth of speculative capitalism, the transnationalization of capital, and the consolidation of wealth and power during periods of economic decline. While there are many definitions of globalization, Thomas Friedman's (2000) definition in *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, is helpful for exploring many of the complexities of food systems:

It is the inexorable integration of markets, nation states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before – in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation states to reach around the world farther, faster, and deeper than ever before... the driving idea behind globalization is free market capitalism – the more you let market forces rule and the more you open your economy to free trade and competition, the more efficient and flourishing your economy will be (Friedman 2000:9)

In the face of deindustrialization, economic crisis, and the decentralization of capital away from urban centers, the Friedmans (2008) predict serious identity crisis, which leads people to turn to their historical roots, and collective identity. Within the context of hegemonic decline in the U.S., Nonini explores how the growing interest in sustainable agriculture over the past two decades has gone hand in hand with a cultural identity crisis that has stemmed from a period of sharpening economic crisis (Nonini 2013). Further, he notes the absence of a national food movement and claims it is a misnomer to call local-food movements social movements. Instead of framing this as a response to social ills, Nonini characterizes it as a response to market demands by the upper-middle-class, who are looking to access cultural experiences and cultural capital.

Nate McClintock (2014) argues that urban agriculture has the potential to exemplify and represent both existing neo-liberalism *and* a simultaneous radical counter movement, stemming from dialectical tension. On one side, scholars have extolled urban agriculture's potential to contribute towards solutions for food security, food justice, public health, environmental sustainability, education and community building, among others.

Simultaneously, a more critical group of social scientists examine the discourse around alternative food networks (AFNs). Despite their progressive or even radical intentions, many

AFNs are neo-liberal in outcomes, and reformist at best, because they continue to accept the capitalist logic of the food system, rather than challenge it (McClintock 2014:148).

With Are local food and the local food movement taking us where we want to go? Or are we hitching our wagons to the wrong stars? Laura DeLind (2011) argues that the local food rhetoric has shifted away from deeper concerns of equity, citizenship, place making and sustainability. Instead, she posits that the language of the local food movement has been coopted by locavore initiatives, which suggest that changes in personal behavior can fix major systemic wrongs in the world. Heralded as the 2007 Oxford Dictionary word of the year, the term *locavore* originally referred to people who try to exclusively eat grown or produced within a 100-mile radius, but it has been extended to include groups that aim to develop more resilient food networks that improve local economies, among other things. In a sense, the language of the movement has been adopted, while the substance has been left behind, and when the local loses track of its self-reflexivity, it loses its potential for systemic resilience and can begin to aid the status quo (2011).

Holt-Giménez and Wang (2011) echo this sentiment by identifying the contradictions in a food movement that has focused its energies on consumer-based solutions, such as *voting with your fork* while obfuscating the efforts by people of color and poor people to enact structural, systemic change. More so, in trending towards market-based solutions, the results often reflect neo-liberal policies that have weakened governmental assistance and defined the free-market as the provider of all solutions. Structural critiques of capitalism are much less common in the mainstream alternative food movement, which focuses on market, or policy-based solutions, rather than question the economic system that has enabled the current web of relations. While the progressive trend is to focus on local ownership of production and improving the service and delivery aspects of the food system, the radical trend directs more of its energy at structural changes to capitalist food systems (Holt-Giménez and Wang 2011:94).

On the other hand, Domenic Vitiello and Laura Wolf-Powers (2014) argue urban agriculture is utilized most effectively with a consumption-based model that includes

investment in community-based institutions. However, they are critical of the multi-functionality that urban agriculture is almost always tagged with, because it obscures the actual value of urban agriculture, and creates high expectations bound to fail. Urban agriculture carries the promise to spur inside-out revitalization of distressed urban neighborhoods, but the authors openly question whether multi-functional urban agriculture operations are possible without major subsidies or philanthropic support. “Just as improved food access alone cannot alter structural inequality, urban farming jobs are unlikely to create what Shapiro (2005) terms transformative wealth building and providing economic stability across generations” (2014:519). By problematizing the assumptions of multi-functionality, Vitiello and Wolf-Powers (2014) hope that we can more honestly look at the solutions we create to address our food systems with urban agriculture at the center.

Case Studies in Urban Agriculture

In Resource needs for a socially just and sustainable urban agriculture system: Lessons from New York City, Nevin Cohen and Kristin Reynolds (2014) elaborate on the diversity of scope and practice within the local urban agriculture landscape. The multifunctionality of urban agriculture (UA) inspires a plethora of projects, ranging from community gardens, non-profit community farms, for-profit commercial farms, and institutional farms affiliated with public or non-profit organizations. Within this range of projects, they identify five key goals, which are not mutually exclusive.

1. Environmental goals: To increase communal green space, reclaim vacant lots and rooftops, and foster environmental awareness and activism.
2. Public Health Goals: To increase the access and consumption of nutritious produce, as well as stimulate outdoor activity.
3. Social and Educational Goals: To develop youth programs, job skills training, environmental education curricula, as well as create programs that target historically marginalized populations.

4. Economic Goals: To encourage entrepreneurial training, job opportunities, farmers' market development, and the establishment of economically feasible models of urban farming.
5. Community Goals: To cultivate community empowerment, rebuild relations between producers and consumers, create safe public spaces, encourage intergenerational interactions, and increase visibility for community-led efforts. (2014)

Further, Cohen and Reynolds (2014) identify land tenure, clean soil, and funding as the three most critical resources for successful urban agriculture. Regarding funding, many grants are distributed on a one to two-year basis, while the above goals require a minimum three to five years investment of time and resources (2014). This situation presents a razor's edge for grant-funded non-profits to operate within. They can either dedicate themselves to their mission, where they may struggle to find consistent funding sources, or they can focus on delivering on the grant's deliverable goals and risk sliding away from their organization mission. While this is an over-simplification, it is a tool to examine the choices non-profits face when trying to fund their work.

Beyond deliverable goals or mission-based goals, Cohen and Reynolds note that at its roots, urban agriculture is about residents actively engaging in their communities, rather than maximizing the agricultural potential of urban growing spaces (2014). While Galt recognizes the importance of examining urban agriculture through the lens of political economy, money is not the sole measure of success: "Farmers may not have high earnings because high earnings do not matter much to them" (Galt 2013:359). Instead, many of the farmers prioritize other directives above making money and express their preference for personal sacrifice over personal gain through exploitation.

Cohen and Reynolds recognize two distinct UA movements: one primarily composed of white and middle-class residents, the other composed of low-income people of color. They identify a distinct inequity in resource distribution between the two groups, which is evident in the two groups different goals (Cohen & Reynolds 2014; Reynolds 2015). From their

observations, community gardeners and urban agriculturalists of color often lacked the financial resources to obtain basic supplies or pay membership fees, while white middle-class practitioners were more concerned with finding paid jobs that provide middle-class sustenance within UA. With such a distinct resource gap and a different set of goals, they identify both groups of having a shared expectation of urban agriculture's promise of multifunctionality.

Furthering the findings of Cohen and Reynolds (2014), Kristin Reynolds finds that existing race and class-based disparities from broader social systems are being replicated in New York's urban agriculture system, despite diverse groups practitioners, and increasing public interest in both urban agriculture and social justice (2015:). This structural racism in urban farming is most often expressed through disparities in funding, land access, cultural capital, and political will (2015). Reynolds also problematizes urban agriculture's multifunctional promise as something UA *can* provide, but that is not guaranteed (2015).

Ryan Galt (2013) argues that many researchers examining CSAs and urban agriculture have dropped their political economy tools when examining them. He asserts that CSAs need to be assessed with the tools of political economy (2013; Galt et al. 2015), despite the fact that researchers are celebratory of urban agriculture. Instead, they become embedded with their research sites and are celebratory of the urban agriculture at hand, but they miss a valuable opportunity to gather critical data, which could inform future decisions.

By looking at CSAs in California, the U.S. state with the most CSAs (Galt 2011), Galt (2013) finds that despite the goal of CSAs to increase farmer security through the establishment of deep social relations, social embeddedness itself may act to negate the reciprocal nature of the CSA relationship. Instead, half of the surveyed farmers practice super self-exploitation, while a few of them make a decent salary. "Self-exploitation in CSA should not exist, since the original CSA concept insisted on a fair wage for the grower, yet it does, because social embeddedness creates a sense of personal obligation that cuts into farmers' economic well being" (2013:361). Perversely, social embeddedness can increase the sense

of obligation farmers feel to keep bountiful harvests coming, even when output is down, by buying outside produce.

In this case, the relationship between grower and buyer is best summed up by this quote by one of Galt's informants, "People are paying you to get a specialized product, but they're not paying you enough to live in the same world that they do" (2013:361). Instead of diversifying the risk of running a farm, small CSA farmers are left with just as much of the burden, if not more because of social relations which commit them to producing an acceptable CSA box (2013). In addition to all of the responsibilities that come with producing food for a CSA, increased competition has a negative correlation in regards to profitability and farmer satisfaction (Galt et al. 2015).

In a more targeted case study, Bradley and Galt (2014) investigated the practices of Dig Deep Farms in Oakland, California. The founders of Dig Deep farmers selectively engaged with food logics that supported their food justice goals and built internal practices based on the values of self-determination and autonomy (2014). Rather than solely being a means for confronting food justice, Dig Deep's founders saw the farm as a vehicle for addressing crime prevention, job creation, and food justice through increased food access and ownership of the means of production. Dig Deep began their work by researching and respecting local foodways and partnered with other organizations. Also, they did not start by trying to change the community or their employee's consumption patterns and instead worked within a framework of flexible and dynamic priorities that visibly valued more than just the vegetables grown.

Using a multisite ethnographic approach, Jurow and Shea (2015) investigated *Impact*, a U.S. non-profit dedicated to establishing backyard gardens through the use of community garden educators. The non-profit forged stronger relations with the community through the garden educators' outreach work, yet complications arose when *Impact* attempted to expand their program's outreach beyond their initial Mexican-American target group. The garden educators wanted to focus on their own community's needs, and the other minority groups required experts with language skills outside of Spanish and English. Jurow

and Shea raise the important question, “how can groups engaged in social change efforts, where unequal power relationships are ongoing, arrange their organizational practices, and assumptions on which they are based, to be more inclusive and community-driven?” (2015:303).

In *Extending the Consequentiality of “Invisible Work” in the Food Justice Movement* (2016), Jurow, Teether, Shea and Van Steenis dive deeper into the relations between *Impact* and the community garden educators they employ and work with. In this more focused, single-site ethnographic study, the authors identified contradictions between *Impact’s* stated goal and intra-organizational relationships between in-office management and the garden educators on the ground. While the organization’s success was dependent on the inroads made by the garden educators within the community, there was no mechanism to share the full range of their work with the directors. This limited *Impact’s* ability to better engage with the community, as well as with the garden educators. However, the conundrum of invisible labor worked both ways, as the garden educators were not fully aware of the obstacles faced by management on a daily basis. While this may seem a given, Jurow, etc. (2016) rightfully point to better transparency as a prerequisite for genuinely empowering their educators, who desired more professional experience to further their careers, as well as strengthen *Impact’s* ties to the community and provide access to valuable neighborhood data to create better programming.

Bourdieu’s Cultural and Social Capital

Pierre Bourdieu’s (1986) concepts of *fields*, *habitus*, economic capital, social capital, and cultural capital offer a framework for evaluating the non-economic value derived from the farms, as well as for understanding the tensions between structure and agency that play out in this investigation. To Bourdieu, the field to represents a domain of activity and all agents occupy multiple and overlapping fields simultaneously. To achieve success in an area, agents utilize habitus by maximizing their cultural capital, which depends on the knowing the constraints of the domain, structure, the values of different activities, and how to maximize

said values. This knowledge comes from repetitive habits which reproduce a set of culturally accepted practices, which combined with the right amount of cultural capital can result in success in a *field* (Bourdieu 1977).

For Bourdieu, this series of abstract interactions can occur without the explicit knowledge of the agent themselves, because they may not see the structures that are guiding their actions and choices. While agents may feel the personal responsibility of choice, their “options are partially foreclosed by her social environment” (Gerrans 2005:58). Rather than being purely deterministic, the rules or structures that govern how individuals interact with their environment are continuously and actively being changed and reproduced by the practice of habituation, as well as by unintended consequences that are produced despite individual intentions (2005).

Bourdieu develops the concepts of social, economic and cultural capitals as part of a larger project to understand how relations of difference, power, and domination are crafted, how they are sustained over time, and how social actors move within these sets of relationships (Bourdieu 1977). Cultural capital is defined as a person’s education that provides advantages in achieving higher social status in society, while *social* capital is defined as existing and potential resources tied to the establishment and maintenance of institutional relationships. While economic capital includes: property, currency or objects of monetary value. Although these three different types of capital may appear distinct, they are all at play and impossible to separate from the broader context of how they interact.

In this investigation, the interaction between these different forms of capital and how they are used sheds light onto how social capital, and cultural capital to a lesser degree, have played a central “ideological role in the neo-liberal project, accommodating it more than questioning it” (Mayer & Rankin 2002:807). Regarding neo-liberalism, Rankin (2001:10) places social capital within a larger “governmental strategy for shifting the onus of development from the state to civil society and third-sector agencies working on its behalf.” Laurie et al. (2005) argue that the language of social capital can play a sanitizing role in policy discussions, by narrowing donor rhetoric and simplifying their understanding of how

social capital is part of a larger system of power relations. With the above criticisms in mind, Bebbington (2007) argues, “civil society led development will never be enough, and those redistributive policies are far more important than any social capital-building policies (even if the social capital being built was pro-poor and not patriarchal)” (2007:160).

There is no shortage of irony that Bourdieu’s concept of social capital has gone from being a tool to examine how power is reproduced (1977) to becoming a powerful tool in neo-liberal thought, used to justify the shift of civic responsibility from powerful states to less powerful institutional actors. Further, this can be seen as a manifestation of the ongoing tension between structure and agency, and an explanation for how the actions of maneuvering through a field of limited choices can lead a non-profit to reproduce the same kinds power relations they are trying to fight.

The Non-Profit Sector

Non-profit organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are often presented as alternatives to centralized governmental intervention. Most often they fill a role that governments have traditionally occupied, providing services to the poor and needy, as well as acting as a middle broker between blighted communities and government funds. Heavily influenced by neo-liberal governance, underfunded and understaffed non-profits offer services formerly provided by local and federal governments, such as urban economic development, arts education, refugee resettlement, and health and human services.

Urban Agriculture-focused non-profit organizations often adopt narratives that promote radical or revolutionary change through revised land use. However, this depends on structural changes, including changes in public perception, policy, economic investment strategies, and community investment. In Re:Vision’s case, many of their goals seemed radical at the time of conception, especially in regards to the role urban agriculture could play as a driver for community economic development. The organization had to work within the structures that limited its potential for meaningful change.

In *When More Is Less: Contradictions of Nonprofit Work* (2013), Rachel Wright utilizes a case study drawn from a 15-month ethnographic study of non-profits within Memphis, Tennessee to examine the ways power is perpetuated through daily interactions. She identifies three ways the basic structure of non-profits preserves unequal power dynamics.

1. Governance structures are often opaque to the point where employees with grievances struggle to locate the origins of injustice in the workplace.

Stress caused by filing a grievance can also be exacerbated when executive directors maintain cozy relations with governing board, in turn leaving employees feeling exposed when they do express dissatisfaction with management.

2. Nonprofits depend on funders, and funders, in turn, impose corporatized accountability systems that profoundly shape daily operations.

These accountability systems take form in how projects are reported and how qualitative results are quantified. This system can create a rift between administrative employees who report to funders and programming employees who report to administrators.

3. The divide between program staff and administrative staff correlates with splits in race and gender.

Women are often preferred for front-line direct care positions that enact larger emotional tolls, pay less, and offer little opportunity for upward mobility. Further, front-line staffs that look like their clients are also preferred, which leaves black women doubly pigeonholed into high-stress caring roles.

When programming employees feel undervalued and overworked, they told Wright methods of how they utilized small individual acts of resistance by working fewer hours, or just doing what they saw as a worse job. The author identifies a close connection between quality of service and staff satisfaction.

In Re:Vision's case, the two directors were men, the farm manager was a woman, one of the office workers was male, all but one of the *promoturas* was female, and the interns were half men, half women.

Wright emphasizes the need to "...resist the tendency to position nonprofits outside of the broader political economy where money dictates personal and professional worth; employees are aware of the correlation between their low pay and the low value of their opinions" (2013:88). Further, she advocates for employee-centric models of non-profit management in contrast to the widespread donor-centric model she identified time and time again (Wright 2013).

Critiquing the Non-Profit World

In "That Stubborn 'doing good?' question: Ethical/Epistemological concerns in the study of NGOs", Donna Murdock (2003) asks whether it is practical or even useful to ask whether an NGO is doing good to measure its success. Instead of asking, Murdock suggests emphasizing the political-economic context and negotiated, constructed quality of women's lived experience of shifting NGO strategies. While conducting ethnographic research in Colombia during a time of extreme political upheaval and change, she witnessed the professionalization of many women's rights oriented NGOs.

Using a practice-based approach, she echoes Foucault (1978) by reminding us that social policy focused NGOs often do not sit at the wheel of power. Instead, they are more likely to spin whichever direction its already turning. In this case study, Murdock links the professionalization of social organizations to a shift towards policy advocacy. Where in the past, many of the women's organizations she studied could not dream of having a seat at the table, now that seat is conditionally attainable, with a shift in organizational culture. One of Murdock's informants expressed worry over the increasingly interwoven relationships between NGOs and the state.

The style of the movement we had before of groups outside patriarchal dynamics, private and the State, disappeared. Inside these institutions now is a functional discourse of policies...the development of institutions, contracts that institutions have with agencies of cooperation and the State... We have lost the capacity to subvert. (Murdock 2003:515)

So while the professionalization of them can, and should, be seen as another form of the anti-politics machine (Ferguson 1994), the political and economic circumstances of the post-neo-liberal state leave NGOs little choice but to bend to the demands of funders.

With *How progressive culture resists critique: The impasse of NGO studies*, Amanda Lashaw (2012) addresses the distinctive dilemmas that arise from a lack of distance between ethnographers and their research subjects and particularly the difficulty of critically examining the moral sentiments of progressive actors. In reviewing the progressive culture that underpins much of non-profits and NGO culture, Lashaw argues that the values they share with many academics have made them difficult to apply our tools of critical analysis to (2012).

Beginning with her own experiences working in educational reform, Lashaw maps the challenging process she underwent to find a methodology for gaining the analytic distance to critique actors who carry values that unite them with many of the social scientists who make up the audience of her research. The difficulty lies in the lack of distance between ethnographers and their research subjects when the subjects are progressive actors, whose cultural worlds are "...already organized by positivist and instrumentalist paradigms" (2012:504). With their willingness to utilize critical social-analysis in some form, progressive organizations do not usually register as strange or new to many social scientists. This closeness can protect them from public curiosity, and protect their middle-class liberal employees from being reducible to one identity. Also, this questions how a researcher can effectively critique an organization when the researchers own moral code suggests, "Critique equals pessimism which equals paralysis" and reduces the equation to: "You're either for reform or you are for the racist status quo" (2012:517).

From this question, Lashaw identifies the *professionalization of activism thesis* (Alvarez 1999; Incite! 2007; Ferguson 1994), or what Incite! (2007) labels the Non-Profit Industrialization complex. As a framework for more extensive critique, it balances the nuanced idea that progressive reformers can both enable and resist the very social inequalities they fight, at the same time. Many of the subjects in Lashaw's study "moved effortlessly between discourses of social justice, economic efficiency, and professional

development. They creatively combined activist and government resources, strategies and identities” (2012:511). Rather than focus on the effectiveness of programming or a practice-centric study, Lashaw argues that unmasking the creation of different modes of morality is critical, but only becomes instructive in the contexts of challenge or crisis, when the shared moralities that act as a foundation for progressive reformers and progressive academics, are challenged.

Non-Profit Industrial Complex

Criticisms brought by Rodriguez (2007) and Incite! (2007) shed light on the relations between non-profit organizations, charitable foundations, and government. They label this collection of interactions as the *non-profit industrial complex* (NPIC). The NPIC encapsulates the way capitalist interests and the state manipulate non-profits to:

Monitor and control social justice movements; divert public monies into private hands through foundations; manage and control dissent in order to make the world safe for capitalism; redirect activist energies into career based modes of organizing, instead of mass-based organizing capable of actually transforming society; allow corporations to mask their exploitative and colonial work practices through “philanthropic”: work; encourage social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than to challenge them (Incite! 2007:3)

By examining the history of the non-profit system within the U.S., Rodriguez uses a framework centered around the political economy of non-profit organizations, which looks at the historical context that spawned foundation funded activism, and the changes that have occurred in activist work as a result of the NPIC’s influence.

The professionalization of NGOs has significantly influenced the kinds of work non-profits undertake (Rodriguez 2007). First, the professionalization of social movements can be connected to the co-opting of radical movements, because requiring a professional staff can have the effect of disqualifying urban community organizers and leaders from leadership positions within non-profits. Instead, professionals with college degrees are often hired to run non-profits with a business like efficiency. These positions usually require a deep understanding of grant writing, non-profit accounting, and leaders who have established relationships with the political establishment, and deep-pocketed funders are in high demand.

Wealthy and powerful donors fund grassroots movement, and in turn request more efficient operating and reporting. This effect can re-center focus to delivering the goals outlined by the funding agency instead of goals driven by mission. In turn, this interaction fosters a system that requires a more professionalized staff and also gives funders more of a say in who occupies leadership positions, as well as in the overall direction of the organization. Arnove (1980) called this process *cooling-out*, and Ferguson (1994) called it *anti-politicization* because it functionally delays and prevents more radical changes from taking place. Rodriguez (2007) identifies this collection of mechanisms and relationships as the Non-Profit Industrial Complex.

Building on the mechanisms described by Incite!, Bretton Alvaré (2010) contributes to our understanding of the dual nature of NGOs and nonprofits. On the one hand, NGOs can remain responsive to some local needs, while simultaneously engaging with the state in a manner that can cool critique and discourage alternative perspectives. This is a continuation of much of the Non-profit/NGO scholarship that focuses on the *anti-politicization* of social movements (Ferguson 1994; Incite! 2007; Alvaré 2010; Vannier 2010). Out of a growing desire and need for foundation and government grant funding, organizations that formerly wielded discourse of radical political change attempt to legitimate themselves through professionalization, and by carefully utilizing language that emphasizes neutral needs-based solutions. “All of this is particularly unsettling when such results exist side-by-side with the stated good intentions of well-meaning groups and individuals (Mertz and Timmer 2010:174)”. In the guise of reducing corruption through financial accountability, NGOs are increasingly self-censoring political thought and avoiding the more in-depth criticisms of the state social that were previously a hallmark of social movements.

While this thesis is not centrally focused on the interactions between government, philanthropy and non-profit decision making, understanding the dualities faced and embraced by non-profits is necessary to develop a better and more contextual understanding of the challenges non-profits face.

Summary of Literature and Important Concepts

The next few pages are a synthesis of the literature and concepts introduced earlier in this chapter.

Political economy is a theoretical framework concerned with the relationships between economic systems, their supporting institutions, and the rest of society. This framework acknowledges the influence of non-economic factors such as political and social institutions, morality, and ideology in determining economic events (Sackrey & Schneider 2002: vii). Specifically, I use this framework to make sense of the effects neo-liberal governance and thinking have had on how non-profits operate. Neo-liberalism and neo-liberal governance refer to the deregulation of the private sector, the widespread dismantling of government safety net programs in the U.S. and Britain during the 1980s, and these actions have resulted in widening economic disparities. One key way neo-liberalism has effected non-profits has been in the widespread adoption of social capital as an ideology of development. Plenty of scholars (Bebbington 2007; Mayer & Rankin 2002; Rankin 2001; Laurie et al. 2005) have begun to see social capital as part of a larger pattern of neo-liberal governance within governments that shifts the burden of community development from the state to civil society and non-profit agencies.

Pierre Bourdieu (1977) developed his *theory of practice*, which posits that we are all actors operating within multiple *fields*, where actors must utilize a combination of cultural capital, political capital and to ultimately achieve some form of economic capital. The intersection and manifestations of these different capitals come in an actor's *habitus*, which is another way of saying a combination of education, family environment, social class, social ability, and to degrees to which one understands how to move within differing strata of society. Further, the interplay between fields, habitus, these forms of capital, the actions that reproduce the structures that govern how people interact. This theory of practice has been a way to make sense of the tension between structure and agency that govern how relations of difference, power, and domination are crafted and preserved.

Starting with the decline of small-scale agricultural, we see the widespread emergence and domination of industrial agriculture within the U.S, which has significantly altered individual food consumption (Dimitri, Effland, Conklin 2005), and helped further entrench structural discrimination. It is important to note that institutional racism has always been expressed via land ownership and the food system, and the industrial food system only further entrenched (Pennick 2011; Billings & Cabbil 2011). By zooming out, Donald Nonini (2013) ties globalization, deindustrialization, and the emergence of the urban and sustainable agriculture movements together to paint a vivid picture of an evolving food landscape in urban and rural America.

McClintock (2014), DeLind (2011), and Holt-Giménez and Wang (2011) challenge urban agriculture by identifying many of the contradictions that exist in the form of neo-liberal outcomes. These outcomes stem from a consumer focus that does little to fix systemic wrongs and also obfuscates intergenerational efforts by people of color, and poor people. While Vitiello and Wolf-Powers (2014) advocate for a consumption-based model of institution building, they problematize urban agriculture's promise of community revitalization and its assumptions of multi-functionality.

According to Cohen and Reynolds (2014), the multifunctionality of urban agriculture is aspirational and inspirational. By looking at urban agriculture in New York City, they identify five key goals that are representative of a range of practitioners: 1.) Environmental Goals 2.) Public Health Goals 3.) Social and Educational Goals 4.) Economic Goals 5.) Community Goals

To achieve these goals, Cohen and Reynolds identify land tenure, clean soil, and funding as the most critical resources for success, but they are not equitably distributed. Instead, the authors find two distinct urban agriculture movements split along racial and socio-economic lines, and the white and middle-class movement has greater access to the levers of success.

Galt (2013) asserts that researchers examining urban agriculture and CSAs need to utilize the tools of political economy and be aware of the dangers of being too celebratory of

research sites. Following his recommendations, Galt theorizes that social embeddedness within CSAs may act to negate the implied reciprocity of CSA relationships because the system does not mitigate farming risk, but rather intertwines social relations with a regular market interaction.

The case study of Dig Deep Farms presents a case against a consumption-based model of social change. Instead, they began with respecting local food practices and focused on using the farm as a space to work on crime prevention, job creation, and local ownership, in turn creating a dynamic framework that visibly values more than the vegetables grown (Bradley & Galt 2014).

A series of authors (Juwon and Shea 2015; Juwon, Teether, Shea and Van Steenis 2016; Wright 2013), argue for greater transparency of leadership within the non-profit sphere and use the case of *Impact* to argue for better collaboration between high-level administrative employees and lower-level programming workers. Without better communication, much of the work of on-the-ground community workers falls into the realm of invisibility, which has profound consequences for employee satisfaction and program effectiveness.

Further, Wright (2013) identifies three fundamental ways the basic structure of non-profits can perpetuate unequal power-dynamics along gender, racial, or hierarchical divides.

1. Governance structures are opaque
2. Non-profits depend on funders, who in turn impose corporatized accountability systems.
3. Differences between program and administrative staff correlate along race and gender lines

To counter these self-replicating modes of unjust power dynamics, Wright advocates for an employee-centric model of non-profit management. Murdock (2003) recognizes the fine line non-profits walk between choosing to participate in systems and being forced into them by larger forces, and reminds us to avoid the tendency to let our political persuasions guide our research and to moralize the work done by the NGOs we study (2003).

Lashaw (2012) takes this stance a step further, placing the moral codes of many researchers in the same camp as that of many of the non-profits they study. In reality, she argues that there is not enough emotional and intellectual distance between academics and the non-profits they study. As a result, much of the middle-class progressive non-profit culture is reasonable to middle-class researchers and does not register as strange or new. Similar to Murdock (2003), Lashaw (2012) critiques research that focuses on program effectiveness, instead advocates for the unmasking of different modes of morality in times of crisis.

From a historical perspective, Incite! (2007) and Rodriguez (2007) discuss the mechanisms that encompass what they call the *Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (NPIC), which I have dissected in detail above. In review, the NPIC:

1. Monitor and control social justice movements
2. Divert public monies into private hands through foundations
3. Manage and control dissent to make the world safer for capitalism
4. Redirect activist energies into career based modes of organizing, in turn weakening the potential for transformational mass-based organizing
5. Allow corporations to mask their exploitative and colonial work practices through philanthropy
6. Encourage social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than to challenge them

Alvaré (2010) invokes the power of what he calls the *NGO bureaucracy* to enforce an audit culture that effectively de-politicizes many who participate in it to receive funding. Instead of dealing with overt government censorship, many NGOs self-censor political thought and avoid broad critiques of the state with the goal of receiving political support and funding.

In the next two chapters, I will review the findings of my fieldwork and analyze the resulting data utilizing the political economic framework outlined in this chapter. With the five general goals of urban agriculture and three critical resources they identify, Cohen and Reynolds (2014) offer a strong foundation for critiquing and evaluating Re:Vision's urban

agriculture program. Wright's exploration of gendered power dynamics (2013), and the *Non-Profit Industrial Complex* offered by Incite! (2007) provide a robust framework to understand the political and economic sphere's navigated by and within non-profits. This context is crucial to make sense and contextualize Re:Vision's choices in regards to Ubuntu and Kepner Farms.

Chapter 4: Results and Findings

In this chapter, I summarize the data I have gathered from participant observation, as well as formal interviews. I also utilize local press coverage, 2010 U.S. Census data, and information from Re:Vision's website, including publically available financial documents, their annual reports, farm harvest data from 2014, and a published strategic plan for 2014-2016. I discuss Re:Vision's origin story, locate the two farms within the Westwood community both spatially and relationally, and examine where their practices drifted from the initial goals, as well as the findings of my research.

Re:Vision's Origin

Like many non-profits, Re:Vision has a compelling origin story. Re:Vision's two founders met during a university service trip to Central America, where they witnessed immense poverty related to international free trade policies and exploitative labor. They returned from the trip inspired, and founded Re:Vision International in 2007, after graduating from college. While their original plan involved returning to Nicaragua, they became aware that similar conditions of poverty plagued proximate neighborhoods in Denver. With an awareness of the poverty experienced by members of their community, they shifted their focus from the global to the local.

After reviewing a community needs assessment, authored by the University of Colorado-Denver and LiveWell Colorado, that identified food access as a central issue in the Westwood community, Re:Vision began the Re:Farm program in 2007. Based on a model of community activism drawn from community health initiatives in Central America, Re:Vision hired a group of local women as *promoturas*. The promoturas began by talking with their neighbors about growing food and efficiently worked as garden and nutrition educators within

Westwood. As members of the immediate community and native Spanish speakers, the promoturas directly communicated with participants, and gathered information on how to improve the program. The backyard garden program has undergone tremendous growth, growing from 7 families in 2008 to over 400 in 2015, and it represents Re:Vision's most successful project in the community. At the time, it was also one of the largest community-led agriculture programs in the U.S (Interview #3, 2015).

Just Southwest of Denver, the small residential neighborhood of Westwood is nestled in between four major roads and a plethora of local businesses. Federal Boulevard marks the eastern boundary of Westwood, resembling a four-lane highway lined with an array of Vietnamese bakeries, pho shops, Mexican panaderias, countless mini-strip malls, and ever-present traffic. On the North side, West Alameda Avenue acts as a central artery that connects Denver proper to its western satellites and suburbs. Car dealerships sit next to carnicerías (butcher-shops), marijuana dispensaries, rug stores, and Spanish language billboards, while South East Asian markets stare directly at nail salons and evangelical churches. In short, almost anything can be found on Alameda or Federal if you know where to look. As I proceeded west on Alameda, I encountered Morrison Road, which intersects with Alameda and creates an irregular five-way stoplight. While Federal and Alameda emanate a multi-ethnic feel, a sharp left turn onto Morrison evokes the feeling of a Mexican neighborhood. Before encountering Re:Vision, I passed by small taquerías, a Mexican panaderia, tortillerías, corner stores, auto shops, and a farmacia that specializes in herbal remedies. Morrison is primarily a commercial avenue surrounded by residential streets filled with: kids riding bikes, painstakingly manicured rose gardens and the occasional hum of loud music.

After leaving Re:Vision, a flurry of quick turns deposited me at the gate of the Kepner Educational Farm in less than 5 minutes. Kepner Farm was constructed in 2009 at Kepner Middle School, and Ubuntu Farm began growing produce in 2013. To properly introduce the farms, I have included polished field notes spanning my first day on the farm in May 2014 to my last day in November 2014.

Kepner is a small farm. Sitting at the edge of a dead-end street, pinched between two residential lots, an early education center, and a middle school. It blends in with the scenery. A seven-foot high chain link fence surrounds the farm, while the two adjacent houses sport wooden fences that keep unwelcome eyes from gazing in. There are about ten vegetable rows, six raised beds, and a border of raspberries and strawberries along the middle school side fence, in addition to rows of grape vines, and a handful of fruit trees. On the south side of the farm, there are ten compost bins, constructed of old wooden pallets, and each container has a different stage of compost. Along a short retaining wall, a standard garden hose snakes its way from a spigot through tall grass, across a concrete platform and under the door of a small greenhouse. With vents for airflow and solar panels for energy, the greenhouse contains many of the plants that will eventually go in the ground. For now, it is a warm refuge on a chilly spring day. After watering a few trays of baby onions, we transplanted some of the larger bulbs outside to begin the process of hardening them so that they might survive a late May cold snap.

We left the greenhouse gorged with water and rode the truck two blocks to the Ubuntu Farm. If you somehow found yourself meandering down Tennessee Boulevard on a cloudy day, it would not be uncommon to walk right past the narrow four-foot high fence without noticing what is behind it. A stream of commuters pour out of their houses each morning to congregate, socialize, and learn at the school, among other things. Simply put, the sound of screaming, yelling, joyous children is never far off. Between the chorus of children, a constant stream of hip-hop, salsa, and a vast array of colorfully assembled tunes invite you to move your hips.

The border of the farm is more symbolic than functional. At the front, a long bike lock often secures the four-foot fence, but it has a gap on the far left side that most people could fit through. If the gap is too small, there is always the option of hopping the fence. Past the worn gate and the cable lock, there are hundreds of feet of walking paths crafted out of burlap coffee sacks, which have been painstakingly

nailed into the ground. To the left, a small shed with double doors contains an array of shovels, hoes, irrigation patches, wheelbarrows, as well its fair share of spiders ranging from the occasional brown recluse to the more common wolf spider. The front of the shed is adorned with a large banner that has Re:Vision's name and logo on it, as well as a list of major donors.

Made of iron rebar and covered by a thick, cloudy polyethylene wrap, two large high tunnels extend two hundred feet into the farm. Although the outside air was around forty-five degrees Fahrenheit, I was hit by a gust of tropical humidity when we entered the hoop house. As the farm manager gave me an abbreviated tour of the beds under the plastic, my eyes darted back and forth, attracted to the emerald carpet of greens reaching for the sky.

Winter had begun to concede some territory to its turbulent teenage sister: spring and a battalion of volunteer greens were the first to emerge after a mild winter. Arugula, lettuce, and spinach were scattered around the farm, far from where they sprouted last summer. In the gardening world, these volunteers are seen as a blessing, because they are often the earliest producers, and do not require planting. In the farming world, they are at best a nice surprise, and at worst, a nuisance that takes up important space. Next to these large leafed greens were some miniscule, but independent carrot tops, amidst two orderly rows of intentional spinach.

With a harvest knife in one hand, we pulled back the reemay (polyester garden cover), which protects the spinach from cold. She demonstrated how to cut a head of spinach just below the soil to keep the head intact. This spinach was destined for a local restaurant in the highlands. She noted how lucky I was to harvest spinach on my first day. Before becoming a farmer, she worked in an unrelated field until the most recent recession led to a period of unemployment, and a change in careers. As she moved at twice the speed I did, expertly severing each bundle of spinach from its roots and picking off the yellower shoots, she explained how a farming internship changed her life. By previously working for one of the largest

organic CSA operations in the state, she discovered her passion and learned how to farm on a larger scale, before getting hired by Re:Vision.

On larger farm crews it is rare for newcomers to harvest greens as delicate and valuable as spinach. But here, there was no large crew. It was just the two of us. Lucky for her, I was no stranger to vegetables, or to greens for that matter. We glided down the aisles collecting the wigs of spinach in a rolling cooler, while simultaneously swapping ideas and theories of how to use the land more efficiently in an urban farming operation.

Suddenly, my attention was drawn to her silence and her outstretched finger, pointing at a small insect underneath the bushy spinach I hovered over. Sorry, arachnid. Red hourglass on its abdomen, this spider was a lion ready to pounce, an asp in the grass patiently waiting. I had only laid eyes on black widows within the confines of television, never in person. Looking down at my sleeveless arms, and gloveless hands, I quickly imagined a trip to the emergency room as my hand sat frozen 4 inches away from it. She calmly shifted her weight to her right knee and used her harvest knife to crush the spider. If I was not sure what our policy on killing spiders was before, I understood it after

Our knives swam through the air a little slower after our first encounter with the widow, and we began to methodically examine the bottom of each spinach bundle before grabbing it with our hands. As we systemically moved down the final row of large spinach, we began to discuss the farm's relationship to the Bantu.

Initially, she repeated Re:Vision's published statement from their website: Re:Vision's relationship with the Bantu is of an educational nature, so the Bantu can learn to farm in Colorado, as well as grow food for their community at the existing farms. However, she followed this up with her observations, and caveats. In her first season working with the Bantu, she did not observe them bringing home much produce, saw very few female participants, and saw their participation disappear with the first snow of the fall. As of April, she had still not heard anything from the Bantu,

who were promoted as the primary farm participants, and she was worried about their continued participation in the coming summer. Most notably, she was curious about the gender dynamics within the Bantu community that contributed to a lack of female participants, and she questioned whether the male participants recognized her authority as a farmer, let alone the farm manager.

With the cooler chocked to the brim with sweet, succulent, cool season spinach, we loaded it into the truck and retrieved a couple plastic bags from the shed. The self-sown greens were in the way of progress and scheduled for removal later that week. The ground they broke was being primed for the farm's big cash crop, tomatoes. I gleefully took this opportunity to harvest two gallons of the nutty, spicy, and sweet greens. Once we returned to the office, I promised to return the following week, and I safely strapped my giant bundle of leafy greens into my car with the seatbelt. (April 2015 Field Notes)

Early in the season, the farm was brimming with potential and enthusiasm, but early conversations hinted at an array of unaddressed pre-existing problems. Formerly two residential lots, the remains of past concrete foundations continued to be found just below the surface throughout the growing season. No more than 50 feet wide, about 75 percent of the property is used for agriculture. The rest resembles a fallow plot of weeds, wildflowers, and hidden remnants of the buildings and automobiles that occupied the space in a past life. Until it became a farm, the empty lot embodied the popular image of urban blight, the result of a multi-decade divestment in low-income communities.

To mark the shift of mental and organizational resources from the farms to the Westwood Food Cooperative, Re:Vision International hosted a re-branding party, and changed their name to Re:Vision. By removing *international* from their name, Re:Vision publicly declared their commitment to the local, and publically promoted the future construction of the Westwood Cooperative.

Re:Vision has been championed as one of the more successful community-based non-profits in Denver, and a burgeoning actor in local food politics. Over the past few years, Re:Vision has garnered a significant amount of support from the City of Denver, won a few prestigious grants and established itself within the Hispanic community through its backyard gardening program. As a result, Re:Vision continues to grow its staff, and present its successful adaptation of the promotora model for food education.

The backyard gardening programming represents Re:Vision's most significant success, while the two urban farm projects have been an underwhelming follow-up. However, the failures of the urban farm projects were augmented by the rapid redirection of resources from the urban farm project to the co-op. The farms were intended to break even, to govern themselves serendipitously, as well as engage the community, address communal food insecurity, create a dialogue between Hispanic and Somali Bantu community members, and provide some educational component for local youth. However, to me, this appears to have been overly ambitious. As a result, the farms shifted from being a tool of social justice to two plots dedicated to producing food for a CSA program. CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture and often refers to a growing model where growers establish groups of subscribers who pay a flat rate at the beginning of the growing season and most often receive a weekly or monthly delivery of produce from the farm. The CSA model was envisioned as a way to reintroduce community and strengthen relationships between consumers, and growers.

Re:Vision's Financials

Before we dive into Re:Vision's vision of the farm, it is essential to discuss the financial transformation Re:Vision underwent from 2010 to 2015. While I conducted my fieldwork at Ubuntu and Kepner in 2014, it is important to display the growth Re:Vision experienced before and after.

	Individuals Employed	Contributions/Gifts/Grants	Public Support %	Revenue from Programs
2010	n/a	\$91,237.00	n/a	\$5,215.00
2011	6	\$235,287.00	81%	\$23,341.00
2012	5	\$360,949.00	100%	\$9,719.00
2013	4	\$571,110.00	68%	\$38,346.00
2014	16	\$3,061,814.00	65%	\$195,959.00
2015	16	\$938,728.00	99%	\$41,430.00

Figure 2: Re:Vision's Financial Growth (source: 2010-2015 990 forms)

Over the course of 6 years, Re:Vision almost tripled in size, and their revenue from grants and charitable contributions goes up tenfold from \$91,237 in 2010 to \$938,728 in 2015. In 2014, Re:Vision received a \$1.3 million award from the Denver Office of Economic Development to purchase the property for the Westwood co-op, which in part explains the jump of almost \$2.5 million in contributions between 2013 and 2014. In a short period, Re:Vision quadrupled their staff, and saw their operational budget increase by 800% between 2010 and 2015. While Re:Vision's financial details are incomplete at best, they help create a full picture of Re:Vision as an organization.

The Envisioned Farm

To accurately analyze, evaluate, and contextualize the data I gathered throughout my fieldwork; I will discuss the ideal vision of the farm from a project overview written in 2012. I encountered this document on the Healthy Kids Healthy Communities (HKHC) website. HKHC is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nations largest philanthropic organization dedicated solely to health issues, and Revision participated in the Denver HKHC partnership in 2009. This partnership was funded by a four-year, \$360,000 grant, and was lead by Denver Public Health, who worked with a handful of local non-profits. The partnership focused on healthy eating and living strategies, such as: fostering transportation reform, developing better public park spaces, creating Ubuntu Urban Farm and

two community gardens, and opening two Latin markets in designated food deserts (Kemner, Wieczorek, Brennan 2014:5).

From the outset, Re:Vision sought to create an urban farm that would provide fresh food, economic opportunity, and act as a cultural bridge for the Somali Bantu and Hispanic communities. The farm's goals included increasing the amount of affordable, healthy food in the middle of low-income communities that are food insecure, while simultaneously creating self-sufficiency, jobs, and healthier and safer communities.

The plan hinged on the assumption that the farmers would be Bantu, and Hispanic, and that the food would be grown directly for their families, and the community. The surplus was supposed to be sold in a local cooperative that would return profits to the contributors. At the heart of the farm, the plan was the development of a business model to support this project, as well as an initial 30-month lease with the right to negotiate for a more secure lease.

Goals/Desired Outcomes

The first objective was to convert the 1-acre Ubuntu lot into a productive urban farm and provide 40 Somali Bantu families and 40 Westwood residents with land to cultivate and grow food. The farm was intended to produce food on a year-round schedule through the use of greenhouses, hoop-houses, and other season-extending techniques. With a year-round growing schedule, the goals were to provide over 15,000 pounds of food by the completion of year one and increase production to 25,000 pounds or more by the end of year two.

Re:Vision intended to create 30 paid positions for residents as promoturas, as well as involve all participants in cooking, diet, nutrition, and health-related classes. Also, Re:Vision intended to help identify more vacant lots with policymakers to rezone them for agricultural use, as well as make a case for the acquisition of additional land for more Bantu families living in Southwest Denver.

Keep in mind that the goals listed above are solely the targets articulated in the objective section of the proposal.

Many of the expected outcomes reflect a focus on the Somali Bantu. The farm was portrayed as a way for the Bantu to reconnect with their ancestral and cultural way of life, as well as provide a stable source of income for them. Also, Kepner would act as an outdoor classroom for teaching children, and adult community members how to grow food. All in all, these goals were intended to coalesce into a brick by brick transformation of the community by way of a community-owned food system. Through grassroots community transformation, Re:Vision hoped to create a model of best practices for this kind of resident-led work.

Participants

Somali Bantu

The reason we wanted to purchase it, why we signed the lease, was there was a need from the Somali Bantu community. They wanted to farm the property, so we thought it was an awesome opportunity for us to work with a community that has gone through a lot, and really wanted for them to get back to their roots and have that opportunity to have agriculture as part of their life, and make sure that their kids grow up with that knowledge, and for all those reasons we were really excited about it.

(Interview 3, 2015)

In 2012, Re:Vision developed a relationship with the Somali Bantu community of Denver. With help from the City of Denver, they acquired access to land for the Ubuntu Urban Farm in 2013. It is important to point out that Re:Vision never owned the property they planted the farm on. The farm was presented as an opportunity to create a space occupied by a two or more ethnic communities, as well as a chance to provide paid jobs for residents, and land for Bantu families and Westwood residents to grow food for personal consumption (Re:Vision Ubuntu Project Overview 2012). The partnership with Re:Vision offered the Bantu a hands-on learning experience to familiarize themselves with fickle Colorado growing seasons and also provided relatively low-risk farming experience.

According to Informant #1-0201, the first growing season started late but was a success for how quickly everything came together (Interview 2, 2015). Throughout the 2013 growing season, the Bantu's time limitations were quite evident. While Re:Vision's project overview emphasized lack of ideal job opportunities for the Somali Bantu's, many of the participants worked long hours that limited their availability to work on the farm.

Instead of occupying paid positions on the farm, the Bantu participants were volunteer farm workers. Over the course of my six months of fieldwork, the Bantu exclusively worked at the farm on weekends, while paid interns worked alongside the farm manager during the workweek. While many of the interns worked second or third jobs, none of the interns had children, most had a college degree, and all were sacrificing potential income to work an internship that paid a below-minimum-wage stipend without benefits. However, all of the Bantu volunteers were married, had multiple children, had large extended families who they helped support, and very few of them had college degrees recognized in the U.S. With these factors in mind, it was no surprise that the Bantu did not conduct the majority of the work on the farm.

With the Somali Bantu, they want to bring back their nature of experience, because they did farming for the rest of their life... They don't know any office work, so the most work they do is farming, so if you ask them anything about office things, have no clue about it, but if you ask them something about the farm or gardening, then they feel like whoa wow, now I can tell my experience (Interview 1, 2014)

The Bantu were weekend volunteers at the farm, motivated participants, intent on: learning appropriate regional farming techniques, acquiring more farmland in the future, educating their kids about where their food comes from (Interview 1, 2014), and establishing a seat at the table for the Somali Bantu community to take part in local food politics. They showed up on a regular basis and donated their time to Re:Vision and the farm. The Bantu's relationship with Re:Vision offered increased visibility and association with a nascent non-profit.

While the farm was initially proposed as an engine of economic opportunity, and as a solution for food insecurity, it appears to have provided neither. The limitations of the partnership included: Re:Vision's inability to pay the Bantu for their time, a non-existent mechanism for distributing food to the community, a shift in organizational priorities to the community cooperative, as well as financial hardships that altered the farm's model and ultimately the destination of the food.

Also, the farm was rented to Re:Vision on a short-term lease, and in conjunction with landlord related conflicts, the farm ceased to exist after its second full season and was eventually abandoned by the end of 2014. This excerpt portrays some of the ways different groups of volunteers were organized, as well some of the tension around ownership, leadership, and decision making.

The second team of AmeriCorps volunteers is finishing up their rotation at the farm just in time for the summer interns to start. By 9:30 a.m., there were 7 other people working on the farm. The AmeriCorps volunteers were pulling weeds in the soon to be cabbage patch, while the Bantu were chatting and conducting work in the tomato field.

A little grumpy, I was fortuitously directed to weed in between the bushes of Swiss chard. After an hour of therapeutic weeding, I headed towards the farm manager, to discuss the plans for the day. Without its polyethylene hood, the rims of the hoop-house looked naked. However, the bok choy, radishes, arugula, and carrots were basking in the unadulterated rays of sunlight. The first CSA delivery was around the corner, and there were still seeds to sow, and plants to be transplanted. Before we could exchange words, the farm manager caught a view of the Bantu men digging potato ditches in the new squash zone. Potatoes were planted there last year and had failed quite miserably. Tasked with asking the guys to stop digging there, I approached the three men and tried to relay the message that the manager did not want potato ditches there. That ground was earmarked for hubbard squash.

Brutally aware of my role as a newcomer, I tried to artfully convince them to put down their shovels, but they explained to me that there were potatoes there last summer. After a couple of minutes, neither they nor myself had convinced the other. Confused, frustrated, and a little dejected, I returned to the manager, who was loading supplies into the pickup, and I explained what happened. Notably frustrated, she headed to Zone 6 to personally ask them to stop digging potato ditches. After seeing how deep the ditches were, she directed them to a different area and pondered aloud what to do about the ditches. Later on, potatoes were planted there, as the squash's neighbor. (May 2015 Field Notes)

This excerpt portrays one of many instances where the leadership of the farm was challenged in some way. While the frequency of these miscommunications diminished as the season progressed, it brings up the theme of *ownership*. Fostering a sense of community ownership can make community development projects successful, or cause them to fail.

Other Volunteers

Throughout my six months of fieldwork, I encountered three distinctive categories of non-Bantu volunteers. The first group I met was a cohort of six AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) service members. While federally classified as service members, AmeriCorps members work the equivalent of a full-time job, yet are paid below the legal minimum wage through a stipend, healthcare benefits, and an education award upon completion of the program. They are not considered employees, but they are also not considered volunteers. As a result, AmeriCorps service members occupy a liminal place regarding employment status. Some of their work includes: aiding disaster services, bolstering anti-poverty efforts, aiding education in low-performing schools, maintaining and protecting parks, trails, and watersheds, and strengthening the Non-Profit sector by helping to increase their organizational capacity. The AmeriCorps NCCC service-members' labor was used to fill the role of at least one full-time employee.

Of the six service members, three were male, and three were female. Without this first wave of NCCC participants, it is hard to imagine the farm would have been ready for planting time by May 30th. Before the first official day of the farm internship, the farm manager, NCCC participants, and groups of volunteers did all prior farm work. The AmeriCorps volunteers were present on the farm between four and six days a week. It is fair to say that the farm would have been behind schedule without their regular contributions early in the growing season.

After the first NCCC team left, a second group arrived and continued to help prepare the farm for summer through June. As regular farm participants, they provided more skilled labor as they became familiar with the farm rules, the layout, and the weekly goals. One or two time volunteers needed more supervision than the NCCC team, because they were not as familiar with the daily farm tasks or as habituated to the taxing nature of farm work. While the NCCC volunteers were regular laborers during their rotation with Re:Vision, and many were passionate about the work on the farm, they were short-term participants.

The second category of volunteers included organized groups often sent from religious, or community-oriented organizations from around Denver. Organized groups of volunteers came infrequently and often showed up on city-wide civic participation days, or volunteer days coordinated by local churches, or community organizations. These volunteers were often curious about Re:Vision's work, excited to get outside, and many of them had spent very little time in Westwood outside of trips to Re:Vision's farms.

The third category of volunteers was lone volunteers. Lone volunteers include individuals, families, small groups of unaffiliated volunteers, and students interested in the farm. Lone volunteers arrived sporadically, and while some volunteered once, others were weekly or bimonthly volunteers. Most volunteers coordinated their volunteer days with the farm manager and showed up on Saturday, the official volunteer day.

Restaurants

While the majority of the food grown and harvested at the urban farms was redistributed as part of the CSA program, Re:Vision sold a portion of their produce to local restaurants. Although restaurant sales were less of a focus than the CSA members, they were essential to the farm's financial viability. Direct farm to restaurant deliveries fetch a higher price than selling to wholesalers because this cuts out the middleman and allows farms to negotiate their prices. With that said, farmers' markets often fetch much more lucrative prices, but there was not much of an emphasis on selling at area farmers' markets. However, restaurant sales provided an avenue for surplus food to be sold without requiring a market booth.

The relationships with restaurants can provide growers with a steady market throughout the production season, premium prices for specialty items, and brand development and recognition.

Hispanic Community

According to the 2010 Census, Hispanic residents make up the largest minority group in Denver at 31.8%. In comparison, Hispanic residents makeup 80% of the Westwood community and are primarily of Mexican origin or descent. The cultural influences of its Mexican community are evident by a plethora of taquerias, carnicerias, Mexican-bakeries, shops that sell herbal remedies, and the Spanish billboards that line the streets. Most of Re:Vision's efforts appear to have been directed at engaging the Mexican community of Westwood. From the backyard garden program to the upcoming Westwood Food Cooperative, many of the participants, and Re:Vision's local supporters stem from a large Hispanic contingency.

While the majority of the Spanish speaking community in Westwood is of Mexican origin, I will use the term *Hispanic* to denote a more generalized portrait of the Spanish speaking community, because Hispanic is used in area census data. Also, there is a small presence of immigrants from other Central American nations who reside in Westwood, and

may be involved in Re:Vision's programs. Re:Vision has primarily focused much of their efforts towards the large Mexican community, and a few of their employees speak Spanish, including the two founders. At the time of my research, all of the promoturas were Spanish speaking, and most were from Mexico.

At the time, Re:Vision employed eleven female promoturas and one male promotor. They acted as community health workers by teaching residents how to garden and grow food, as well as assisting throughout the growing season. Through personal relationships with families in the community, they have been central to the inroads Re:Vision has made in the community. While the Hispanic/Mexican community has been a focus of Re:Vision's community programming, their presence was not felt at the Ubuntu or Kepner farms. In fact, many houses around the farm were occupied, or owned by Hispanic residents, but the farm participants were almost entirely White, or Somali Bantu. While their ideal farm featured a multicultural cohort of participants building their community through agriculture, the reality was different. The multi-ethnic coalition never materialized, and Re:Vision continued to keep up the farms' appearances, while the farms' goals slid further away.

Before the manager headed back to the office to complete some paperwork, she mentioned that a group of funders were going to stop by the farm later in the day. Tasked with trellising tomatoes and weeding at Ubuntu, picking up trash to make Kepner more presentable to the funders took precedence.

Between the fence and the school lies a concrete highway that hundreds of students traverse on each school day, but during the summer, its use has plummeted. However, the fence is still lined by empty bags of flaming hot Cheetos, as well as bottles of Gatorade filled with rainwater that are submerged in patches of flowering bindweed and clover, along with plenty of other colorful reminders of the things we leave behind. After slipping on a pair of leather gloves, and arming myself with a handful of plastic trash bags, I began to scour the ground for visible pieces of trash lazily. After passing the corner of the farm's fence, the refuse became more dense and interwoven. Broken beer bottles, crushed cans, and spent cigarette butts

created a formidable perimeter around the neighbor's fence in strategic places, indicating where they stand on the other side. Frankly, I was a little annoyed to pick up the neighbors' trash, because there was a lot of farm work left to do and I had to leave around 3:30 p.m. An hour later, the fences looked pristine for the impending funders' tour, but I knew it would not last. Within one or two days, scraps would find their way back, as if simply due to the law of inertia. (June 2015 Field Notes)

To start on a more positive note, Re:Vision was able to turn a lot that had long been a neighborhood eyesore, filled with trash, remnants of an old foundation and overgrown weeds, and transform it into a luscious urban farm. Neighborhood members, who were excited to have a farm nearby, often complimented the transformation of the lot. While both lots were more beautiful as farms than before, keeping the farms physically clean of trash was a constant struggle. Bits and pieces of debris thrown over fences represented a small aesthetic nuisance that had the potential to grow into a more significant issue if unaddressed. Throughout the existence of the farm, the mission appears to have been in conflict, even if the external message stayed the same.

Inconsistencies in Self-Reported Outcomes

According to their 2013 annual report, 300 families participated in the backyard gardening program, and over 42,500 pounds of produce was produced between the two urban farms and the gardening program. Of that 42,500 food of produce, Re:Vision attributes 15,000 pounds of it to the Ubuntu Urban Farm. However, finding consistent figures has been difficult. Their independently reviewed 2013 financial statements state that they produced over 7,000 pounds of vegetables with Somali Bantu refugees, and helped 200 low-income families establish gardens in Southwest Denver. Those figures differ from what was included in their 2013 annual report. Further complicating these inconsistent figures, the 2014 Harvest Log totals the farm's bounty at 5,484 pounds, which is much lower than the 15,000 pounds reported in the annual report or than the 7,000 pounds listed in the 2013 financial statement.

	Inconsistencies in Produce Reporting	
	Total Produce Grown, including backyard program (lbs.)	CSA Produce from Ubuntu & Kepner (lbs.)
2013 IRS 990		12,000
2013 Annual Report	42,500	15,000
2013 Independent Financial Statement		7,000
2014 Harvest Log		5,484
2014 IRS 990	45,000	

Figure 3: Inconsistencies in Re:Vision's Produce Reporting (source: 2014 Harvest Log, 2013 IRS 990, 2013 Annual Report, 2013 Financial Statement, 2014 IRS 990)

In Re:Vision's 2014-16 Strategic Plan, there is a detailed list of targets and goals for each aspect of their operations and programming. The objectives for Re:Vision's urban agricultural projects, included:

1. Expand the backyard garden program in Southwest Denver to 500 aggregate families by the end of 2016
2. Produce 75,000 pounds of produce from the urban farms and backyard gardens by the end of 2016
3. Purchase or agree on a long-term lease for land for a Somali Bantu farm by the end of 2014
4. Secure long-term lease for Kepner Middle School Educational Farm, and transform it into an educational hub for urban agriculture by the end of 2014
5. Have turn-key, or franchise-ready, model for Re:Farm Denver in place by the end of 2016

While three of these goals are still in play, two 2014 objectives were not achieved. We harvested produce until mid-November 2014 and Kepner Farm was no closer to being an educational hub than when we had started. The lease for Ubuntu Farm ended in the winter of 2014, and as of October 2015, Re:Vision had not secured a lease or purchased land for a Somali Bantu farm. While they had orchestrated a successful crowd-sourced fundraising project for the co-op, there had been no public statement on the status of either farm project as of December 2016.

As far as addressing community food insecurity, the majority of the food was sold to CSA members, and delivered to them through two weekly drop-offs. Most CSA participants lived in more affluent neighborhoods. There were a few community members who were members of the CSA program, but commonly, they did not pick up their shares every week (Interview 2, 2015). Outside of the Bantu who volunteered at the farm, the CSA members, and the rare neighborhood volunteer, very few members of the community received food from the farms.

While the farm was established in a prime location to foster cross-cultural interactions between the Somali Bantu and prospective Hispanic farmers from the community, this goal was not realized on the farm. Over the entire summer, I encountered one or two members of the local Hispanic community in Westwood at the farm, which indicates their participation was minimal at best. The plants were selected by the farm manager, and planted by a combination of volunteers, two groups of AmeriCorps volunteers, and seven farm interns.

By the time I arrived in year two, there were no community-jobs offered at the farms, and there was no visible job training program in action. There also did not seem to be a proactive strategy to involve youths, or interested members of the community better. Interested volunteers who initiated contact with Re:Vision were directed to the Farm Manager, who acted as the volunteer coordinator. Re:Vision employed *Promoturas* from the community to work with their backyard gardening program, but the promoturas did not play a role in the urban farms. While they are counted as paid employees from the community in Re:Vision's reporting on the farms, their employment with Re:Vision was not associated with the urban farms.

Also, among the Bantu participants, there were no regular female participants, outside of a few of the volunteers' young daughters. While 50% of the interns and the farm manager were female, the lack of females from the community left the feeling that the farm was a male-oriented space.

...With that being said, I think we ran into some cultural challenges that we weren't maybe ready to handle. Differences in gender dynamics being a big one. We were

kind of surprised to learn ...that none of the women came out and farmed on the property, it was really kind of controlled by the men, and our farm manager at the time, a woman, she did the best that she absolutely could to work with them, but one thing that she continually said was that they just didn't seem to take directions from her. (Interview 3, 2015)

Multiple employees of Re:Vision expressed surprised by the lack of female participation in the farm because they had assumed the farm would engage the entire Bantu community. While her relationship with the Bantu was friendly and warm, the farm manager was uncomfortable with the farm's existence as a male space, and she developed a sense of double consciousness regarding situations when the Bantu men did not follow her instructions. Whether or not they did not hear or comprehend her was often in conflict with the thought that "maybe they are just not listening to me because I'm a woman."

At the time of my fieldwork, Re:Vision was in the process of building an educational kitchen at their office to conduct future classes on cooking, canning, and presumably, nutrition. However, throughout the summer of 2014, I did not hear or see much about classes outside of a large batch of homemade sauerkraut the interns stuffed into quart sized mason jars.

As soon as I arrived in April of 2014, the Westwood Food Cooperative seemed to be inevitable, and a lot of focus was dedicated to the acquisition of land, and the development of the coop plan.

Tomato Season to the Cold of Winter: Farming from the Halfway Point

Throughout the season, there was tension between making the farm more efficient, increasing CSA membership and bringing more money into the farm operation, and distributing food to the community members. This tension is visible in the following excerpt:

On the left are beautiful bushes of kale; on the right are tightly quartered colonies of rainbow chard on the verge of becoming feral. Each Thursday, the farm straddles the line between wild and manicured, as a variety of plants grow into the

path. Ramadan falls during July this year, so the Bantu have been limited in their contributions as of recently. All of the interns have picked up a second or third job to help make ends meet, so much of the side work has come to a halt. The compost piles have become neglected, and bindweed is beginning to gain a stronger foothold in the kingdom of chard and most of zone two.

Like worker bees, we wove in and out of the rows, picking, pulling, cleaning, carrying and packing the produce for the CSA recipients. Last week, the manager attended a new downtown market to increase produce sales and reach more affluent customers. Although she initially objected, and not much money was made, she felt as though it was a productive strategy to increase exposure to the broader metro community. However, Informant #3-0109 and Informant #4-0108 have been worrying that the farm does not directly benefit the community enough, in part because it reflects poorly on them and the organization's ability to deliver on its goals. As a result, the downtown farmers' market appears to be a one-week experiment.

Informant #1-0201 mentioned her increasing discomfort with the need to bend the truth when asked about the farm. Although she initially joined to help grow food that helps people in the community, that seems to be far from the reality and frustration is setting in for everyone. Outside of the few Bantu we see on Saturdays, and the two or three community members we have worked with, most of the labor has come from the interns and manager. While the majority of food is being exported to the wealthier communities in Denver, the most frustrating part has been the lack of a plan for engaging the community with the farms, or for distributing food to the community. And it is not that people do not ask about the food when they walk by, there is just no outlet outside of CSA participation, or farm handouts (Field Notes July 2014)

At the end of June, Informant #1-0201 mentioned that members of the organization's leadership were panicked because, despite their efforts to promote the farms' effects within

the community, very little of the food grown was staying within the community. With the Co-op project underway and this knowledge at the forefront, there was a one-week experiment of selling food at a downtown farmers' market. This attempt appeared to be the extent of the effort because after the first week merited little sales, the farm manager did not go back to the farmer's market. It is not uncommon for regular market customers to buy from the same vendors on a weekly basis, so breaking into an existing market can present many challenges without a clear strategy of differentiation. However, Informant #1-0201, who was present at the market experiment, mentioned that the market offered the potential to educate others in the larger community about the farm, as well as the opportunity to build a farmers' market clientele.

After this, the farm team doubled down on their efforts to grow quality produce, and no more strategies for expanding the farms' buyer base were mentioned until fall.

In many ways, the farm was neglected, in the absence of a food distribution plan to the neglect of the farm itself. As the season progressed, the number of intern hours spent on the farm diminished considerably, but their increased efficiency helped partially cover the gap. While the harvests did not suffer from the interns cutting back their hours, maintenance and upkeep of the farm did. The 2014 growing season depended on the labor of the farm manager, the interns, and to a lesser degree the Bantu and other sporadic volunteers. With that said, I have mentioned that every intern had a least one other job, and almost everyone worked odd jobs or tasks to make ends meet. At the beginning of the season, each intern outlined what their hours and limitations were, but hours worked surpassed hours scheduled. The desire and pressure to work more was embraced because of our shared passion for farming.

What became evident very quickly from working on the farm, and having informal discussions with other interns was that there were just not enough paid-hours allocated to work on the two farms to get everything done. Friendships were developed between the interns, and many of the interns began expanding their farm schedules in June so they could overlap with the others. The labor boon of June led to a few different crises in July, including

the firing of one office intern who felt overworked, and the reduction of farm hours by almost all of the interns to accommodate more time for income-generating activities. While interns were provided with a stipend and the option to take home surplus greens, it was less than half of the minimum wage.

In July, discussions among interns had shifted from early summer optimism to debates centered on the issues of the farm, its conflict of mission, and how to clear things up before summer had passed. By the time July was through, those who regularly spent time on the farm knew the food was not going to the community, and many conversations centered on developing ways of getting the food to the community, yet no solutions manifested, and administrators were rarely seen around the farm, despite the 5-minute proximity.

June seems like a lifetime ago, and July was a blur. The farm work has become routine, and there has been a lot of change at the farm. One of the office interns was let go during July, and all of the farm interns have cut back on hours to dedicate time towards income generating activities. At about \$300 a month, the farm stipend just does not cut it. While the love for farming is still there, pressures of the outside world have begun to creep in. Ferguson has been on fire for the past week and has consumed most of our discussions on the farm.

However, as labor is stretched thin, these discussions are happening less and less because everyone is spread across the farms. I have become a specialist in Swiss chard cutting over the past couple weeks and am often left to my own devices in the chard forest. A few of the other interns are also interested in social justice and distressed by the farms' lack of community involvement, while others are there for their love of farming. All in all, the reality is beginning to set in.

Earlier this week, I arrived at the farm on a Sunday, and the Bantu were present but idle. The manager had not left a to-do list, so they were sitting in the shade of the sunflowers and chatting. I quickly conjured up a few zones to weed, and we leisurely worked and talked. After an hour of work, we were out of things to do, so I walked around the farm with Informant #2-0204, chatting about the farm. The

tomatoes were bursting with juice, the chard overgrown, the compost piles untended and baseball size radishes poked out of the soil, exposed to the dry air. There were more than enough tasks to keep us busy, but without organization or autonomy, the Bantu's labor went fairly un-utilized today. Before we left, I pulled some of the straggler carrots missed during last week's harvest, and we split them up among the four of us along with a small bounty of potatoes, and onions. They rarely take home chard or kale, and not many tomatoes are brought home because they are the big cash crop. (Field Notes August 2014)

At the end of the summer, there was a second wave of shift reductions as a few interns stopped working to focus their time on school, fall jobs, or other pursuits. This reduction of help shifted more of the work onto the farm manager because there were not replacements. The composting project was already on thin ice, and this proved to be the death knell because the arrival of fall emphasized harvesting everything we could.

During my interview with Informant #1-0201, we were discussing issues of community ownership, and food distribution when she was reminded of an encounter with a Bantu man who came to harvest tomatoes:

...so last year it was the week before harvest of our first round of tomatoes, and I went to the farm to work, and the next day we were gonna harvest tomatoes for the first time. When I got there, there was another guy there from the bantu community, he had literally filled up two bags of the tomatoes that were intended for the CSA the first week and he was gonna take the tomatoes home to his one family and I just said, I'm really sorry but you cannot take all of the tomatoes home, because we need them for the CSA, and I gave him a few tomatoes, it's not like I said, "give me those tomatoes they're mine I need them back and some other things, take some collards, take whatever you want, but I need the tomatoes for the CSA". So that one day I think really set the tone for the rest of the season (Interview 2, 2015)

While she told this story, there was a sense of regret in her voice, and she continued to refer back to this exchange as a pivotal interaction between the farm and the Bantu. They did not stop coming to the farm, and there did not seem to be any bad feelings, but then again, they did not take home much food in front of her after this.

At the beginning of the year, I really had to encourage them...and repeat “please, please, please take this home” and I was very confused by that. We have this farm here, where actually most of the funding was given to Re:Vision with the intention of feeding that specific community. Talking with the Bantu, I said, “you guys aren’t taking any of the food home from the farm, you have huge families, you know where are you getting your food?” They told me, Walmart. (Interview 2, 2015)

The Bantu repeatedly told her and me that they bought their food from the supermarket, but this does not mean that it was their preferred food source. In my interview with Informant #2-0204 (Interview 1, 2014), he stated a strong preference for freshly picked produce, not just for its taste or lack of chemicals, but also for its lack of packaging and waste. Most of the food the Bantu took home on Saturdays from the farm was from excess harvest, which is fundamentally different than growing produce for personal consumption. The majority of excess foods included greens and damaged fruit. While many of the interns and the farm manager were happy to take home cracked tomatoes, split onions and other produce that would spoil quickly, it required rapid processing. To take advantage of split tomatoes or ruptured peppers, you must cook them immediately or soon, which is not difficult if you have extra time or no family. I would imagine that the multi-hour block of time necessary to process produce was a luxury that the Bantu men did not have, with their families, their jobs, and their community responsibilities, not to mention the technical knowledge and tools needed to process food correctly.

Contrary to Re:Vision’s belief that the Bantu did not take any food home, they often did take home small amounts of food on Sunday, when the farm manager and no Re:Vision employee was present. Early in June, I arrived for work on a Sunday, and there was a group of Bantu men pulling out potatoes that were barely big enough to eat. It looked like they were

weeding the potato plants out, so I asked them to continue their weeding in a different location. After about 30 minutes, one of the men returned to the immature potatoes and began pulling them up. A little frustrated, I repeated what I had said, to which he replied that he was only trying to find some bigger ones. At that moment, I felt ashamed that I had assumed he did not know what he was doing, so I led him to a volunteer potato patch where they were a little further developed, and bigger. After this event, I was included in these *guerrilla harvests* on Sundays and was given a portion of produce to take home.

From summer to fall, the change of seasons coincided with changes to work on the farm, as well as changes to the farm's personnel. With this next passage, I try to illustrate how the work shifted, and what effect it had on the moral and pace of the farming.

This is the first week of the fall quarter, and the fickle Colorado weather seems to know it. Since it is a harvest day, I dragged myself to the farm at 7 a.m., and it was not easy. Last night, the temperature dropped into the thirties and remained there while we picked all we could. The days of abundant tomatoes bursting from the vine are coming to an end. Paired with the grey sky, conversation sunk to a minimum. All five of us directed our limited energy to swiftly collecting everything on the checklist. I never knew I could pick chard and cherry tomatoes so rapidly, but it was the only way to fend off the creeping feeling of my toes and fingers freezing. Anything that was above ground and close to ripe was preemptively pulled from the stalk. After all was done, I hopped in my car to warm my fingers and flew to my garden plot to shield my peppers and tomatoes from the cold with an old bed sheet. (Field Notes September 2014)

In addition to my work at the farms, I maintained two separate gardens plots, which I used to grow food for myself. Faced with an early cold snap, our prayers for a kind and gentle fall went unanswered. Instead, the labor shortage became more pronounced, and the cold transformed the harvest day from a joyful group activity to a fairly miserable race to pick, cut and collect all we could before frostbite had infiltrated our extremities. In this period, we were just past the peak of the season, which is traditionally a transitional period for farms. Most of

the labor was directed towards harvesting what is in the ground and prepping the beds for the following spring. At this point, the future of the farm had not been revealed to us, so there was still hope that the farm would remain in its place at this point.

Although the clouds looked ominous, the sun peeked through a small hole in the sky and shined on Re:Vision's annual Harvest Festival. Taking place on the middle school football field, most of the employees were seated together under a tent and eating. Most of the food was provided by Re:Vision, and the Hispanic community members, who brought dishes in an array of colorful and oddly shaped casserole dishes, crockpots and frying pans. As I put a plate of food together for myself and found a seat, the Somali Bantu community began to arrive. However, due to pork in the taco meat, they did not start to eat until Joe* arrived with their own platter of sambusas, sweetbread, and some kind of fragrant stewed meat.

Although everyone was drooling over the diverse and colorful spread of food, the Bantu women attracted all eyes with a show of colorful gowns. Bantu Men sat at one separate set of tables, while the women and children primarily sat at another. The women's and children's table contained oranges, blues, yellows, purples and reds, arranged in diamonds, stripes, and other complicated patterns. I briefly sat down next to Mohammed* and a group of Bantu men and exchanged pleasantries with those I never met. The background of electro-Latin club music made conversation difficult and frankly seemed a little inappropriate for the event's intended family-friendly atmosphere.

Kids were everywhere, and a long line of them armed with tickets, purchased to play games, stretched from the moon bounce to the tables where their parents ate. The whole event was staffed by Re:Vision employees and one of the founders acted as the moon bounce security, removing misbehaving kids to keep the fragile peace in the inflated ecosystem. Frankly, I could not help but laugh and find humor in the wild gaggle of children, scheming how to budge the line or get an extra turn in a game. The air was saturated with the sounds of screaming, laughing, and crying children.

Using our adult privileges, Joy*, Frank* and I climbed into the moon bounce, and immediately released our inner twelve-year-old selves. Upon seeing us, Andrew's* face lit up a little, as he seemed tired of chauffeuring kids in and out of the inflated castle. Following the eleven-participant salsa competition, and a few rounds of musical chairs, the harvest festival dissipated rapidly to avoid the now imminent rainstorm (September Field Notes 2014) *All names included here are pseudonyms

The harvest festival represented a culmination of all of Re:Vision's work in the community, and their growing place in it. With that said, two parties were going on at the same place, at the same time. While the goals of the farm included fostering and promoting cross-cultural interactions, the patterns that people sat in at the festival represented anything but cross-cultural interaction. The atmosphere was very jovial and happy, but each distinct group: Re:Vision employees, the Somali Bantu, and the Mexican community, arranged themselves in clusters, except for a few Re:Vision employees who wandered between groups, and community leaders who served food to all. The accessibility of the food itself was a point of contention because although it was a communal potluck style event, the Bantu did not begin to eat until a separate delivery of their Somali food arrived because there were no labels on what kind of meat was in the dishes brought by the non-Bantu attendees. Unsure of whether or not there was pork in the assortment of homemade meat dishes, the Bantu did not begin to eat until about an hour into the event. Through this event, it did become evident that community members involved were interested in Re:Vision's efforts to make urban farming, and vegetable production accessible and successful. The founders of the organization and employees actively worked very hard to help make the event fun, and promote a familial atmosphere, and despite its shortcomings, there was a reasonably high resident turnout for the festival.

Over the following weeks, we learned that the Ubuntu Farm was in its last season of cultivation.

Last week, I learned that the farm's continuing existence is at risk. The landowner is asking for higher rent and has no interest in selling them the land.

Regrettably, it was confirmed today that the Ubuntu Farm would not exist next spring. We have about 30 days of growing left at most. Although the official exit date is not definite, many structural additions will have to be taken apart and removed. It is sad that all of the compost we have added to the soil and the work we put towards making next year better will disappear. Everyone was relatively stoic and somber, so there were not many words exchanged today. (October Field Notes 2014)

In my interviews and discussions with Informant #3-0109, and Informant #1-0201, they both said that the landlord would not allow Re:Vision to build electrical infrastructure, or permit them to host large events, which limited their ability make the farm profitable. With their rent regularly increasing, Re:Vision decided it would be advantageous to look for a bigger tract of land to work with the Bantu, and consequently, focus more of their energy on the food co-operative (Interview 2, 2015).

Going back to 2010, we had been trying to purchase that property, from the organization that owned it. We were not successful in reaching an agreement with them; they want more than the property is valued at, so as a compromise, we signed a three-year lease back in 2011 that we thought would give us enough time to you know figure out the acquisition part of it. I'm sad to say that it didn't happen, and as the lease expired at the end of the last growing season, we were trying to renegotiate some terms with them, and couldn't come to an agreement on that. Such as we needed to have electricity on site, we wanted to install electricity. Re:Vision was gonna pay for it, essentially invest in upgrading their property and they refused to let us put electricity on site, which has limited our ability to farm that property year round, needing that heat source for the for the hoop houses and everything, they were raising the rent, so we decided, let's walk away from this site and see what happens, so there's that sort of sets the stage for it. (Interview 3, 2015)

By raising the rent so Re:Vision could not pay, barring structural improvements to the property and refusing to sell the property outright, the landlord forced Re:Vision off the land.

One of the more significant barriers to urban agriculture is the high cost of urban land and the

difficulty in acquiring long-term leases (Reynolds 2015). Many growing metropolitan areas do not meet the demand for affordable housing, and waves of gentrification are pushing minorities and low-income communities to the fringes of urban areas. With this said, the lot was allegedly intended to be affordable housing in the past, but it remained a vacant trash dump for that period, until with the help of the City and other funders, Re:Vision revitalized and beautified the lot by creating an urban farm.

After realizing that our seeds would not be reaped the following season, our focus shifted to getting all we could get out of the ground, and this seemed to change the mood on the farm. After learning of the farm's impending fate, an air of mourning crept into our conversation. Many of the chats between interns shifted to the past tense, and we spoke as if the farm had already disappeared. However, this nostalgia did not seep into the labor, as winter was early and unforgiving

Slowly, I put four shirts on, tucking the first one into my two pairs of long underwear, then I slid two pairs of wool socks over the long underwear and put a pair of jeans on. Then I zipped up my down jacket, put my Wisconsin football sweatshirt on over top, wrapped a scarf around my neck and put two hats on. With a pair of gloves in hand, I am finally ready to head to the farm. In a couple of days, I will head home to Minneapolis for six weeks. When I return in January, winter will be everywhere, and the farm will have seen its last days. However, the snow and extreme cold are realistically four or five days out, so time is short and the sad fog of nostalgia has crept into the air. Last night, Rachel*, Frank*, and some others came over for a pumpkin potluck, and I convinced them to go to the farm for one more day of work, for old times sake. We all arrived around 9:30 am, and it was a frigid 12 degrees outside.

The cold makes reminiscing difficult, so we focused on the task at hand. Rather than putting the garden beds to sleep for the winter and feeding hot compost piles, we focused on dismantling the iron hoop houses and removing the last remnants of farm infrastructure. Removing iron bars from a frozen ground is really a

pain in the ass. Frank and I begrudgingly discussed how much of this work could have and should have been done before the ground froze, and how much easier this would have been when labor was more abundant, and volunteers were present. At the end of the day, we exchanged hugs, and all drove off in our separate directions. I do not know if I have ever encountered a sadder last day of fall. All of us openly lamented the loss of the work we put into the land and the shameful state of the soon to be abandoned farm. Without their covers, the hoop houses looked like a hollow boneyard of broken ribs, fractured vertebrae and the remains of what was once a living organism. We were merely jackals picking through what was left, and prying as much as we could from the frozen ground (November 2014 Field Notes)

With winter in full swing, the last day on the farm was a reminder of the work that had been put off earlier in the season. After the larger infrastructure and high-value equipment were removed, everything else was left, and the beds were never put to sleep. It was practical to focus time and energy on removing the high-value objects from the farm, but it felt like a job left unfinished, and like a story without a desirable ending.

While the farm was disassembled, Re:Vision had begun promoting a buying club. The club aimed to provide customers with the ability to purchase bulk goods, high-end locally processed foods, and organic ethically produced meat. The club struggled to get more than a handful of buyers every week or two, and from my understanding, very few of the purchases came from community members. Below, an informant elaborates on the buying club, and how it lead her to quit her position unexpectedly.

You know this issue that they had in the food buying club, they really wanted me to ramp up the buying club, but the things they were interested in selling, despite the funding for a Westwood specific food buying club, as far as I know, they had grass-fed beef for \$9 a lb., they had bacon for \$12 a package, and it was amazing, but it's completely unaffordable (for residents). (Interview 2, 2015)

By mid-Winter, Informant #1-0201 had reached out to me, as a friend, because she was having a tough time with her break from Re:Vision and wanted to talk about the past season.

...and so in terms of what happened with me leaving revision is you know, they wanted to focus on the cooperative and the food buying club, and that's what they needed me to do... and I didn't know how to do it, and I didn't feel like I was capable of doing it, and when I approached them, they were unwilling to teach me or really explain what really needed to be done to make this happen and so I didn't feel like I had the skills and resources and abilities to do the job they wanted me to do, and I wanted to focus on agriculture and growing food and educating people on growing food...So I think they had a completely unrealistic expectation about what they want and what is capable. For me, it was my first year managing a farm from beginning to end, they said, "we want you to manage the farm, plan it, plant it, make it happen, you know, manage a group of interns, manage the Ubuntu, sorry the Bantu community, do all those things that need to happen, and we also want you to start a buying club too." Revision has this really amazing way of putting things down on paper that look so good, and so smooth, with the possibility of flawless execution, but look at what we have here. The buying club had been going on for how many months? Five! You know when I left and two weeks after, not much, nothing happened, even the few weeks I ran it, at most we would have 1 to 2 orders a week at the end (Interview 2, 2015)

Over the course of the growing season, the farm awoke from dormancy to become a hustling and bustling operation, primarily run by the farm manager with little daily operational oversight. When the issue of distributing food to the community became acuter around July, the organization was focusing most of its energies on the co-op, so the problem caused some panic in the offices. But not much changed, the ship continued ahead at full speed, and by the time we were disassembling the farm in the cold, the idea of having a community farm was no longer in the plans.

There's definitely that aspect of having the farm in the residential community if the people that live around there... own it, and they view it like, 'this is our farm, we participate in it, we benefit from it, we take pride in it,' versus having something that doesn't feel like it's quite their... Having a farm in a residential area is symbolic if the people own it (Interview 3, 2015)

The next farming operation Re:Vision undertook was to be on the recently acquired co-op grounds and be strictly for co-op production. In 2015, they continued to look to purchase a farm that the Somali Bantu could cultivate but never got there. As far as I can tell, Re:Vision no longer maintains a formal relationship with the Somali Bantu through any projects. In the next chapter, I will dive into why this community farm struggled to take root.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The story of urban farming is still being written, and we can all help write it, everywhere you look, urban farming is gaining momentum, from New Orleans to London to Shanghai to New York to Los Angeles (Plant This Movie 2014)

Since this project began in 2013, urban agriculture has continued to move further into mainstream American culture thanks to beautifully shot documentaries, which show youthful urban pioneers taking their communities back from blight and neglect. It is a story that fits nicely within the American mythos of picking yourself up by your bootstraps by picking up a shovel to make your community better. Many of the protagonists are small budding groups of friendly horticulturists in conflict with diabolical real-estate developers and opportunistic politicians, as seen in *The Garden* (2008), a film about the South Central Community Garden in Los Angeles. In September of 2017, Marcy Kaptur, House Democrat from Ohio, proposed an Urban Agriculture Bill to help create the next generation of local, urban farmers and food producers (accessed: 09/19/17 <https://www.hoosieragtoday.com/urban-agriculture-bill-introduced-u-s-house/>).

Meanwhile, in 2015 Pittsburgh, the city adopted a progressive zoning code for urban agriculture, and the city has begun plans to create the largest urban agriculture space in the U.S. with a price tag in the range of \$10 million. It is evident urban agriculture's moment in the sun has not passed. As city-governments, non-profits, social activists, and academics have looked closer into community-supported agriculture, local growers, and urban agriculture movements; serious criticisms have arisen. These include:

- Urban land is expensive, and agricultural land tenure is often insecure in cities

- The food movement is segmented in ways that reflect, and reproduce social hierarchies of race, class, gender (Holt-Giménez & Wang 2011; Gottlieb 2010; Reynolds 2015)
- Is cultivating more equitable food access possible without also cultivating democratic communities? (McIvor & Hale 2015)
- Existing methods for gathering agricultural data do not accurately define and count CSAs and do not differentiate urban farm operations from rural
- Researchers are too celebratory of non-profits, and community supported agriculture, and have dropped their political economy tools (Galt 2013; Lashaw 2012)
- Alternative food systems are still subject to the problems of distribution, equity, and access, associated with capitalist political economies (Bradley & Galt 2014)
- Despite their overarching goals, the nonprofit hierarchy of pay, power, and prestige discourage critical feedback from those with the greatest knowledge (Wright 2013)
- Non-profits and NGOs have become more enmeshed with The State and large funding agencies, and many have lost their ability and capacity to offer frank criticisms of power structures, and instead focus on policies (Murdock 2003)

My research with Re:Vision has revealed that organizations can be aware of the many pitfalls that plague urban agriculture, as well as non-profit work, and still struggle to implement this knowledge. Before diving into the successes and failures of the farm now is a good time to revisit the central research questions of this thesis.

1. Did Re:Vision utilize the Somali Bantu's refugee narrative to garner support?

2. What capacity did Re:Vision's deliverable goals, as outlined by funders conflict with the farm's mission to positively impact the immediate community?
3. Which shortcomings were attributable to structural obstacles influenced by neo-liberal governance?
4. Which shortcomings were attributable to Re:Vision?
5. What happens when a non-profit fails, and what can be learned?

Reviewing the Five Key Goals of Urban Agriculture

Within the urban agriculture landscape in New York City, Cohen and Reynolds (2014) identify five general goals that can be found across much of urban agriculture. These goals include environmental goals, public health goals, social and educational goals, economic goals, and community goals. They identified one of these goals present in almost all of the organizations they surveyed. In addition to these goals, they recognize land tenure, clean soil, and funding as essential resources that can determine whether projects are successful or not.

Drawing from my interviews and participant observation, Re:Vision utilized all of Cohen and Reynolds' (2014) five goals throughout the life of the farm to appeal to a plethora of supporters. The farms were intended to address residents' need for better food access, to improve on the lack of economic opportunities in the neighborhood, and transform blighted lots into environmentally friendly organic farm spaces. Also, urban agriculture could feed the engine of commercial enterprise, while reaching the community through educational workshops. Re:Vision utilized the aspirational multi-functionality of Ubuntu and Kepner to attract new funders and create a compelling narrative.

Assessing Re:Vision's goals within the Five Goals Framework

Before we can honestly evaluate whether Re:Vision met their goals, let's review Re:Vision's farm structure, and examine what their primary goals for Ubuntu Farm were.

Re:Vision operated two urban farms in 2015. Both Ubuntu and Kepner had explicit goals to feed members of the surrounding community, and Re:Vision intended to use Kepner for educational purposes due to its proximity to Kepner Middle School. The two farms were within 1500 feet of each other and farm workers often moved back and forth between the two farms within a regular workday. Re:Vision hired seven farm interns at the beginning of the 2015 season, and these interns worked with the farm manager to complete the majority of work on the farm. Groups of volunteers, including Somali Bantu residents, arrived on Saturdays to work with the farm manager and two to four interns. The Somali Bantu volunteers also showed up on Sundays to do some work on their own, and they were guided by written instructions left in the shed.

Below, I restate Re:Vision's goals for the farms and use the general goals of urban agriculture as outlined by Cohen and Reynolds (2014) to categorize each of Re:Vision's goals with a type. Classifying the goals will allow for more a robust assessment and comparison. Re:Vision's primary goals for the farms included:

Environmental/Public Health Goals

- Convert the 1-acre Ubuntu lot into a productive urban farm.
- Provide 40 Somali Bantu families and 40 Westwood residents with land to cultivate and grow food.

Economic Goals/Public Health

- With a year-round growing schedule, the goals were to produce over 15,000 pounds of food by the completion of year one.
- Increase production to 25,000 pounds or more by the end of year two.

Social-Educational Goals/Public Health

- Create 30 paid positions for residents as farming and health promoturas
- Involve all participants in cooking, diet, nutrition, and health-related classes.

Community/Environmental Goals

- Help identify more vacant lots with policymakers to rezone them for agricultural use.

- Make a case for the acquisition of additional land for more Bantu families living in Southwest Denver.

In my characterization of Re:Vision's goals above, I do not separate public health as its category of goals. Instead, it should be considered as a through-line that connects the many directions of their work within the urban farm projects. Below I discuss Re:Vision's goals in theory and practice, and I have matched Re:Vision's goals up with four of the five goals outlined by Cohen and Reynolds (2014): environmental, economic, social-educational, and community.

Re:Vision's Environmental/Public-Health Goals: In Theory

Most farm participants emphasized the value Re:Vision's farms added to the visual landscape of the neighborhood. Beyond the aesthetic qualities of the farm's greenery, the farm's transformation from a derelict property to a bountiful growing space was part of the larger narrative around community revitalization that Re:Vision wanted to push forward. For many community revitalization projects, the first steps often involve cleaning up the physical environment to signify a new commitment of care. In layman's terms, the farm space had to look the part before it could play it. Cleaning up the two farm sites also would directly improve public safety by turning unsafe and unclean areas into more friendly spaces. Also, the justification for changing these environments rested on a desire for better access to locally grown produce, and a willingness to cultivate it within the community.

Ubuntu went from a communal dumping ground to a beautiful farm. By 2014, the transformation was underway, and the heavy lifting appeared to be done. Neighbors recognized the change, funders accepted it, and overall the visuals were stunning. The farms' physical makeover was used as a powerful narrative device to display their connection to the community, and their ability to quickly churn out successful projects. However, changing how something functions and how a community interacts with space is more complicated than improving appearances.

Re:Vision's Environmental/Public Health Goals: In Practice

Re:Vision succeeded in meeting an environmental goal by turning a blighted property into a working farm, and raising community environmental awareness through the day-to-day existence of the farm. Throughout the 2014 growing season, it was quite regular for residents of the surrounding houses to walk by and comment on how they loved seeing the farm, and how they had not imagined the previous lot as a vibrant farm. The Ubuntu Farm also acted as a safe public space where Bantu men brought their children on weekends and discussed community issues while conducting farm activities. In the passage below, Informant #3-0109 shares their thoughts on the farms' successes.

Well I think that on a couple levels it succeeded, and on a couple levels it failed, so let me start with the successes first... we did launch this farm, turn it from a vacant property that wasn't being used into an asset, we were able to rally some funders together, umm, I think that there is a lot of benefit in the amount of food that was grown, but not to the scale that we wanted. (Interview 3, 2015)

Re:Vision also succeeded in obtaining the funding to convert a derelict urban lot into a productive urban farm, and they transformed it into such. This transformation required the removal of large segments of concrete foundations from the soil, the disposal of large trash items such as couches, old cars, refrigerators, etc., the building of iron hoop houses, vegetable beds, a tool shed, the establishment of a water source, and more. Cleaning up the property was an entire project in itself. The land was a trash dump, and it became a productive farm, where food was grown, and people were brought together. Re:Vision planned and executed the creation of the farm, and managed the technical aspects of running a CSA operation.

However, they relied heavily on volunteer labor and used the farm's transformation as a compelling narrative tool to stimulate financial support and paint a picture of change. While the land produced thousands of pounds of produce, very little of it reached the community, and the farms were prioritized to provide for the CSA members.

Re:Vision's Economic/Public-Health Goals: In Theory

In theory, urban agriculture's economic goals are tied to a project's ability to create a sustainable and just model that compensates participants, provides fair-priced produce to consumers and offers more choices to producer and consumer alike. However, land is often unobtainable, rent is unpredictable, sustainable labor requires compensation, and food is cheap to buy. These factors help create a landscape that raises the cost of entry and forces urban agriculture projects into a kind of capitalism that places a value on everything, and projects are ultimately judged by their ability to maneuver within a market they were created to subvert. As a result, methods of measurement are designed, and efficiency is used to represent the maximum number of benefits derived from a project, to justify the cost. The ultimate goal, however unrealistic it may be, seems to be a model of urban agriculture that provides wide-ranging benefits that address inequities in public health and food access, as well as covers its costs. Within many of the landscapes, urban agriculture is practiced, that ideal model is not just unattainable, but it could also be harmful towards the development and implementation of effective programs that address specific needs, rather than all of them.

Re:Vision's Economic/Public Health Goals: In Practice

Do I think it went perfect? No, but last year was the first year that I was actually able to implement a plan... from a perspective of planning and executing, I think it went really well... I think we could have really addressed some fertility and pest issues that we had, but there were other factors that didn't allow that to be addressed, like financial stuff, having to purchase the soil amendments, and (obtaining) overall management approval from the people above me and we didn't really have the same opinion on how to proceed when it came to that. (Interview 2, 2015)

For Informant #1-0201, the farm's success was derived from the technical implementation of the farm plan, and from reducing the amount of food wasted, but many of

the obstacles came due to disorderly management and disagreements from management staff. Compared to 2014, the operation in 2015 was more efficient in delivering food to people and restaurants. While the farm was a success from a production standpoint, the farms' production goals existed because greater production was associated with greater effectiveness and outreach. Therefore, increased production was not the desired end in itself, but rather an indicator for Re:Vision's ability to provide food to the community.

However, Re:Vision did not develop a reliable method of food delivery to members of the community, and therefore did not establish a reliable method for measuring the food delivered to the community. As a result, produce grown by weight was the only quantitative data generated that speaks to farm productivity. It was also used to report progress to funders. Ideally, measuring output and reduced agricultural waste should have been a tangential goal related to maximizing farm production, rather than the primary methodology for determining farm success. Measuring the impact of food grown is much more difficult, but in the hustle to report on progress to funders, the weekly weigh-ins became increasingly crucial to Re:Vision as the management team realized the anecdotal evidence they had hoped for was not materializing. Even if they had devised a method for quantifying their food's impact on the community, the numbers would have reflected poorly on Re:Vision. For Informant #1, the differences between the 2013 growing season and the 2014 growing season are best represented by the fact that 2014 had more food grown and less food wasted.

I think we had such abundance of food (in 2014)...and to be completely honest, the year before (2013) we composted thousands of pounds of food. I'm talking hundreds of pounds, 400 to 600 of heirloom tomatoes. We pulled them from the field, brought them to the office, weighed them, put them in the walk-in and then returned them to the compost...hundreds of pounds of Cucumbers and tomatoes. Last year (2014), I didn't even track it, because... we were leaving greens, not tomatoes or cucumbers. (Interview 2, 2015)

Over the course of 2014, 5,484 lbs. of produce was grown and harvested for the CSA (2014 Harvest Logs), and that calculation is undoubtedly an underestimate because there was food taken directly from the farm that was not weighed at the office, but it was below their growing goals. While Re:Vision did not record how much produce was wasted, this informant noted that an anecdotal decrease in waste meant more food was used than in the previous year, although it is important to note that no data was kept on whether food was used or how much the food was used. Comparing the weekly harvests versus perceptions of food composted sheds light on Re:Vision's focus during this time on using quantifiable metrics to indicate success. However, the single-minded focus on quantifying the benefits of the farm took Re:Vision's attention away from delivering those benefits to the target community. The drive to create a productive farm shaped Re:Vision's hiring practices for the available internships and emphasized production over outreach or community engagement. Even if Re:Vision would have hired members of the neighborhood as farm interns, the positions were educational without much structure and offered very little in the way of a stable income for all but the farm manager, who worked 50 to 70 hour weeks. All of the farm interns had at least one other source of employment that provided the majority of their income, and the hourly rate was less than minimum wage, so it would not have made sense for someone with a family to support. Therefore, the positions attracted applicants who were already passionate believers in urban agriculture, who were willing to donate their time and who did not need much initial training. By design, the barriers to the internship were high enough to either not attract community applicants, or for Re:Vision not to advertise the internships within the community.

As the growing season progressed, the interns' initial enthusiasm and feeling of purpose began to wane with the realization that much of the food did not make it to the community. The internships lack of suitable pay combined with the desire, and pressure, to work more than scheduled, led some of the interns to acquire a second or third job during the height of harvest. This is not to say that the interns reduced their hours because they were disillusioned with Re:Vision, rather it is an observation that the time commitment was high,

while the financial compensation was minimal. Further, the lack of community buy-in was felt by the interns, who had expected to work with members of the community, versus merely growing vegetables in the community.

In hindsight, the lack of a cohesive outreach plan, or the failure to execute it, led to a vast underperformance regarding delivering food and opportunities to members of the community. The opportunities that were available, internships, offered little to improve one's immediate economic security, and the internships did not provide much in the form of a structure for learning skills for urban agriculture. To increase production from 2013 to 2014, Re:Vision needed more consistent labor, which led them to hire a group of college-educated interns, who were relatively experienced gardeners or farmers, and could contribute without much guidance or education (Interview 2, 2015). After the growing season, Informant #1-0201 was very frustrated with the failures of the program and felt hurt that despite her extensive experience, her thoughts and observations did not inspire any changes in management procedures, or food distribution strategies.

Their funding came with the intention that they were gonna feed a community in Westwood and help increase food accessibility to low-income residents, but they sold the CSA to Wash Park, they sold a CSA to downtown Denver, I don't remember very many efforts of trying to sell the CSA in the neighborhood.... You know, under ten people in the neighborhood had a CSA out of 40 odd members. In my opinion, it was a public relations stunt, but I think when it comes down to it, they really did have the right intentions with trying to feed the refugee community, but they didn't have the proper systems in place to actually have that happen... they never sat down with me and said we have to figure out exactly how food is gonna get into the community. I talked to them (management) several times about getting a farm stand in the neighborhood, either at the office or the farm, anything... cause people were always asking about us, we had an amazing presence in the neighborhood, but there was not one opportunity for the residents to come and buy food from us, and I had a huge

issue with that, and that's why I was constantly giving people produce... (Interview 2, 2015)

This informant identifies conflict between the image Re:Vision projected, the justification for the funding they received, and the amount of food that realistically reached community members. Hidden in that passage, the interviewee mentions raising the issue with management several times, and while they do not mention the reception these conversations received, it is safe to say that changes did not occur. They were present on the farm more than the two directors combined, but their insight into issues with their food delivery strategy was not used to change practices.

Regarding administration's decision to not try more experimental methods of food delivery mid-season, informant #1-0201 said, "That's one thing I would've done, more specific to the neighborhood... the directors didn't want me to start a market stand, but I would've [started a market stand] on Fridays..." (Interview 2, 2015). As structural problems went unaddressed, the divide between administrative (office) staff and field (farm) staff became more pronounced. Informant #1-0201 felt her feedback was not appropriately valued, and stated if given the opportunity again: she would have subverted authority more by creating different avenues for food delivery. While Informant #1-0201 was worried about the details of the farms' success, Informant #3-0109 was adamant that Re:Vision's goals were about creating more than just a successful farm; the overarching goal was to create a successful and replicable model. To him, balancing the farms' books was among the most challenging aspects, because financial questions hindered the farm's potential for scaling. Re:Vision imagined that a successful Ubuntu Farm would inspire other organizations doing similar work around the country to use Re:Vision's model. However, creating a financially viable model of non-profit urban agriculture appears to have taken priority over ensuring food reached the community because community buy-in was assumed.

I don't know if it was because it was viewed as the Somali Bantu farm, that we were never able to integrate other community members into it as well. So we did not get to develop an apprentice program and... the economics of it were really

challenging; we were putting a lot of money into the resources, the infrastructure, the staff salaries to run it, and then never really recouping that through sales of produce, so that farm ran a substantial loss. We didn't even have enough revenue from it to pay the Somali Bantu for their labor so they were essentially volunteering, so in that dynamic, they're not gonna be as committed, they're gonna show up when they can... (Interview 3, 2015)

For him, it was all interconnected. Issues of community ownership, money, landlord disputes, and the lack of CSA participants, all contributed to an extensive feedback system that prevented Re:Vision from reaching their goals. However, Re:Vision did not employ someone to help plan and fulfill their promised programming agenda, and did not hire someone with experience planning an apprentice program or working with the targeted communities. Therefore, with no apprentice program in place to formally teach the Bantu, and no ability to compensate the Bantu for their labor, the Somali Bantu participated less frequently than anticipated.

With the potential pitfalls outlined by this interviewee, it is somewhat of a wonder they were able to pitch their project so smoothly to funders. Their ability to raise money is evident by their experience raising \$110,000 for this project over two days in 2013 by pitching to a panel of investors (Kornacki & Slow Money 2013), as well as by the speed at which their public funding grew (refer to figure 2 in chapter 4). Re:Vision leveraged the multifunctional nature of urban agriculture, and presented their project as a sort of silver bullet that could improve community food security, beautify distressed properties, create a small economic engine, and provide skills training, among other things. However, their vision exceeded their ability to plan and execute the steps necessary to reach their goals. It raises the question of whether or not it was realistic to expect the farm to generate a profit at all.

Re:Vision's Socio-Educational Goals/Public Health: In Theory

Within Re:Vision's two urban farms there were soft goals and hard goals, and some could be easily measured and others could not. In theory, Re:Vision's social and educational

goals were to be integrated into the farm's production schedule. Re:Vision planned to use the operating farm as a space to employ and engage community members, and their other facilities to host classes that touched on: cooking, diet, nutrition, and gardening. On a social level, the farm was supposed to operate as a space for inter-cultural exchanges, as well as a place the community could take pride in.

Re:Vision's Socio-Educational Goals/Public Health: In Practice

Earlier in Chapter 2, I raised the concept of "understanding the soil" as a metaphor for the Somali Bantu's education on the land, and their development of farming skills in Colorado. While learning how to farm in Colorado was a central goal for the Somali Bantu, there were no formal management processes in place to teach them beyond weekend volunteering. They were given the opportunity to do farming activities such as weeding, planting, harvesting, and handing out CSA boxes at the pickup, but they were not formally empowered to participate in the crop planning, the farm management, or other operational responsibilities. While the Somali Bantu learned much over their two years on the farm, educating the Somali Bantu was not treated by Re:Vision as an aspect of the project worth formally dedicating resources. Most of the educational moments I witnessed took the form of informal explanations, or hasty corrections to fix mistakes that were caused by miscommunication. The Bantu were not an active part of the farm management, and speculatively, were not given many opportunities to learn the subtler points of running or managing a farm in Colorado. Instead, education was expected to happen via osmosis.

While the farms' were staffed to produce at a higher level than 2013, Re:Vision did not employ educational staff as part of the farm projects and did not prioritize the educational vision they promoted as community benefits.

Re:Vision's Community Goals: In Theory

Many of the expected outcomes reflect a focus on the Somali Bantu. The farm was portrayed as a way for the Bantu to reconnect with their ancestral and cultural way of life, as

well as provide a stable source of income for them. Also, Kepner was supposed to act as an outdoor classroom for teaching children and community members how to grow food.

All in all, these goals were intended to coalesce into a brick by brick transformation of the community by way of a community-owned food system. Through grassroots community transformation, Re:Vision hoped to create a model of best practices for this kind of resident-led work.

Re:Vision's Community Goals: In Practice

From the start, the project was fraught with misunderstandings over who maintained ownership over the farm spaces and the food grown there:

Last year it was the week before the harvest of our first round of tomatoes, so I went to the farm to work and the next day we were going to harvest tomatoes for the first time. I got there and there was another guy there from the bantu community, that had literally filled up two sacks with the tomatoes that were intended for the CSA the first week and he was gonna take the tomatoes home to his one family and I just said, "I'm really sorry but you cannot take all of the tomatoes home, because we need them for the CSA", and I gave him a few tomatoes, it's not like I said give me those tomatoes they're mine I need them back and some other things, take some collards, take whatever you want, but I need the tomatoes for the CSA. So that one day I think really set the tone for the rest of the season. (Interview 2, 2015)

Re:Vision utilized the CSA model of produce distribution and thought it would satisfy the needs of the community, and depended on the CSA entirely as the sole strategy for food distribution. However, it would have been prudent to develop a formal plan for distributing food to the Bantu volunteers, to ensure they were taking food home, because they were the intended beneficiaries of the farm, and donated their labor without pay.

Establishing a secondary method for food delivery might have cost Re:Vision more regarding staff hours, and the costs of execution, but addressing food insecurity was the flagship goal of the program. It hardly seems unreasonable to focus organizational efforts on

reaching that goal. Before touching on what prohibited food distribution from being the focus of the farm, I would like to touch on the CSA program's roadblocks.

From the start of the 2014 season, the CSA had fewer families than anticipated, and few of them were members of the community. Out of approximately 40 CSA members, 10 of them were community members (Interview 2, 2015). Although community members had the opportunity to pay a lower rate than non-community members, that price discount did not draw as many buyers as anticipated. As a consumer, getting the most value out of your CSA farm share depends on at least four factors:

- Starting your membership at the beginning of the season to maximize the weeks you receive food
- Understanding the mechanics of a CSA, from the weekly pickups to the varying quantity and quality of foods delivered
- Picking up your farm share every week
- Having or developing the knowledge to prepare the produce provided

In theory, one of the marketable advantages of CSA programs is that they allow farmers to share some of the risks of growing food with consumers. A farm that has sold all of its CSA shares is a farm that has an established price for their produce. For CSA buyers, a prospective relationship with the farmers who grow your food is often attractive to individuals who already hold certain local-food, organic, or environmentalist sensibilities. In short, CSAs are often marketed to specific communities of people, because they have a high upfront-cost, offer intangible cultural value, and require planning and work to maximize the benefits.

With few community CSA memberships, the issue of food distribution was compounded by the fact that by mid-summer, there was anywhere from one to six produce boxes that were not picked up by their owners at the weekly deliveries. These neglected boxes often belonged to members of the Westwood community. Simply put, there were not enough community members in the CSA program, and those that did exist did not

consistently pick up their food. CSA shares may not have been adopted for any number of reasons, including:

- Upfront investment cost was too high
- Food offered was not culturally appropriate
- Families did not have access to multiple months of grocery money
- People like individually selecting what they want to buy
- Re:Vision's community marketing was not effective
- The uncertainty of not knowing what will be delivered and how much is a deterrent to people already living with higher levels of economic insecurity

These reasons are speculative, but it is clear that there was no alternative strategy in place for getting food to members of the community who did not participate in the CSA. Other than technical or cultural explanations for why the CSA program did not meet their community goals, it is essential to look at the tension between the lack of an equitable food distribution model and Re:Vision's desire to build a viable model for agriculture-centered community enterprise.

The success of the CSA program depended on residents' ability and willingness to change their consumption patterns in the market. Instead of creating and testing radical alternatives that challenged structural impediments to food access, Re:Vision's solutions centered on tweaks and changes to existing market logic (Holt-Giménez & Wang 2011). Re:Vision designed a project that relied on buyers who could purchase an entire summer's worth of produce at once. While one could argue that CSA price points are competitive to market prices when cost is broken up across 15 to 20 weeks, this misses a central point. If CSA memberships are not a culturally accepted strategy for obtaining the majority of a household's produce, they appear to be prohibitively expensive, as well as unpredictable and unreliable. Also, the goals of the first CSA model were to have producers and consumers participate in the market as equals, with consumers sharing the risk of farming in exchange for things like transparency, environmental stewardship, and relationships. The model was

dependent on consumers' willingness to pay for something more than the product, as well as the products (Galt 2010). With this in mind, it seems questionable to use a method of food delivery that inherently places risk on consumers who have been previously identified as economically disadvantaged, and food-insecure, without significant adaptations to the specific target community.

Re:Vision also pushed the idea that the farms would help generate forms of social capital through relationships created around food production, which might foster intercultural dialogue. As stated earlier in this chapter, it is unclear how much effort Re:Vision put into generating the kinds of knowledge, relationships, and skills, which the Somali Bantu could use as social capital to better position themselves in society. Like many of the other benefits Re:Vision had hoped to generate with the farm, there were not many visible efforts to help to Somali Bantu accumulate social or cultural capital in relation to the farms. At the time, there was a Bantu community member who sat on the board of the prospective Westwood Coop, although it seems fair to speculate that real benefits will not materialize until the coop is operational and stable for a few years. This observation echoes McIvor and Hale's (2015) criticisms that there is little evidence to suggest social capital is a more efficient area to focus on in comparison to economic capital. Ironically, it often suffers from the same issues of unfair distribution across class and race, which economic capital suffers from.

As Incite! (2007) and Rodriguez (2007) point out, the attachment of wealthy donors to socially conscious non-profits is a double-edged sword. While money is necessary to run a non-profit and compensate employees for work done, that money can also tie large, ambitious projects and organizations to a set of goals that are not aligned with their mission, or agenda. This was seemingly evident in the weekly produce weigh-ins, which focused on measuring all of the food harvested, even if not all of the food went to the CSA boxes. Also, while harvest volume is useful to measure farm output, it says very little about the impact of the farm on the community or to the target population of Somali Bantu participants. Despite the organization's use of the Somali Bantu in their promotional material for the farms, the impact on the Bantu was minimally measured, and did not seem to be a primary focus.

It seems fair to ask whether Re:Vision used the lived experiences of the Somali Bantu and community members to set goals and develop management procedures. From here, it looks like Re:Vision commoditized the Bantu by presenting them as the primary beneficiaries to create a compelling narrative to drive funding. From my interviews with staff (Interview 2, 2015; Interview 3, 2015), and casual conversation during farm work, Re:Vision did not predict some of the problems that arose from working with the Bantu. They did not foresee the complications that could result from having a female farm manager, and they did not base their farm management practices on dialogue with the Bantu community. If co-management of the farm operations was an idea they considered, by the time I arrived in the spring of 2014, it had been discarded. Therefore, they were surprised when the Bantu did not take home as much food as they would have hoped, just as they were surprised by the lack of female Bantu participants on the farm, and surprised by the lack of participation on behalf of the Hispanic community. Also, Re:Vision started the project with the fundamental misunderstanding that the majority of the Bantu community was interested in the farm and would participate in it to train the future farmers in the state of Colorado. However, the farms were used as a space for older men to gather and practice something they loved doing on a personal level, but would not want their children to do for a livelihood. Instead, the Somali Bantu men wanted their children to gain an appreciation for the origin of food, but get college degrees, and work in more economically stable fields of work (Interview 1, 2014). Simply put, the complications that might arise from creating a multi-cultural farm space were not factored into the farms' management procedures and combined with an unclear mission and a misunderstanding of the Somali Bantu's intended level of participation on the farm, they contributed to Re:Vision's inability to execute their goals.

In regards to community-oriented goals, the farms never reached their aspirations to create a robust inter-cultural dialogue. The larger Spanish-speaking community never genuinely engaged with the farms regularly, and inter-cultural interactions between members of the community, one of Re:Vision's original goals, was not achieved on a regular basis. This disconnect was visible at the end of season Harvest Party, where members of the Somali

Bantu community sat together and brought their own food, while members of the Hispanic community occupied a separate set of tables and ate the food they brought. Of the attendees, a handful of community leaders from both sides bridged the cultural divide by serving food, but in many ways, language and dietary barriers limited the interactions. The Bantu community engaged with the urban farm projects to a degree, while the Hispanic community engaged with the backyard garden projects with the aid of Spanish speaking promoturas.

While inter-cultural harmony was not achieved, it is essential to try to understand why. The farms were promoted to create a source of fresh food outside of the industrial food system. However, from the beginning of my time on the farm, Re:Vision owned the activities and decisions on the farm. The Bantu did not give input into what was grown on the farm, they also did not get the best farm produce, and they did not get paid.

To begin this project, Re:Vision established working relationships with members of the Bantu community, who were central to Re:Vision's vision for the farms. As a weekend activity, a regular group of 6 to 8 Bantu men volunteered at the farm. They used the farm as a *third place*, (Oldenburg 1989) where they gathered to socialize, discussed community questions, and taught their children about the origins of produce. A third-place is defined as an informal gathering place on neutral ground distinct from home and school, where a conversation is a primary activity, and freedom of expression and choice are permitted (1989).

Beyond deliverable goals or mission-based goals, Cohen and Reynolds note that at its roots, urban agriculture is about residents actively engaging in their communities, rather than maximizing the agricultural potential of urban growing spaces (2014). With this in mind, Re:Vision's production goals were oriented toward maximizing the agricultural potential of the two farms instead of engaging the surrounding communities.

The farms' primary goal was to get food to the community, and while physically creating the farm were necessary to reach the bigger goals, achieving the technical goals was not equivalent to the achieving the larger mission-based goals. As quickly as the farms

were introduced and planted, the plan shifted 180-degrees due to an array of issues with the landlord, community ownership, and the farm's inability to cover its own costs.

The backyard gardening programming represents Re:Vision's most considerable success, while the two urban farm projects have been an underwhelming follow-up. However, the failures of the urban farm projects were augmented by the rapid redirection of resources from the urban farm project to the co-op. The farms were intended to break even, to govern themselves serendipitously, as well as engage the community, address communal food insecurity, create a dialogue between Hispanic and Somali Bantu community members, and provide some educational component for local youth. In hindsight, this vision appears to have been overly ambitious. Below, Re:Vision's failures and unachieved goals are discussed in detail.

A Lack of Organizational Capacity

Re:Vision's goals on the farm were expansive. They included, but were not limited to:

- Creating a replicable model of a community-centered urban agriculture enterprise
- Producing over 25,000 lbs. of food on the farm
- Providing land for 40 Somali Bantu Families and 40 Westwood residents to grow food
- Creating 30 paid positions
- Providing educational classes to all participants
- Creating a space that promotes and fosters cross-cultural interaction.
- Obtaining a permanent growing space
- Creating a financially viable model for a community-owned urban farm
- Decreasing operational costs on the farm

Outside of the farm, they included:

- Expanding the backyard garden program
- Increasing organizational efficiency

- Obtaining funding for the co-op
- Obtaining land for the co-op
- Establishing an internship program for 8 to 10 interns
- Obtaining continued funding for the farms.
- Establishing a buying club

At the time, Re:Vision employed fewer than ten full-time employees, and zero were dedicated to programming (Interview 3, 2015). As a result, they were understaffed and unprepared to fulfill their promises to create apprenticeships and skills workshops. Unlike their promotura driven backyard garden program, which relied on leaders with direct ties to the community, and a needs-based approach of problem-solving, the CSA program was staffed entirely of people from outside of the community, and with the goal of creating a model. Re:Vision was self-aware that they had a lot on their plate, and that 2014 could have been a much more fruitful year in regards to the farm. Such institutional juggling took a heavy toll on Informant #1:

And you forgot to throw in managing the buying club, another responsibility and these were things I had never done before. So not only was I teaching myself and learning how to do these things, but I was also having to do them. So I was learning, doing and trying to figure it out all at the same time and that's why things weren't flawless or seamless, and I was so stressed out all the time, because I was learning how to do all these things as I was doing them, and I think it has to do with the nature of the Non-Profit, because of their limited budgets, plus the huge expectations and responsibilities of these people. Like I said with this whole program, there was a lot of conflict (Interview 2, 2015)

At the time, their institutional capacity was stretched. Re:Vision had twelve promoturas from the community who worked with their backyard garden program, but there were no community members paid to work with the urban farms. It appeared as though most of the administrative work, programming, volunteer-organization, and intern management fell

on the farm manager, who was later responsible with running the buying club. Non-profits often take pride in and are known for their ability to do more with less. It could be interpreted as taking the negative aspects of being under-resourced and spinning it into a narrative that demonstrates the resiliency and heroic effort put forward by those who sacrifice for the public good. In this case, Re:Vision appears to have found themselves overwhelmed. It seems counterintuitive to create a sustainable model that is heavily dependent on undercompensated labor and does not deliver on its promises to provide food to the community. Their struggles had begun to compound, the farms were not generating enough money on their own, the community they had intended to partner with was not participating at the expected contribution, and the food was not making its way back to the community at a high enough level. Below, Informant #1 expresses their conflict with knowing that the farms' food was not going to the Bantu or the immediate community at the quantities Re:Vision presented.

It was really hard for me to blatantly lie to people about revision and what I was doing there, and what we were doing there on that property. My speech was about: half the food goes to the Greater Denver community, and half the food goes to the immediate community, and you know what, every time I said it. I knew that I wasn't being truthful, but you know, I felt like we had to say that, because I wasn't gonna stand here telling people about Revision, and say, "actually only 5% of the food we grow goes to the community, in all actuality it kind of sucks, but thanks for being here today and volunteering" (Interview 2, 2015)

Re:Vision's farm projects reflected DeLind's criticism that most local foods research and programming has focused first on market potential and economic outcomes as vehicles to realize food reform (2011). The farms focused on developing a successful model for a CSA program that would cover its costs in a low-income community, so addressing food insecurity was treated as tangential. While Re:Vision heavily leaned on the project's social justice mission and the perceived engagement with Bantu refugees, their practice of food distribution did not reflect their messaging. Instead, the food primarily ended up in the kitchens of

wealthier residents and fine dining establishments, rather than in residents' homes due to an emphasis on CSA membership, and a focus on building a financially replicable model.

Further, the Ubuntu and Kepner farm projects messaging emphasized the idea and merits of local ownership of production. This farm never became community owned, and the CSA program reached few in the community. Re:Vision may have been better off putting the full effort using the farms to engage the community, instead of attempting to scale a model that had not yet been tested.

While the one full year of the Ubuntu Urban Farm was not a huge success, they did not have enough time to reach all their goals; their early failures were compounded by the fact that the farm did not get a 2nd full year to learn and rebound from their mistakes. Without much room for failure and with all eyes on them, Cohen and Reynolds (2014) describe the space non-profit urban farms operate in as the razor's edge. Due to problems of a systemic scale, Re:Vision struggled to balance on this ledge, and they ran out of time and funding before they could learn from their mistakes and fulfill their goals.

Contradictions within and the Reproduction of Power

During a casual conversation with one of Re:Vision's directors, he expressed his dismay that Re:Vision was gaining a reputation as an urban agriculture organization. He imagined their projects as more than urban agriculture. They were developing community resiliency and trying to rebuild the local economy through urban agriculture. From here, I analyze Re:Vision's goal to empower through job and opportunity creation, and the contradictions with their narrative of empowerment, ranging from the utilization of undercompensated interns, AmeriCorps service members, and uncompensated Bantu volunteers.

It is common practice for non-profits to utilize volunteers to aid paid programming staff. For many organizations, volunteers are crucial, and the time they donate allows the organization to operate under budget, as well as gain access to expertise they may not be able to afford. People often volunteer because they want to give back to their community, or

help improve others' communities, and they may stop by at regular intervals and contribute a few of hours per week, month, or event. These are some of the positive aspects of utilizing volunteers. While using free and undercompensated labor is often the reality of trying to do more with less, it is problematic when it directly contradicts the mission of an organization and project.

If Re:Vision's goals for the two farm projects were to demonstrate the ability of urban agriculture to engage with a community through volunteer work, Re:Vision's abundant use of volunteers might be justified. Building community can require many contributions that often go financially uncompensated. However, Re:Vision imagined their work as building the local economy and strengthening community resiliency and capacity.

In year two of the farms, they were paying zero community members for activities related to the Ubuntu or Kepner farms, their production goals were well below the promised goals, and less than ten Bantu families were utilizing the land to grow food. As far as I saw, there were zero non-Bantu Westwood residents regularly participating with the two urban farms. Also, the two farms were used to produce food for sale in the CSA explicitly. There were no established procedures for dividing food among community volunteers, so the food taken home by the Bantu participants was informal and unmeasured.

Re:Vision was not providing the alternative food they had promised. The project seemed more dedicated to meeting deliverable goals as outlined by funding agreements than to meeting goals related to improving community food access, as well as access to skills training and pay for work. For this reason, I think the failure of the farm was effectively camouflaged by Re:Vision's inability to secure a long-term lease. Although related, the loss of the physical farm is not the same as the farm not achieving its goals.

Failure of Food Delivery

The central failure of Re:Vision and the two farms was their inability to deliver a meaningful amount of food grown from the farms to the target community. This shortcoming

was despite the organization's focus on food insecurity, and despite the fact that feeding the Somali Bantu was promoted as a fundamental goal of the farms.

The Bantu received excess produce, but did not receive many of the other promised benefits of the farm, which included: paid jobs, organized training, and access to more agricultural land. While deliverables do not appear to have been created to indicate community impact, what we do know from the harvest data and Interview 3 (2015) is that less food was grown than anticipated. However, with the amount of administrative input, and the lack of cooperative management with the target communities, it is fair to assess that their goals were unattainable without massive changes.

At the time of this project, Westwood was identified as a food desert due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and healthy food providers. In this case, the problem of unequal food access is framed as an inefficiency of the market, which has left this particular impoverished community without access to healthy, affordable food. This framing leaves much to be desired, as it implies the issue can be fixed by bringing food markets to a community, rather than by alleviating the power relations that left the community without access to affordable produce in the first place. In a sense, using market-based solutions to attempt to fix problems that may be caused by the capital market continues to espouse the idea that better markets are the solution, especially when funders, politicians and other power-brokers continue to be enamored by, and preferentially fund market-centered narratives. Put into practice, much of urban agriculture research and programming has focused first on market potential, and second on economic outcomes, as vehicles through which to realize food reform (DeLind 2011). In this case, the desired food reform did not take place, and Re:Vision was left with a method of food distribution that was not tailored to their target communities. Also, the process of establishing this market did not improve the economic possibilities for the Bantu who participated, or the Hispanic community who did not.

While access to markets, both physical food markets and theoretical capital markets, is a prerequisite for participation, even with access to the quality of foods they desired, many community members may have been priced out of participating. Re:Vision's master plan

centered on a multi-year, multi-pronged effort that involved promoting their backyard gardens and urban farms to foster support for a community market. This case begs us to ask whether the strategy of using market changes and economic incentives to spur meaningful reform, that cuts across class lines, in the food system is the answer. When these projects fail, blame is often placed on the execution of the tasks, or the unwillingness of the community to participate. All the while, the underlying assumption that market-oriented solutions are the ideal solution for food reform is left relatively unscathed. This is not to say that there have not been successful market-oriented solutions to issues of food access, but rather that it holds a relatively hegemonic position in the rhetoric of food reform

While Re:Vision's narrative creation was compelling, it could not make up for the lack of culturally inclusive management procedures for the farm projects.

Contradictions of Narrative Creation and Scalability

As a small community of relatively new African refugees with historical ties to agriculture, the Bantu were close to an ideal partner to craft a compelling narrative. Their story is emotionally engaging. It interested volunteers, attracted donors, and the connection between the organization and the target community appealed to common sense: refugees who used to farm before conflict sent them to the U.S. With a little funding and support they will be prosperous farmers here. However, Re:Vision did not anticipate many of the challenges they would encounter working with the Bantu.

The dangers of compelling narrative include: oversimplifying complex problems to create smoother stories, as well as focusing too much energy on the story rather than the execution of a project. Re:Vision's emphasis on telling a neat story was displayed when the founders showed up for one day to "teach" the Bantu how to do farm tasks on camera for a citywide advocacy day. After that day, they were rarely seen on the farm again. Instead of creating an effective program which could produce a compelling evidence-backed narrative, Re:Vision attempted to create a model out of a narrative. A simplified story drove the program, and as a result, the project occupied a liminal space between the multiple

discourses of social justice, professional development, and economic efficiency. Re:Vision crafted a market-based plan to address the community's food insecurity. However, Re:Vision failed to keep their focus on serving the surrounding communities, and the community did not entirely buy into the CSA model of food delivery or into participating in an enterprise farm that they did not own.

It is not definitive, but this may be one of the costs non-profits must manage to navigate within a neo-liberalized landscape, which rewards organizations that effectively use their target populations to craft simplified narratives that effectively market the non-profit to foundations and individual donors. When this does not work, it can appear as blatant exploitation of marginalized groups to generate economic capital, but when projects succeed in their goals, it is seen as a blend of brilliant fundraising and effective storytelling that can benefit all. However, successful or not, it appears that narrative creation may just be another arena where unequal power relations play out because it is rarely the target community who is crafting their narrative for their direct benefit.

Community Buy-In

From my observations during participant observation and the interviews I conducted, a roadblock to meaningful community buy-in stemmed from Re:Vision's unclear mission surrounding the purpose and goals of the Ubuntu and Kepner farms. Although ownership was not formally established, early interactions with Bantu dictated that the farm activities, plan, and produce belonged to Re:Vision, so they did not take home much food when Re:Vision was there. There was no aspect of co-planning for the selection of crops, and outside of inviting them to contribute farm labor, there was no formal plan for interacting with the Bantu or Hispanic communities.

From the Bantu's perspective, Ubuntu Farm offered them the opportunity to learn how to farm in Colorado, as well as a place to educate their kids about their food's origin. During my time there, Re:Vision did not supply an educational plan that indicated education was a focus of the farms, and there was a small amount of administrative interaction with the

farm on an operational level. The gaps between Re:Vision's ideal farm and reality were widened by the lack of staff who were familiar with Somali-Bantu culture or who spoke their language, Somali May-May, as well as a lack of staff who spoke Spanish to interact with the surrounding Hispanic community. A variety of crops were grown, but none of the target communities were brought in to help create a farm that grew what they wanted. Instead, Re:Vision grew food they thought the Bantu would eat such as potatoes and tomatoes, food they thought the Hispanic community would buy such as tomatillos, a few crops for the Southeast Asian community such as bok choy, and other niche goods for restaurant clientele. The result was a CSA program that did not attract the desired number of community members, and a selection of produce that often confused the Bantu participants, who lacked familiarity with some of the farms' bumper crops like bok choy, tomatillos, and Swiss chard. Meenar and Hoover (2012) argue that one of urban agriculture's most important benefits is the generation of knowledge to those unfamiliar with the production of food, but it is hard to see where this happened beyond anecdotal evidence that the Somali Bantu participated on a regular basis. No programs were developed, and I have been unable to unearth specific goals related to Re:Vision's educational aspirations.

By the time I arrived, it had appeared as though the farm was run with minimum administrative interaction outside of the farm manager and an engagement plan that left much to be desired. At the same time, I speculate that administrative time and resources were being directed towards Re:Vision's next big project, the Westwood food coop, rather than towards delivering on their promises of community engagement and improved food access.

Land Tenure

By design and by circumstance, urban agriculture has taken deepest root in peripheral communities around the world where land is underdeveloped, or underused. Re:Vision was granted access to a derelict property by the city of Denver, despite the landlord's distaste for the agreement (Interview 3, 2015). During their time at Ubuntu,

Re:Vision transformed the property into a farm while the rest of Denver was experiencing a booming real estate environment.

2014 was the last year Ubuntu Urban Farm was used to produce food, and this was primarily due to the inability, or unwillingness, of the landlord and Re:Vision to come to a fair leasing agreement. This raises the question of whether urban agriculture projects should be considered as part of a long-term solution within food reform, because of its reliance on low-wage labor, and subsidized land within high-cost urban areas. Also, rather than being a driver of better economic outcomes, “landowners often tolerate urban agriculture as an interim use” (Opitz, Berges, Piorr, Krikster 2016:345) until the land is valuable enough to develop. This reality is increasingly reflected in an urban agriculture landscape where many farmers do not own the land they cultivate, but contribute to raising the value of the property, until they are priced out, as well as eventually, long-term residents. In short, urban agriculture is seen as best used on land that is doing nothing, until it becomes too valuable for urban agriculturalists to use.

Critically Looking at Urban Agriculture

Overwhelmingly, urban agriculture carries a positive reputation and has been able to avoid the kinds of critical treatment associated with publically funded projects, which sometimes use public lands. In a way, there is a kind of blind faith that is related to urban agriculture, because it is often portrayed as a silver bullet. This kind of magic thinking is reliant on a continued general lack of knowledge regarding what it truly takes to achieve the promises of urban agriculture.

Galt (2013) argues that many researchers who examine CSAs, and urban agriculture, are too celebratory of the continued existence of urban agriculture operations and do not utilize their political economy tools fully. Instead of offering informative insights, they become too embedded with their research sites, and they miss a valuable opportunity to gather critical data, which could inform future decisions. With that said, there is a growing body of research that offers critical perspectives on urban agriculture, but there is an

exceptionally sparse record of urban agriculture work that is subsidized by non-profits, and consequently, government.

While the relative cost of informal urban agriculture can be low, the cost of urban agriculture for members of impoverished communities who dedicate time and resources is high, even when subsidized. For urban farmers and gardeners, Cohen and Reynolds (2014) placed the time frame for tangible outcomes at 3-5 years. For individuals and organizations, three to five years is a commitment, but many funders do not offer grants that cover more than one to two-year cycles. This often leaves grant funded urban agriculture projects in a tight space, where they are unable to reap the full fruits of their labors, or show it to funders as proof of process, until maybe the third grant cycle at the earliest. In Re:Vision's case, Ubuntu Farm lasted two years, and in reality, it did not come close to reaching its production potential, let alone its potential to fulfill their other goals related to community place-making, public health, education, training, and more. During the two years, Re:Vision did not develop a set of robust management procedures that would allow them to reach their goals. They were focused on meeting the production-oriented goals they had proposed to funders, even though the weekly produce weigh-ins spoke very little to the farms' impact on their target communities. If there was a plan to involve the Somali Bantu more in the farms, or to directly engage with the surrounding community, it was not evident in the weekly farm operations.

All the while, the farms continued to lose money (Interview 3, 2015), a claim I have been unable to substantiate with any detailed account of their financial data from 2014 and 2015. However, what is clear is that in 2014: 65.3% of their financial support came from public sources, while in 2015 that number jumped up to 99.3%. Re:Vision raised a farm from the ground, and attempted to spur the farm to produce more money through restaurant sales, and by selling 75% of the CSA shares to members outside of the community. However, there was no accurate accounting for how they used the grant money earmarked for the farm. Judging by their lack of detailed plans for reaching their social justice oriented goals, it begs the question of whether money and resources were allocated to future projects, further necessitating the need for the farms to be self-sufficient.

For non-profits, publically discussing your misgivings and their thoughts on why a project failed might seem risky. The discussion could hinder their ability to fundraise in the future, as well as their ability to convince community members to commit their time, energy, and willpower to an organization that has struggled to fulfill promised projects. In Re:Vision's case, the Ubuntu Farm project disappeared into the ether after it closed down in 2014. Over time, the Somali Bantu narrative has become less central in their promotional materials, although Re:Vision used pictures from the farms to promote their work. I have reached out to the Executive Director, and operations manager, on numerous occasions over the past three years to inquire about whether they continue to work with the Somali Bantu, and whether they have found a suitable location for a new Somali Bantu farm. He has not responded to those questions. However, this does not seem uncommon, for non-profits to offer little external communication about projects that have not succeeded. Instead, they seem to be swept under the metaphorical rug, and the public is left without much of an explanation. Further, there are dozens, if not hundreds of non-profits, or similar community-oriented urban agriculture projects around the U.S., and world, that continue to do work that is very similar. This lack of transparency could prevent them from learning from these mistakes as well. This also raises the question of how viable urban agriculture enterprises can be, if there are an unknown number of projects who fail, are not acknowledged, and fall into oblivion without the greater public becoming aware of why. All the while, when organizations, such as Re:Vision, reach rock star status and begin to pull in hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant money, success can be unclear or hard to measure. Urban agriculture' long timeline for success, inconsistent reporting practices, and the difficulty of securing long-term funding, make meaningful metrics challenging to create.

Simply put, there has not been documentation of the practices and outcomes of urban agriculture, despite its growing popularity and increasing presence in policy discussions. Not every non-profit has the blessing and curse of being followed around by researchers who will publish the results of their observations, whether a success or failure. So in future projects, the urban agriculture landscape as a whole would benefit greatly from a

more open culture that encourages the publishing of results, good or bad. This kind of memory bank and an associated dialogue could help newer organizations avoid repeating the mistakes of organizations that have come before them, in turn fostering better community relations and more efficient uses of public money.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Revisiting Research Questions

I started this investigation with the intention to focus on the Somali Bantu and their partnership with Re:Vision by conducting fieldwork at Ubuntu Urban Farm, but very early in my fieldwork, my questions began to shift in focus, and this investigation pivoted 90 degrees. This shift is evident from comparing my preliminary questions below and my original thesis statement to my current thesis statement and the problems that fueled it. My initial questions were:

1. How are those who work at the farm food actors? What motivates them to be so?
2. What do community members want to know about the effect of the farm?
3. What is produced on the farm, besides food, and what are the consequences? Are relationships, partnerships, shared histories, agricultural skillsets, or other things created? How?

My preliminary research questions depended on the assumptions that: Re:Vision's farms were generating food for the community with the farms, and that they were working towards their other related goals. From this set of questions, my original thesis statement predicted that the farm would act as a social space for specific members of the community, in addition to its role as a center of food production. As I stated at the beginning of this paper, my initial questions missed the larger story of how Re:Vision interacted with the Somali Bantu, how they were failing to deliver their promises, and what the implications these findings said about how non-profits operate are influenced by neo-liberal governance.

As the project unfolded, it became quite clear that Re:Vision's urban farm program lacked a clear mission that could be reflected in the daily operations of the farms and fell short of the refugee empowerment narrative they had used to get the project started. Below are the answers to the fundamental questions I developed throughout this investigation.

1. Did Re:Vision utilize the Somali Bantu's refugee narrative to garner support?

From their partnership with the Somali Bantu, Re:Vision was able to generate social capital in the forms of increased political will, brand strengthening, and growth in their volunteer and donor networks. That new social capital was transformed into increased economic capital in the form of grants, foundational support and a multi-million dollar property acquisition for the food cooperative.

2. What capacity did Re:Vision's deliverable goals, as outlined by funders conflict with the farm's mission to positively impact the immediate community?

While I was not in the room with funders when goals were established, what is clear is that the production-oriented goals Re:Vision focused on meeting were not determined by the Somali Bantu or the Hispanic community, and they had very little correlation with community impact.

3. Which shortcomings were attributable to structural obstacles influenced by neo-liberal governance?

Within this project, Re:Vision set out to reduce food insecurity and hunger in Westwood through the establishment of two urban farms and a series of interrelated goals. However, they overreached and overpromised from the beginning, in part because the funding environment Re:Vision and other non-profits operate in requires organizations to use set goals and create projects that fulfill the desires of funders rather than the community.

4. Which shortcomings were attributable to Re:Vision?

Within Re:Vision itself, administration never established a clear mission for transferring the benefits of the farm to the Somali Bantu, and they did not appear to have a plan to include the Somali Bantu in the management processes. In addition, Re:Vision did not

execute a plan to include the Hispanic community in either of the Ubuntu or Kepner farms, and there were no paid positions or training programs offered for members of the community with regards to the farms.

5. What happens when a non-profit fails, and what can be learned?

Regardless of whether a project fails or succeeds, it is apparent that greater transparency is needed to inform other non-profits better doing similar work, as well as private funding agencies, and public funders who overwhelmingly funded the majority of Re:Vision's budget. From this case, the needs for increased financial transparency and better transparency of outcomes is evident, and the shortcomings of self-reporting are apparent.

From the findings above, this paper argues that the conflict of mission surrounding Re:Vision's two urban farms and the CSA program, as well as the reality that they were stretched beyond their previous capacity, contributed to the program falling short of its lofty goals. Second, I examine which shortcomings were singular to Re:Vision, and which were structural and influenced by neo-liberal policies.

I investigated these questions in the context of a growing but dispersed urban agriculture movement, that has become quite mainstream across the U.S. It has attracted widespread attention as a solution for the effects of urban blight, and the structural divestment in urban areas. It just so happened that the timing of my fieldwork and analysis coincided with the unexpected failure of Re:Vision's Urban Farm project. One reason the farm does not exist anymore was Re:Vision's inability to reach a long-term rental agreement with the landlord. This explanation provides a simple cause for the farm's failure, with a bad actor (the landlord/developer) that refused to go along with the project. That narrative is well developed in the urban agriculture storybook, but while it is an important factor here, it also deflects attention from the failed processes, lack of administrative support, and the scramble that resulted from overestimating what the farm could do in a short time.

If Re:Vision had a comprehensive plan for engaging with the Hispanic community at the farms or a plan for getting more food to the Bantu, I would have seen efforts on the farm at some point during my six months of fieldwork, or it would have been expressed in one of

the interviews. Instead, the data I collected suggests that Re:Vision did not anticipate or prepare for the cultural differences they might encounter while attempting to create a multi-cultural coalition of urban farmers. Also, Re:Vision did not allocate enough staff resources to make the farm successful, because their administrative resources had shifted to garnering funding for the coop, despite their commitment to providing adequate support to the farms.

While plans often change and projects shift directions, Re:Vision continued to assert the narrative that the Somali Bantu were the primary beneficiaries of the farm, despite a lack of specific metrics, or quantifiable data to back their claims. The farms' community impact was hard to see in the daily and weekly farm operations, because very few community members volunteered at them, and zero occupied paid positions at the urban farms. It is evident the farms' purpose was unclear, and Re:Vision did not invest the necessary time and resources into engaging the community, and it appeared that they had already moved on to their next project. All the while, the Somali Bantu utilized their time on the farm to build community among a small group of men and to bring their children to the farm. However, they were not provided a structured education and were not included in the management processes of the farm operations. In the end, the farm they used for such community-building ceased to exist, and the search to find a new Somali Bantu farm appears to have sputtered. While the farms were supposed to augment the Somali Bantu's cultural capital and create frameworks for learning new skills that would benefit the Somali Bantu, Re:Vision produced a lot of press with regards to the Ubuntu farm which increased their social capital, and led to a pretty immediate increase in economic capital and eventually, organizational growth. While Re:Vision's theory for community development suggested they could deliver the plethora of benefits they had promised, which would have resulted in an increase of social, cultural and economic capital for all the stakeholders, the reality is that there is still a significant gap between praxis and theory within urban agriculture. Without a system-wide improvement and increase in accurate results reporting, it is hard to imagine the development of a just, sustainable and community-centric model of urban agriculture.

The story Re:Vision put together to garner funds, generate support and recruit volunteers was more streamlined and more efficient than their planning and execution, which appeared uninformed by the communities they aspired to engage. Instead of empowering the local participants, Re:Vision heavily utilized volunteers as a source of labor that subverted the need to hire members of the community, as well as low-wage interns and AmeriCorps service members.

Cohen and Reynolds (2014) offered a framework that outlined five critical goals of urban agriculture: environmental, public health, social and educational, economic, and community goals, as well as three resources that are essential to any project: land tenure, funding, and clean soil. Re:Vision imagined a project that could address all five goals, without secure land tenure or long-term financing and the events that unfolded reflected this. From a storytelling standpoint, their farm touched on a little bit of everything and worked with a disadvantaged community. However, by the beginning of the 2014 season, the organization was aware of their shortcomings in community engagement and community benefit, yet Re:Vision shifted their administrative energies to new projects and shifted the farms' focus towards becoming more financially viable and selling more to restaurants.

While the Ubuntu Farm was history by the end of 2014, the Kepner Educational Farm continued to be operated by Re:Vision for at least one more year. At some point between the end of 2016 and beginning of 2018, Kepner disappeared from Re:Vision's website as an active project, and it is now referred to as one of the first urban farms in Denver. With that said, it is unclear whether its educational potential was ever reached.

Re:Vision's narrative creation was compelling, but good storytelling could not make up for the lack of culturally competent management procedures, or for the lack of staff dedicated to creating and executing programs that could have helped them meet the goals they had set to improve the lives of community members. Within this investigation, the tensions between structure and agency come full circle by the end of Re:Vision's growing season, when it was apparent that their farm projects were recreating much of the inequality, they had set out to reduce through an inability to pay the Somali Bantu for their labor.

Re:Vision appeared to prioritize funders' goals over the community's benefits, and displayed a general lack of administrative effort towards drafting and attempting practical solutions for problems as they appeared.

Research Implications

While the findings of this thesis have explicitly focused on the circumstances under which the Ubuntu Urban Farm failed, and consequently ceased to exist, these findings are related to broader theories of power and accountability. Beyond Re:Vision, this project represents a highly publicized and relatively well-funded effort, which fell far short of its expectations, and consequently disappeared without much noise. It is not uncommon for non-profit projects to fail, yet there is very little written about what happens when non-profits experience failure, possibly because there is an assumption of moral authority and goodwill, or perhaps because the mechanisms of transparency are not as active as we think they are. Despite the access I had to Re:Vision's tax forms for the corresponding years, they say little about how they spend their money, or where their money comes from in detail. While their funders receive a much more detailed account of how spending is accounted for, as well as detailed reports on their goals, this offers little recourse to the public who has funded over 60% of Re:Vision's work in every year since 2010, or to the community who partnered with the expectation of reaping some of the promised benefits. Without informed public scrutiny, or the scrutiny of shareholders, like a for-profit corporation, non-profits operate in a strange place, with their association to public good yet lack of accountability or regulation. While there are guidelines many non-profits stick to, they are not enforceable and much relies on self-reporting.

Further, much of Re:Vision's work in urban agriculture is not novel in concept, but derivative and based off of previous examples of urban agriculture, public health, and critical social analysis. I would expect the existence of a vibrant catalog of case studies that document successful projects, as well as failed projects, but there is no such thing. While researchers have looked more closely at international Non-Governmental Organizations,

domestic non-profits have escaped a similar level of criticism despite the everyday engagement between universities, faculty, and community non-profits that are filled with college-educated staff. In the zero-sum game of applying for hyper-competitive grants, Non-profits try to craft organizational narratives of constant progress and increasing success and are incentivized to hide past shortcomings. This opacity does a disservice to the public and the non-profit industry as a whole, as organizations can struggle to learn from the others' result, as well as with the stigma of failure.

For anthropologists, there are many tendrils of potential research questions that have stemmed from this investigation, for one more closely digging into what happens when non-profit projects fail and who feels that failure most acutely. Within urban agriculture, and agriculture in general, there is a growing awareness of the disconnect between production and consumption, theory and practice, and plans and results. Future researchers should continue to examine where the seams are splitting in the narratives organizations, and movements tell the public and themselves because where the gaps exist, there can be an unequal power dynamic at play, or at least an interesting question to be asked.

How can urban agriculture create better goals, whose achievement better predicts success? By all indications, Re:Vision's deliverable goals were production oriented, so it should come as no surprise that their goals were production oriented. However, production alone would not have, and does not predict success, or reflect on Re:Vision's ability to meet their promises.

Re:Vision never established a clear mission. A clear purpose would have helped connect the narrative around Somali Bantu empowerment to a set of steps and practices, and would have helped them prioritize the steps necessary to achieve their established goals within the farm projects. Instead, a farm was built, and produce was grown, but the purpose rang hollow under closer examination. For Re:Vision, the implications are that they were incorrectly staffed to fulfill the management and administrative duties necessary to get the farms moving towards community engagement and community ownership. Further, when they realized this, they doubled down on organizational practices and business decisions that

were contradictory to their stated goals, and that offered little material or intangible value to the Somali Bantu. Through misunderstanding the values and desires of the Somali Bantu for the farm property, Re:Vision failed to serve the Somali Bantu's desires, as well as their own need to fulfill their project goals. The failure to reach those goals was largely overshadowed by the dissolution of the Ubuntu Urban Farm. After the season, the interns who took part in the daily farm operations never worked there again, so much of the institutional knowledge they gained throughout the season was lost, and the farm manager left the organization. In the aftermath, the farm project was put into past tense on their website, and details of their engagement with Somali Bantu have primarily disappeared from their website.

Re:Vision's failures in the urban farm and CSA programs mirror an ongoing tension that exists between the multifunctional form of urban agriculture, which is sold to the public as a cure-all and the untested, and the reality that urban farming is still relatively unproven. Even the most successful projects often lack the long-term success necessary to deliver on their claims.

With that said, like many non-profits who struggle to deliver on their promises, Re:Vision was not filled with malicious, Machiavellian people. The founders of Re:Vision, and the people who worked there, cared for the community and were dedicated to doing their best to make it a better place. However, other scholars who have explored non-profit culture (Lashaw 2012; Incite! 2007; Murdock 2003) have studied how the politics of intentionality can cloud our better instincts as researchers and can prevent more accurate analyses of what happens when things fall apart.

Beyond an academic interest, I see this as an issue of accountability for organizations who utilize large amounts of public funding, as well as an opportunity to learn from mistakes and share them with others who might avoid them in the future.

Without better goals, better metrics for success, and increased transparency, I fear that enthusiasm and support may fade as projects fail to secure stable land agreements and long-term funding because the jury is still out on whether urban agriculture projects can pay for themselves when land is not subsidized.

Future Questions

Considering that urban agriculture projects exist in almost every city, and metropolitan area, future researchers will be able to utilize the findings from this investigation to more critically analyze the different goals and metrics used across urban agriculture projects, and hopefully help identify processes that more efficiently predict success. Urban agriculture is not going away anytime soon, and I predict that the near future will bring us corporate urban farms that draw on the same economies of scale that industrial agriculture does to produce cheaper food at the expense of more intangible values.

From this experience, and the many other scholars who have witnessed failed attempts at making a more just and inclusive food system, I wonder what the efficacy of this kind of small-scale change is without simultaneously change within institutions that play a much larger role in reproducing inequality, such as: the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a wide array of defunded state and federal social service programs, and the overarching style of neo-liberal governance that forces a kind of market-based zero-sum attitude into the non-profit sector. I would like to see future studies that focus more on how the neo-liberalization of non-profits directly impacts the communities they work with and how it shapes their opinions of the organizations.

A closer study of the use and role of narrative creation in the non-profit/NGO world might be an excellent vehicle to explore power dynamics further, as well as to track what social capital and cultural capitals are generated in the process, and who receives it.

Limitations

While many non-profits welcome researchers who they feel can and will advocate for the work they do, as well as offer critical insight into how to improve operations, interactions can be performative, and criticism can be taken personally. Previous scholars have reiterated that to see how non-profits work under pressure, you as a researcher must happen to be there during an extreme crisis. I happened to be at Re:Vision while the CSA urban farm program was failing. Presumably, the risk of exposure for the non-profit includes a potential

impact on their public perception, which drives their ability to attract up political support and funding. Without a witness, the risk of amnesia is high, and as time progresses organizational memories are cleansed and reconstituted. Past failures are polished and can become part of new narratives to attract funding.

While the results of this study speak to many of the environments practitioners of urban agriculture and related non-profits have to navigate and interact with, it is important to note that this is the study of one non-profit and is not representative. Understanding the limitations and obstacles to successful urban agriculture projects is essential because they require significant investments of land, money, and labor. With that said, barring a substantial change from funders and of how non-profits are managed, the responsibility for transparency is on non-profits. They often occupy a position of authority and mediate between their target communities and larger institutions that wield considerable influence and power.

What this speaks to is a need for more detailed and better reporting by non-profits on the financial health of their projects. Also, in the case of failed community projects, it would be helpful to have a publicly accessible report on their experiences. Beyond an academic interest, I see this as an issue of accountability for organizations who utilize large amounts of public funding, as well as an opportunity to learn from mistakes and share them with others who might avoid them in the future.

Finally, it is crucial to understand that because this research is based upon the observation of two urban farms during a specific point in time in a specific place, the applicability of this analysis is limited to current context and time in which this research took place.

Coming Full Circle

The purpose of this thesis has been to identify which factors contributed to the failure of Re:Vision's urban farm program in 2014, and of those factors, determine which were preventable. My findings reveal an organization that sold the idea of an urban farm that would revitalize the surrounding community with affordable produce, economic opportunities,

education, and an intercultural space to foster cross-cultural interaction. In reality, Re:Vision was more committed to creating a viable model of urban agriculture than in addressing the issues of food access, creating a cooperatively run farm, fostering community engagement, or utilizing the farms in an educational capacity. An analysis of this has revealed that the farm emphasized production numbers, but did not employ community members, or deliver a significant amount of food to the residents. Re:Vision's farm mission was misaligned from their management plan, and growing food for the target community was treated as secondary goal, while their promotional materials indicated it was the primary goal. Management faults aside, much of their struggles can be attributed to promising more than they could deliver on.

Although deconstructing a failed project is complicated, the results appear to be reasonably clear. Re:Vision has shifted away from the CSA model of food delivery, they have hired more administrative staff, their focus is now centrally focused on the Westwood Food Cooperative, and their website no longer includes any information that indicates a continued partnership with the Somali Bantu. Considering that larger institutions are beginning to look at urban agriculture as an adaptation to lessen the effects of climate change and to reduce the distance food travels, future researchers will have the opportunity to analyze the results of this research.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Form For Program Staff and Volunteers

Principal Investigator: Raymond Pang
Faculty Sponsor: Richard Clemmer-Smith
DU IRB Protocol #: 600801-2

You are being asked to be in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part.

Invitation to participate in a research study

You are invited to participate in a research study about the activities, and interactions that take place at Ubuntu Farm. With this information, I hope to gain a greater understanding of who benefits from the farm, what happens on the farm, and how Revision International creates bonds with the community through growing food.

Description of subject involvement

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in a focus group discussing the farm, and/or possibly an individual interview, following the focus group. In addition, conversations you have with researchers at the farm may be chosen for analysis, and/or use in a future publication, presentation, or academic discussion.

The focus groups will take about 1 Hour, while the personal interviews will vary from 30 minutes to 1 hour of length.

You reserve the right to stop your participation in the research at any time, as it is voluntary, and you may end participation without any penalty, or repercussion.

Possible risks and discomforts

The researchers have taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, you may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researchers are careful to avoid them. These risks may include the disclosure of sensitive statements or opinions stated by you regarding the research topic. However, all steps will be taken to remove information, which could be used to identify you, and reduce any risks to you as a participant. The study may include risks that are unknown at this time.

Possible benefits of the study

If you agree to take part in this study, there will be no direct benefit to you. However, information gathered in this study may reveal more about the relationship between a local non-profit and community participants, what motivates people to work on the farm, including but not limited to: individual, or group motivations. As a result, this research could help us understand how organizations can better serve their target communities, as well as integrate community voices into planning, and decision-making.

Study compensation

- You will not receive any monetary payment for being in the study, however you will be provided snacks and beverages for participating in the study focus groups.

Study cost

- You will be expected to pay for your own transportation, but focus group locations will be selected on basis of easy accessibility to the participants.

Confidentiality, Storage and future use of data

To keep your information safe, the researchers will store research data at a secure site, inaccessible from the field site.

- Your name will not be attached to any data, but a study number or pseudonym will be used instead.
- The data will be kept on a password-protected computer using special software that scrambles the information so that no one can read it.

The data you provide will be stored the researcher's primary computer, as well as an external hard-drive, in two separate locations.

The researchers will retain the research data for 3 years after the completion of their research.

The data will be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study and will not contain information that could identify you.

The results from the research may be shared at a meeting. The results from the research may be in published articles. Your individual identity will be kept private when information is presented or published.

Any audio recordings will be used for educational purposes, and original recordings will be destroyed after transcription. In the event, the researchers want to use any photographs or images, which could be used to identify you in any publication or presentation, the researchers will ask for your separate written permission.

Please be advised that although the researchers will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of focus groups prevents the researchers from guaranteeing confidentiality. The researchers would like to remind participants to respect the privacy of your fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.

Who will see my research information?

Although we will do everything we can to keep your records a secret, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Both the records that identify you and the consent form signed by you may be looked at by others.

- Federal agencies that monitor human subject research
- Human Subject Research Committee

All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Also, if you tell us something that makes us believe that you or others have been or may be physically harmed, we may report that information to the appropriate agencies.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early, the information or data you provided will be destroyed, if you desire.

Contact Information

The researcher carrying out this study is Raymond Pang. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may call Raymond Pang at 952-454-0042, or email him at Raypang3@gmail.com.

If the researchers cannot be reached, or if you would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) about; (1) questions, concerns or complaints regarding this study, (2) research participant rights, (3) research-related injuries, or (4) other human subjects issues, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or you may contact the Office for Research Compliance by emailing du-irb@du.edu, calling 303-871-4050 or in writing (University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121).

Agreement to be in this study

I have read this paper about the study or it was read to me. I understand the possible risks and benefits of this study. I know that being in this study is voluntary. I choose to be in this study: I will get a copy of this consent form.

Please [initial/check] in the appropriate boxes:

I agree to be audiotaped for research purposes.

Please initial this box if data from this research may be used for future research.

Please initial here and provide a valid email (or postal) address if you would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to you. _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

By continuing with this research, you are consenting to participate in this study.

Appendix B: Sample Interview Transcript

Principal Investigator: Raymond Pang
Faculty Sponsor: Richard Clemmer-Smith
DU IRB Protocol #: 600801-1

Sample Interview Transcript

Me: Hi interviewee #13, before we start, I am going to read through an informed consent form and go over what it means for you, and I will answer any questions you have before we start.

Int.13: Ok

Me: *[Read through Informed Consent form, and discuss what it means for their participation, and their freedom to stop the interview at any point. Reintroduce my project and its purpose to the interviewee as a short refresher]*

Potential Key interview Questions

1. So #13, how are you doing?
2. When did you start coming to the farm?
3. Have you farmed before?
4. (If an immigrant participant) How has your transition to Denver been? (Possibility for follow up questions, based on their response)
5. Why do you come to the farm, and what do you get from it? Do you gain new skills, meet new friends, enjoy the outdoors, etc?
6. Do you bring home any produce from the farm?
7. Do you feel like you have the ability to access foods (that are culturally appropriate) for a fair price?
8. Is there anything that you want to know more about on the farm?
9. What does food access mean to you?

These questions will lead to more in-depth questions, based on their answers, and will form the basis of where the conversation leads to, because this will be a semi-structured interview.

Some of my goals for these interviews includes: establishing the context in which volunteers participate on the farm, why they participate, what they feel is gained from it, and whether they perceive their daily farm activities as part of Revision's project in the community. The reason I want to know this is because I am interested in knowing the extent of interviewees' experience with growing plants, or farming, and what about the urban farm has drawn them there. I would like to know about the extent of their connection with Revision, because Revision portrays their work as a series of community partnerships, and I am interested in how participants identify their relationship with Revision, or the surrounding community.

Appendix C: List of Abbreviations

AFNs – Alternative Food Networks

CSA – Community Supported Agriculture

DUG – Denver Urban Gardens

HKHC – Healthy Kids Healthy Communities

NCCC – AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corp

NGOs – Non-Governmental Organizations

NPIC – Non-Profit Industrial Complex

SBFCC – Somali Bantu Farming Council of Colorado

UA – Urban Agriculture