PERMANENCE OF THE STRUGGLE: RACE, GENDER, AND ENVIRONMENTAL

JUSTICE IN GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA

by

ELLEN ANNA KOHL

(Under the Direction of Nikolas Heynen)

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I examine the socio-spatial processes which contribute to and maintain places of persistent environmental injustices. I argue that there are compounding political, social, economic, and geographic processes that work in conjunction with the fatal coupling of difference and power to create almost insurmountable barriers to remedy social and environmental injustices. They would be insurmountable except for the sheer tenacity of activists and residents who work tirelessly to make positive change in their communities. Through an integrated lens of Black feminist thought and theories on the racial state I draw on my empirical research to introduce factors that independently and in their interactions with one another, lay the groundwork for the persistence of places of environmental injustice. I argue that while nuanced details differ from place to place, the challenges faced by environmental justice communities fall into six interrelated and compounding categories: 1) urban planning, (2) regulatory processes, (3) scale of analysis, (4) the role of science, (5) political economy, and (6) cultural capital. I consider these processes in a historic-geographical context because without explicitly considering these histories and their relationship to difference and power, regulators and activists intentionally or unintentionally perpetuate the uneven development of

discriminatory processes. To do this, I rely on extensive participant observation, semi-structured

interviews and archival research with the Newtown Florist Club, a social and environmental

justice organization in Gainesville, Georgia, elected and career representatives of the City of

Gainesville, and representatives of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Southeastern

Division. I examine how through every day experiences and narratives, activists and

governmental officials contest or perpetuate persistent injustices. I also examine how activist use

storytelling as a way to reassert themselves on the physical and political landscape they feel

ignores their lived experiences. In this way, they use the stories of their lived experiences to not

only draw attention to individual environmental hazards, but also to the structural processes

which allow these injustices to exist, and persist, in the first place.

INDEX WORDS: Environmental Justice, Race and Racialization, Black Feminist Thought,

Environmental Policy, Urban Policy

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JUSTICE IN GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA

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DEDICATION

To the women of the Newtown Florist Club and to my family.

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THE PERSISTENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICES

Storytelling is a fundamental tool to integrate theoretical perspectives and lived experiences.

Stories help us to make sense of the world. They also bring attention to the multiple,

compounding socio-spatial influences that impact the daily lives of people living environmental

injustices. When people hear the story of the Newtown Florist Club (NFC), they often shake

their heads and express outrage or disbelief that after sixty years of activism this social and

environmental justice organization in Gainesville, Georgia in the Southeastern United States is

still fighting the same fight. Along the way, these women have had victories, but they still live

next to a scrap yard, they still live in the shadows of industry, and they still worry on a daily

basis how these conditions impact the health of the people living in their community.

The story of the Newtown community echoes the story of many communities devastated

by environmental injustice. It is also unique. It is the story of a community destroyed by a

tornado that was rebuilt on a landfill:

> The houses here were build in 1938. The tornado came through in 1936 and kind
> of whipped this whole community out. They built this community after the
> tornado, they built it on top of the landfill, we didn't know that until later (Faye
> Bush, field notes, August 26, 2010)

The story of Newtown is based on the memories of people who moved to the community as

young children, people who were born there, people who grew up there or raised their families

there, and the people who lived in the community, many of whom have moved away but still call

it home:

When I first moved to Newtown, I came here and I stayed with my sister Mozetta. Cause the school down where we lived went only to the 7th grade so I came here to stay with her to go to school. It was a dirt road, it wasn't paved you would have, there wasn't any porches, you had steps that you step up into the house. Didn't have hot water but you adjusted to it because everybody was living the same way. And then they paved the streets at that time, they had taken all the land . . . to make the sidewalks and all that. But this community was just like a family. (Faye Bush, interview with the author, April 27, 2012)

It is the story of the transition of farmland to industries, a story of fourteen polluting industries within a one mile radius of their homes, an active railroad line, and a junkyard that sits next to their homes:

Just growing up here in Newtown, there have been a lot of different things that have happened, when I was growing up here, I remember when, my family and I lived in a three bedroom house, my brothers, my two brothers and I and my mother. My mother worked at the poultry plant and during that time, you know, we go Ralston Purina was right across from where we lived and then we could walk around the corner to the row house just right around the corner and there was an open ditch that smelled of sewage all the time so there was no fresh air to breath in because the grain dust came from Ralston Purina constantly and then to walk around the corner, to not ever walk around the corner to just walk out the door and smell that smell was one of the things I remember well. (Rose Johnson, interview with author, September 8, 2012)

It is also the story of community:

I guess, my favorite story is when before they put the park there, we all used to play in Mrs. Wilkens yard, where the garden is now. Her house used to sit there and when I came to Gainesville, that's where everybody played in her yard, and she, and they come across town over there and I think back in those days, Ms. Ruby and I looked forward to having the 4th of July party down there. We would block off the street, have sack races, cooking in the park, and doing all those things and that was a big day for us, like celebrating this area, and kids came from all across town here to the activities and they just had a good time. (Faye Bush, interview with the author, April 27, 2012).

It is a story of loss, people who have died because of lupus, an autoimmune disease, and the same types of throat, mouth, and lung cancers:

One of my sisters Mozetta, one of her daughters came down with Lupus when she was 16, the doctor said she won't be able to live to get out of her teens and she died before she could get out of 16. Then she had a son who just finished high

school and his intention was to go onto college and do things like that, then he had the flu virus and they carried him to the hospital, they diagnosed him with Lupus, he lived for one year, then her husband had cancer, he worked at Purina Mill . . . but he worked there for years, and he came up with lung cancer, she had a tumor in her brain, so her family you know, she died about two years ago, so she was the last oldest member of the NFC. Faye Bush, field notes, August 26, 2010)

It is the story of a group of women who came together to make a difference:

Well the Newtown Florist Club has been around for years. It started out trying to help people, and that's what we've been about all along, trying to make it better in this community. And trying to help the youth and old peoples and just peoples in . . . just peoples because a lot of peoples here in Gainesville come to the Florist Club for help, regardless of what it is. They think that I guess that we move mountains but we can't even move the junkyard. [laughter] but we're open to whatever problem they come and we really try to help them as much as we can and as much as we know about it. (Faye Bush, interview with the author, April 27, 2012)

It is the story of their hopes and dreams for the future:

There is hope against hope for a new community, you know hoping against a hope for a new community, I am talking about the environs in the community because our community itself is beloved the people, you know, the relationships, that kind of things the environs around you know, I just wonder what it would be like to not have to look up and see a Ralston Purina or an image of the junkyard or hear the train coming down the track right behind the homes of the neighbors and I wouldn't ever trust drinking the water, I wouldn't and how that ends up feeling better, it's just one of those things (Rose Johnson, interview with author, September 8, 2012)

And, their story shows a determination that things will change:

I'm for one that believes that a change will come sooner or later. It may not be in my day, but I think if we keep it out there, the next generation will carry it on and make a change in this community. Because we shouldn't have to live like this, we were here first and everything came after. It's not like the companies were here and we moved in, we were here and the companies moved in. So peoples say why don't you all move or locate somewhere, but if you're going to locate me somewhere over there where we came with the trees, it'll be all right, but if you're going locate me back out here . . . if they were to come in and locate us, it wouldn't be over there it would be in this community somewhere. Faye Bush, field notes, August 26, 2010)

It is a story they tell often, for them, it is not just a story, but it is their story. The story of their lives, their families, their community, and their struggles. Their stories cannot be understood without examining the spirit, the strength, the resourcefulness and the resilience of the women who tell the stories. The women who despite, or maybe because of, the compounding oppressions they experience, continue to fight to improve their community.

The indignation that listeners feel upon hearing the NFC's story serves a purpose. It highlights the disconnect between our human, visceral reaction to injustice and the legal and regulatory framework which simultaneously creates and is supposed to remedy these injustices. It also raises the question: how do we address the social and environmental problems facing this community and other communities like this one across the United States and the world? Is there a solution? In this dissertation, I argue that the burden of proof placed on environmental justice communities is too high. They are asked to prove the impossible. They are unable to provide such proof due to how social geographies work in tandem with historical forces to create a system of injustice, which residents cannot break through despite layers of government regulation and years of activism. It is tempting to say that the barriers are insurmountable, but the continued activism and small victories of the women of the NFC prove otherwise. Their battle is an uphill battle, but it is also a battle they are determined to win.

The geography of Newtown, a historically African-American community, like every neighborhood in the United States, is dominated by historic land use decisions. Moreover, as is the case with most communities of color, Newtown bears the brunt of historical discriminatory zoning and land use planning decisions (Brand 2011; Fainstein 2010; Ritzdorf and Thomas 1997). The neighborhood was originally built on a landfill; there are fourteen polluting industries within a one-mile radius of the neighborhood; a scrap yard sits adjacent to the community and
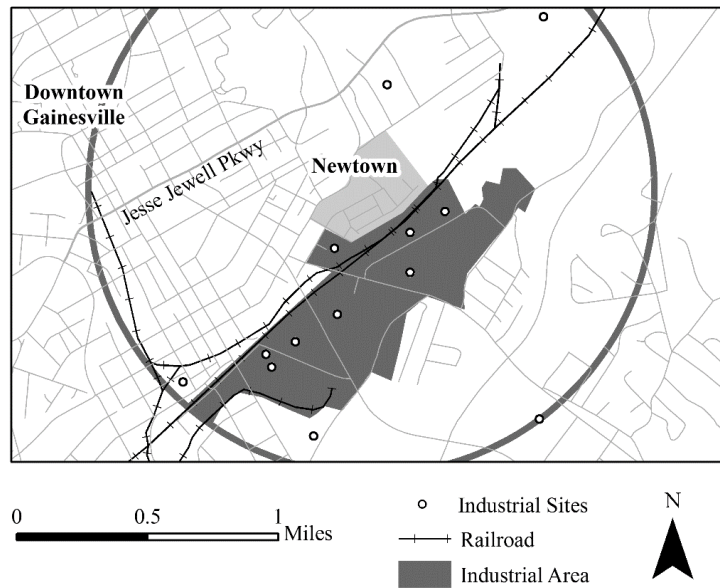
Figure 1.1: Location of the Newtown Neighborhood in relationship to surrounding industries

abuts people's homes; and an active CSX railroad line delineates the southern edge of the

community, separating them, just barely, from the heavy industry on the other side of the tracks

(see Figure 1.1). While their historical geography echoes that of other environmental justice

communities, like every environmental justice community, it is also unique. Their story is about

their lives; it is about the fiercely committed women who have fought to preserve the

community, and the ways they have strategically used stories to bring attention to their lived

experiences of environmental injustice.

Newtown's story is not only told by its residents, but is also written onto the landscape.

You experience the physical landscape with all your senses. To enter the neighborhood, you

watch the silos and billowing smoke stacks of Cargill's vast industrial complex (see Figure 1.2)

and trucks coming in and out of the scrap yard (see Figure 1.3). The smells of fermenting

soybeans from Cargill, grain from Ralston Purina (see Figure 1.4), and chicken refuse from

Fieldale Farms mix together and overwhelm your sense of smell when the wind is right, or

rather, not right. You might hear the pounding and crushing of scrap metal being torn apart, broken down, and loaded into trucks for transport at Blaze Recycling and Metal, the droning of the industrial processing of at Cargill and Ralston Purina or the deep rumbling and screeching whistle of a train running along the CSX railroad line (see Figure 1.5).[1] You can also pass up to three churches upon entering the neighborhood (see Figures 1.6, 1.7, and 1.8). The visual landscape therefore echoes the sounds, sights, tastes, and smells the Newtown community has come to understand - a landscape dominated by industrial carnage and faith in a renewed future.

The story of Newtown and the women of the NFC Club cannot be understood without also examining the stories of the environmental and urban regulators. These are the people who make the policy decisions that create, perpetuate, and challenge persistent injustices. They are often pulled in multiple, sometimes conflicting, directions - answering to different constituents, balancing economic, social, and political needs, and working within the regulatory framework granted to them by their governing body. In every environmental justice community, local, regional, state, tribal (if present), and federal governments play different roles in the community. Therefore their stories must be examined alongside the stories told by the activists and neighborhood residents. Often, stories that are told by those in power are not thought of as stories, but as fact or reality. By examining the stories and narratives of those in power, with specific attention to the role of intersectional identities, I simultaneously question the power relationships and contest processes of knowledge creation that legitimize some forms of knowledge production while delegitimizing other forms.

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[1] In August 2014 Blaze Recycling and Metals merged with Newell Recycling, LLC, to form Newell Recycling Southeast. The merger resulted in the largest full-service recycler in Georgia and one of the largest in the southeast. Despite this merger, throughout the dissertation, I refer to recycling facility located adjacent to Newtown as Blaze because it was owned and operated by Blaze Recycling and Metals through the courses of the data collection. At the time of writing, there were no changes in the operations at the junkyard since it came under the ownership of Newell Recycling Southeast.

Figure 1.2: View of Cargill from West Ridge Road

Figure 1.3: Blaze Scrap Iron and Metals

Figure 1.4: View of Purina from Purina Drive

Figure 1.5: View of CSX Rail line from Athens Street, Purina is in the background

Figure 1.6: Saint John Baptist Church

Figure 1.7 Antioch Baptist Church

Figure 1.8 Bethel A.M.E. Church

In Newtown, over the five years I worked with the women of the NFC, the City of Gainesville and representatives of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 who played an active role in engaging with the community's concerns. Therefore, throughout this dissertation, I interweave their stories with the stories of the members of the NFC in an effort to answer the question: **Why is it so difficult for environmental justice activists to make changes in their community?**

I examine the urban and environmental policies and processes that create and maintain places of persistent environmental injustice and the responses to these places by EPA, local government, and environmental justice activists. In this way, I ask, **what processes cause environmental inequality to develop and persist and what role do environmental justice**

activists, local regulators, and federal regulators play in maintaining and contesting these inequalities? To begin to address this question, I ask the following research questions:

- What socio-spatial processes contribute to the development and persistence of urban environmental injustices?
  - How do these processes impact and compound one another to reinforce and contest the socio-spatial processes that contribute to the development and persistence of environmental injustices?
- What role do local governmental officials and federal environmental regulators play in the development and persistence of environmental injustices?
  - How do they use storytelling to reinforce and contest the socio-spatial processes that contribute to the development and persistence of environmental injustices?
- What role do environmental justice activists play in the development and persistence of environmental injustices?
  - How do they use storytelling to reinforce and contest the socio-spatial processes that contribute to the development and persistence of environmental injustices?

To answer these questions, I examine the compounding socio-spatial and political processes that maintain these places. I argue that through a fatal coupling of difference and power (Gilmore 2002, Hall 1992) these communities are invisible on the political and physical landscape. Although environmental justice activists work tirelessly to reassert themselves on these landscapes, through stock stories and the delegitimization of activists' lived experiences, policy makers rely on existing precedents of burden of proof to dismiss activists' claims of injustice as unfounded, exaggerated, or out of their regulatory purview. While there are policy

makers who work to improve conditions in these places, they are often restricted in their actions by the regulatory framework within which they must operate.

In this chapter, I examine the processes that lead to places of persistent injustices. I situate this discussion within a broader discussion of urban development, white privilege, and the formation and perpetuation of the racial state, or a state structured around race in which race is a dominant, often invisible deciding factor (Goldberg 2002; Omi and Winant 2014). I introduce six factors that I argue, independently and in their fatal couplings with one another, lay the political, social, economic, and geographical groundwork for the development and maintenance of persistent injustices. Specifically, I examine the role of (1) urban planning, (2) regulatory processes, (3) scale of analysis, (4) the role of science, (5) political economy, and (6) cultural capital. In conclusion, I outline the remainder of this dissertation, providing a road map for the theoretical and empirical chapters of this project.

Urban Places as Places of Injustice

Urban places are not static, they are active, constantly being defined and redefined by people, buildings, landscapes, and the environment. Meaning is subscribed to place in how it is used and the social practices that constitute the place (Cresswell 2004). This use of place does not occur in a vacuum; instead, political, social, economic, and cultural processes that structure society also structure places that then reflect and reinforce social relations (Ducre 2006). These processes, rooted in history and place, are influenced by systems of power (Woods 2002). Regardless of the dominant discourse of a place, places are not seamless, coherent, and homogenous; instead, multiple identities and relationships between place and societal factors exist simultaneously (Massey 1994). To understand the relationship between urban places and injustice, I situate my discussion of urban places in the racial state.

Theories on the racial state take as a starting point the notion that processes of racialization play an integral role in the formation, disciplining, and ruling of modern states. In this way, "in states that are racially conceived, ordered, administered, and regulated, the racial state would be said to be everywhere. And simultaneously seen nowhere. It (invisibly) defines almost every relation, shapes all but every interaction, contours virtually all intercourse" (Goldberg 2002, 98). Regardless of the invisibility of race in structuring the state and the city, it plays an integral role in the lived experiences of all people. Race and racism are not stagnant processes, instead, they are a fluid, social construction. Race is contested and redefined through racial projects, which are the personal and societal actions that continually redefine racial formations, or the socio-cultural processes that create, inhabit, transform, and destroy racial categories (Omi and Winant 2014). While the racial state is often conceived of at the level of the nation-state, it has material ramifications in people's lives and the urban landscape. To understand the material consequences of the racial state, I draw on the theoretical notion of the fatal coupling of difference and power.

Stuart Hall (1992, 17) proposes that "what the work of cultural studies has to do is to mobilize everything that it can find in terms of intellectual resources in order to understand what keeps making the lives we live, and the societies we live in, profoundly and deeply antihumane in their capacity to live with difference." To do this, he argues that we must recognize and question the fatal coupling of difference and power, and the "terrifying internal fear of living with difference." Gilmore (2002) contextualizes the fatal couplings of difference and power geographically in the gendered racial state. She contends that

> Geographers should develop a research agenda that centers on race as a condition of existence and as a category of analysis, because the territoriality of power is a key to understanding racism. The political geography of race entails investigating space, place, and location as simultaneously shaped by gender, class, and scale.

> By centering attention on those most vulnerable to the fatal couplings of power and difference signified by *racism*, we will develop richer analyses of how it is that radical activism might most productively exploit crisis for liberatory ends. (Gilmore 2002, 22, italics in original)

In this way, Gilmore and Hall highlight the material consequences of injustice – it is fatal because peoples' lives are put at risk or ended prematurely because of the physical geographies of race. Considering difference and power, in tandem, facilitates an analysis that connects the ways that difference is created and used by those with power with the ways that those deemed "different" contest the accompanying injustices through a contestation of power and a redefinition of difference. Intersecting aspects of identity interact with power to create and maintain injustices. Activists do not sit idly by and watch these process occur, instead, they fervently work to contest and redefine their places in society.

For those living in environmental justice communities, their material reality is intertwined with the fatal coupling of difference and power:

> Well, I look at how one street really separates the peoples that live in the environment[2] and the peoples that don't. And I, the cost of low-income people lives here, they take advantage of them. Even though you try to fight for companies not to come but they can overrule you on it. And then some of our peoples, it's not so easy to fight back, 'cause if they work in one of those companies they know they would get fired. They try, they would stay there to try to you know be able to take care of their families. (Faye Bush, interview with author, April 7, 2012)

The circumstances that created the situation in the first place, the reality of what that means in their everyday life, and the challenges they face in overcoming the political, social, and economic barriers are intertwined with fear. Inequalities become so deeply embedded in people lives that they fear the ramifications of trying to make their lives better. In this way, the women of the NFC are not only working to address a single environmental issue, instead, by

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[2] Ms. Bush refers to the environment as a hazardous place filled with toxins and industries. For her, it is a place to be feared, a place that her community needs to be protected from.

acknowledge and challenging the fatal coupling of difference and power, they are also working

against the racial state and the conditions that enables these inequalities to exist in their

neighborhood in the first place.

Urban Landscapes

The landscapes of contemporary U.S. cities bear the imprint of layers and layers of

historical policies, urban planning decisions, and political economic development even though

the particularities vary depending on the city's age, size, geographic location, and myriad other

factors (Brand 2011; Fainstein 2010; McKittirck and Woods 2007; Ritzdorf and Thomas 1997;

Schein 2006, 2012).[3] These interconnected urban processes cannot be understood without

attention to how axes of difference and power are embedded, and become embedded, in the

landscape (Delaney 1998, 2002; Domash and Seager 2001; Fincher and Jacobs 1998; Hankins,

Cochrane, and Derickson 2012; Harvey 1996; Kobayashi and Peake 2000; Lai 2012; Lipsitz

2011; Massey 1994; McDowell 1999; McKittrick and Woods 2007; Neely and Samura 2011;

Pratt 1998, 1999; Schein 2006). While all axes of difference are important, I draw on feminist

and critical race scholarship to examine the intersections of race, class, and gender on urban

development.

The ubiquity of race and racialization on the U.S. urban landscape, throughout history,

necessitates a close reading of the processes of containment and social control to understand how

they impact the landscape and urban formation (Ducre 2006; McKittrick 2006; McKittrick and

Woods 2007; Schien 2006). Interrelated processes such as redlining, infrastructure development,

white flight, dis-investment, restrictive covenants, segregation, access to loans, cultural

exclusion, representation in the decision making process, and urban renewal are inscribed on the

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[3] These processes also work to create and define U.S. suburbs and rural spaces. My focus on urban processes does not negate the importance and interconnected of these places.

contemporary layout of U.S. cities from the top of the highest building to the bottom of the deepest sewer (Lai 2012; Lipsitz 2006, 2011; Massey and Denton 1993; Ritzdorf and Thomas 1997). These processes have material consequences, given that people "do not encounter racism in general or in abstract, they feel the effects of its particular expressions: poor housing, unemployment, repatriation, violence or aggressive indifference" (Gilroy 1991, 116). As Rose Johnson, a member of the NFC board and a lifelong social and environmental justice activist explains:

> Nobody has to tell me about environmental justice or racial violence or hate crimes or not being able to fully achieve a quality education because of you know racial attitudes, you know, don't need to read a book about it. Can read a book about it to enhance but you know those things just really don't ever go away and they become a part of the soul of who you are and influence you psyche and your world view and how you see things. (Interview with author, September 8, 2012).

While explicitly racist policies such as redlining and racial covenants are no longer legal, their legacies, reformulations, such as differential access to loans, and contemporary challenges, such as gentrification, dictate the contemporary urban landscape (Lipsitz 2006, 2011). Moreover, neighborhoods and places are relational, "the protection of privilege in one community . . . demands the concentration of poverty and pollution in another" (Barraclough 2009, 167). The historical-geographic context within which these processes occur is essential to consider. If historical legacies are not explicitly addressed and rectified, local governments and planners, perhaps unintentionally, perpetuate the uneven development of historic discriminatory processes. In this way, they perpetuate the status quo and reinforce spatial processes of the racial state and white privilege. The material consequences of these processes manifest themselves in the lived experiences of injustice and privilege.

Environmental justice activists, who often live the legacies of these racial pasts, are impeded by spatial inequalities compounded by social, economic, and political systems. While

environmental justice activists often focus on specific environmental concerns, through their

activism, they also intentionally or unintentionally combat the embedded racists, classist, and

patriarchal urban system. Environmental justice activists are therefore not only working to

create positive environmental change, but they are also fighting the policies, practices, and

processes that allowed these injustices to exist, and persist, in the first place. Race is not the only

axes of identity that influences people experiences, nor should racism be thought of as a single,

universal experience. Instead, the complexities of multiple experiences of racism, and how it

intersects with other forms of oppressions necessitates an acknowledgement of the multiple

systems and dynamics of discrimination and injustice.

Persistent Injustices

The specific policies and practices that create inequitable urban spaces vary spatially and

across time, but through a review of environmental justice and empirical research, I argue that

these processes fall into the following six interconnected and interrelated categories: (1) urban

planning, (2) regulatory processes, (3) scale of analysis, (4) the role of science, (5) political

economy, and (6) cultural capital. While there are overlaps between these factors, and they

influence each other, I start by considering them separately, and then consider how they work

together.

To do this, I examine each of the factors through the empirical case study laid out in the

dissertation. The legacy of land use planning and zoning decisions influences how contemporary

"race neutral" approaches to urban planning perpetuate the status quo of historically explicitly

racist planning decisions. Regulators also have to negotiate between differences in regulatory

authority, expectations, and limits. This is influenced by the role of identity politics in the

development and implementation of these processes. In communities, multiple conceptions of a

place can lead to alliances and misconceptions about place. At the same time, there can be an expectation from governmental officials of a unified African-American voice that denies individual experiences and goals within the African-American community. The micro scalar politics of place can further exacerbate those groups who do want to form alliances to meet common goals. Additionally, there is a disconnect between the lived experiences of injustice and scientific measures such as concentrations of air pollutants, noise decibel levels, or frequencies of specific health problems that limits the ability of environmental justice activists and environmental regulators to address community concerns that cannot be measured in these ways. These challenges are recognized by environmental regulators who try to work with communities while staying within their regulatory and scientific frameworks. These processes are influenced by money, power, and politics. In communities, these processes work together to create situations where local regulators can rely on the neutral discourse of economic progress to minimize the social and environmental ramifications of these processes. Finally, cultural conceptions of place by different people and the use of partnerships can be both a deterrent and an asset to environmental justice activists.

Throughout this dissertation, what becomes evident is that these factors do not work in isolation. They are interconnected and compound one another, making their impacts exponential, not additive. By examining these processes together, I argue that a clearer picture of why environmental injustices persist, despite over thirty years of activism, emerges. Moreover, when taken together, the role intersectional differences play in regulatory processes becomes evident. When historical wrongs are not addressed, the status quo is perpetuated, regardless of the intentions of contemporary decision makers. This in turn, works to maintain injustices, which are often the result of explicitly racist historic planning decisions. Furthermore, analyzing these

processes highlights a burden of proof that creates an almost insurmountable barrier to change in these communities. It would be a totally, not almost, insurmountable barrier but for the sheer tenacity of the activists fighting for change.

In instances of environmental justice, the burden of proof is on the community to prove that they are being impacted negatively by the surrounding industries; it is not the responsibility industry to prove that their manufacturing practices are safe. Communities are therefore tasked with the expensive and time consuming job of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that their health and quality of life are being impacted by a specific industry. This is exceedingly difficult to prove, particularly for communities that lack financial and scientific resources. Moreover, it is difficult to prove causation directly from an epistemological standpoint "such that companies will take fiscal responsibility for the health problems of a community. The technical nature of much of the chemical industry as well as the specialized expertise of the medical profession often serve as an obstacle to social action and reinforce feelings of powerlessness in the exposed communities" (Allen 2003, 127; Novotny 1998).

At the advent of the Environmental Justice Movement, there was hope that civil rights claims based on the constitutional principles of equal protection would provide legal recourse for environmental justice communities. Instead, these processes "have not been successful in transforming environmental decision making processes to take into account the social, political, and economic vulnerability of poor communities of color" (Cole and Foster 2001, 126). This is due in part to court rulings that "a government action that might have a discriminatory impact is not unconstitutional unless the decision maker had a discriminatory *intent,* which is very hard to prove" (Cole and Foster 2001, 126 italic in original). The legal recourse, which is not

necessarily always the best recourse for environmental justice communities, is then based on the accumulation of scientific evidence, which presents unique challenges.

For environmental justice communities, the fatal coupling of difference and power leads to a linguistic gap. Communities are not able to articulate the challenges they face in the language provided to them by current legal and regulatory frameworks (Spade 2013). In this context, these injustices become unexplainable to those in power who have the authority to make change through legal and regulatory processes. From a strictly legal and regulatory perspective, this renders the lived experiences of environmental justice communities inconsequential. By making their lived experiences invisible, elected officials, policy makers, and those not directly impacted by policy decisions do not have to acknowledge the injustices that environmental justice communities are facing. There is an overreliance on the mentality, "if you cannot prove they exist then they must not exist." This is not to say that environmental justice communities sit idly by and accept the illegibility of the injustices they face; instead, through social movements and multiple forms of protest they work to bring attention to the conditions in their communities (Barry 2012; Checker 2005; Ducre 2012; Spears 1998; Sze 2007). Their protests are an attempt to bridge this linguistic gap, to counter the unregulatability of their places by asserting their identity and breaking through the bonds of invisibility.

Structure of the Dissertation

To understand the role of the fatal coupling of difference in power in the maintenance and perpetuation of environmental injustices, I rely on the case study through which the empirical and theoretical contributions of this dissertation are explored – the activism of the NFC. In Chapter 2: Setting the Scene: Gainesville, Georgia and the NFC, I introduce the NFC, the City of Gainesville, and explain the pertinent interactions between the NFC, city officials,

and representatives of EPA Region 4. In Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework, I use Black feminist thought to ground abstract concepts of the racial state. By examining the lived experiences of the racial state, the role that individuals and regulators play in contesting and perpetuating these injustices becomes evident. One way that this is done is through storytelling. In Chapter 4: Research Designs, I outline the methodological framework and the methods used to collect and analyze the data in this dissertation. Specifically, I explain how I used everyday talk during participant observation to gather many of the stories upon which this dissertation is based. In Chapters 5-8 I outline the empirical data that answers the questions laid out in this chapter, highlighting the six compounding socio-spatial factors that lead to the development and perpetuation of environmental justice communities and how activists use storytelling as one method to contest these processes. In conclusion, I summarize the findings of this dissertation and engage with future questions and research projects that have arisen from this dissertation. I now turn your attention to the background on Gainesville, Newtown, and EPA Region 4 to situate the theoretical and empirical discussions of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

SETTING THE SCENE: GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA AND THE NEWTOWN FLORIST

CLUB

Gainesville, Georgia

The City of Gainesville is located in Hall County in Northeast Georgia, approximately fifty miles

northeast of Atlanta, Georgia's capital and largest city (see Figure 2.1). Gainesville was

incorporated in 1821 and became an industrial and transportation hub centered on the poultry

industry, earning it the nickname "the Poultry Capital of the World" (City of Gainesville 2009).

Furthermore, its location at the foothills of the North Georgia Mountains place Gainesville at a

crossroads physically, culturally, and economically between major metropolitan center and rural

communities. As a regional hub, the City of Gainesville provides resources for the more than

135,000 daytime population and the 35,000 permanent residents (Skylar, March 20, 2013,

interview with author). Like many small cities in the U.S., city officials must negotiate

competing interests from major economic players, in Gainesville's case manufacturing and

medical industries, city residents, and pressures from surrounding suburban and rural growth.

The City of Gainesville currently has approximately 35,500 residents, of which 39%

identify as White,[4] 15% as African-American, and irrespective of race, 42% identify as Hispanic

or Latino/a (2010 U.S. Census). Hall County (approximately 188,000 people) has similar

demographics, 62% identify as White, 8% as African-American, and irrespective of race, 27%

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[4] Due to the ways that demographic data is collected by the U.S. census, unless otherwise indicated, population statistics for Black and White populations indicate those who identify as non-Hispanic or Latino/a White and non-Hispanic or Latino/a Black. Latino/a populations are irrespective of race those who indicated their ethnicity as Hispanic. While there are clear problems with this system, it is based on the best available data.
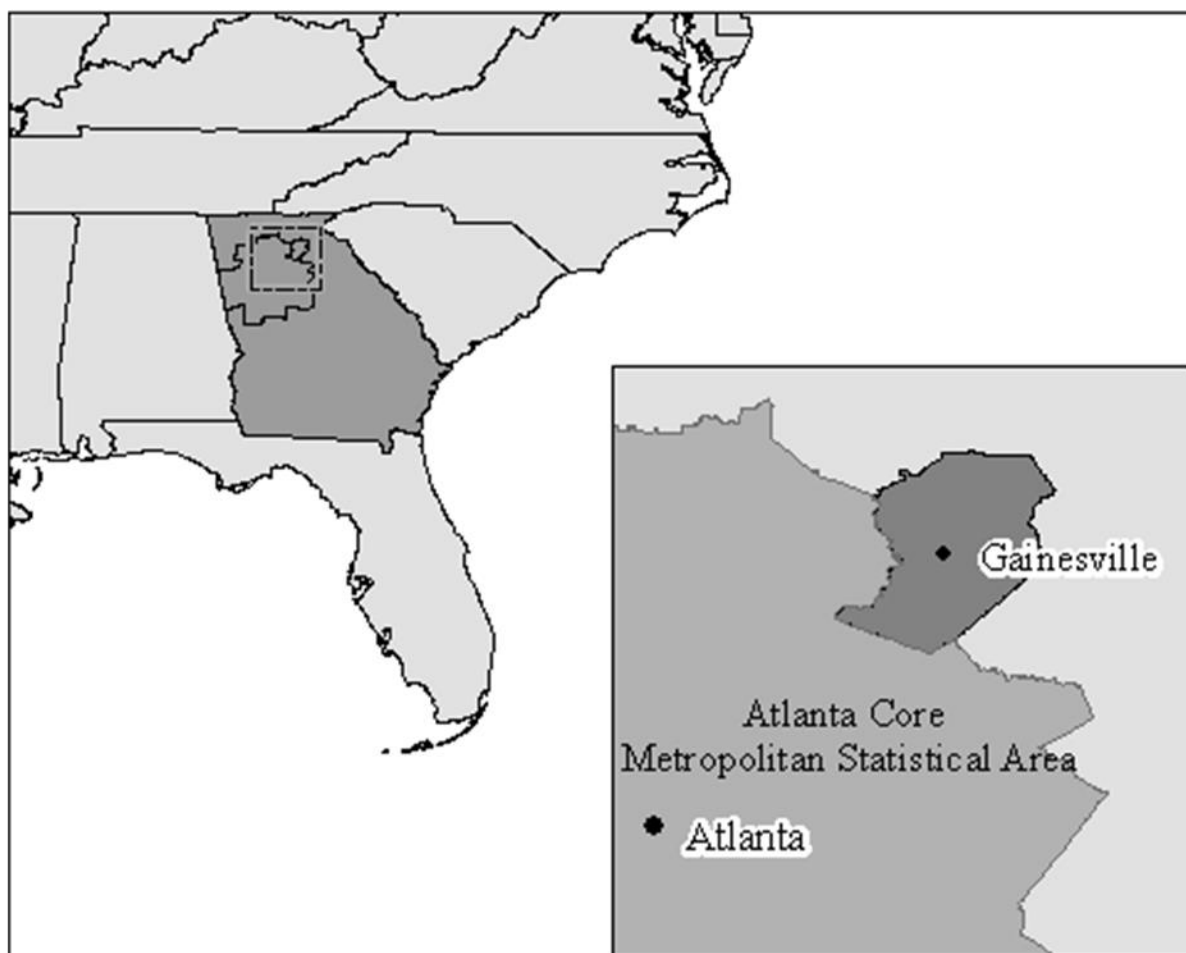
Figure 2.1: Location of Gainesville, Georgia

identify as Hispanic (2010 U.S. Census). The demographic make-up of Gainesville has changed

dramatically over the past twenty years. In the 1990s Gainesville became a destination in the

Southeastern U.S. for Latino/a immigrants. The Latino/a population is ten times greater in 2013

than it was in 1990[5] and is currently the largest ethnic group in the city and the second largest in

Hall County.

The City of Gainesville operates under a manager-council government. The city

manager, who is appointed by the City Council, is responsible for implanting the policies and

services as dictated by the City Council. The city manager oversees ten departments with over

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[5] The population of the City Gainesville has doubled in the same time period from 17,885 in 1990 to 35,533 in 2013. The Latino/a population increased from 1,416 in 1990 to 14,781 in 2013 (US Census)

650 employees in the day-to-day operations of the city. The City Council is made up of five council members, each representing a specific ward. Prior to 2013, council members served two year terms in the mayoral role on a rotating basis, but in 2013, the City transitioned to a directly elected mayor (www.gainesville.org). While each council member must reside in the ward they represent, Gainesville maintains an at-large voting system – all citizens of Gainesville vote on every council member race. The African-American community disputed this system, which has been shown to dilute the minority vote (Welch and Bledsoe 1988), through a lawsuit in 1990. Rose Johnson, a resident of Ward 3 and member of the NFC, ran against John Marrow for the Ward 3 City Council seat. She won a two-to-one majority in Ward 3, but was defeated city wide by a vote of 78 percent to 22 percent. Johnson and three others filed a voting rights suit to eliminate the at-large system and implement district elections. In August, 1994, the challenge was denied by Judge William O'Kelley (Spears 1998). It remains a point of consternation for African-American residents who feel that they are not adequately represented on the city council.

The geographic distribution of communities of color in Gainesville reflects the legacies of segregation. Although Gainesville is no longer officially segregated by law, long-term African-American residents identify Jesse Jewell Parkway, which runs east-to-west, as a *de facto* race and class demarcation line separating the predominately white, and wealthy North Side of Gainesville from the predominately low income communities of color that live on Gainesville's South Side (Johnson, Heynen, and Shepherd 2009). A 2005 report prepared for the city of Gainesville indicated that in 1999, 94.5% of Gainesville's total persons at or below the poverty level lived in census tracts 8, 10.01, and 11, all located on Gainesville's South Side (see Figure 2.2). The majority of the African-American population lived in census tract 8, (Newtown is located in census tract 8) and the majority of the Latino/a population lived in census tracts 10.01

and 11 (Weitz 2005). In Gainesville, industries are also disproportionately concentrated on the South Side (see Figure 2.3). A recent survey of proximity to environmental amenities, through proximity to parkland, and exposure to environmental harms, through proximity to TRI and carcinogenic-processing industries, determined that the lack of parkland in African-American communities in conjunction with the overrepresentation of harmful industrial exposure indicates "greater environmental risk for African Americans and to some extent Latino populations, vis-à-vis Whites. Both minority groups are overrepresented near industry and have a larger number of industries in their communities for virtually all industry classes" (Johnson-Gaither 2014, 14).
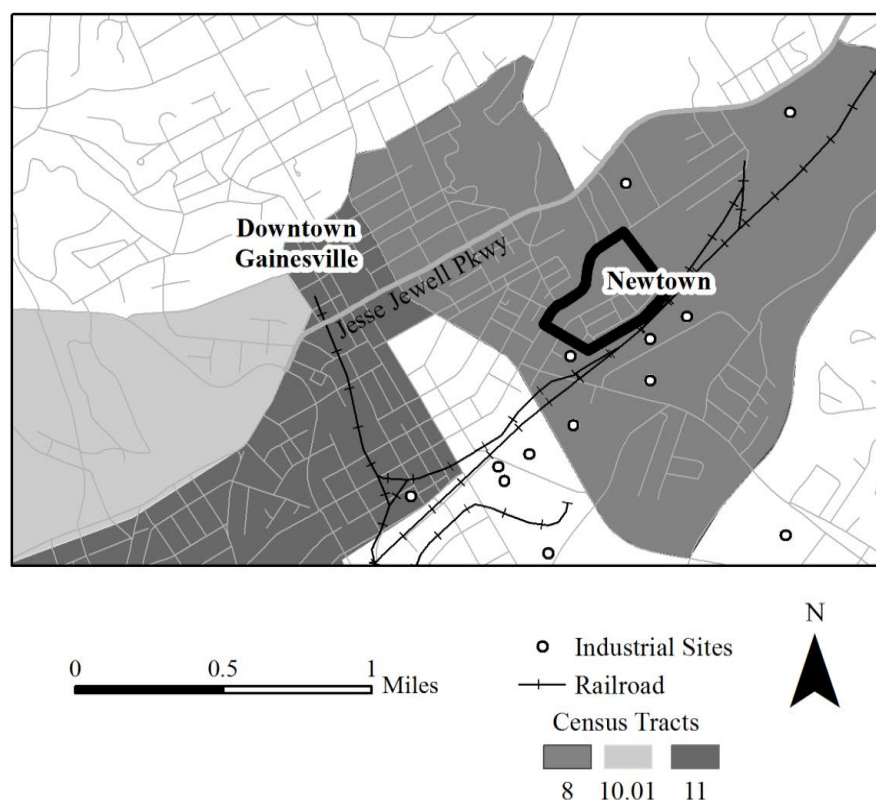
Figure 2.2: Census Tracts with concentrated poverty in Gainesville
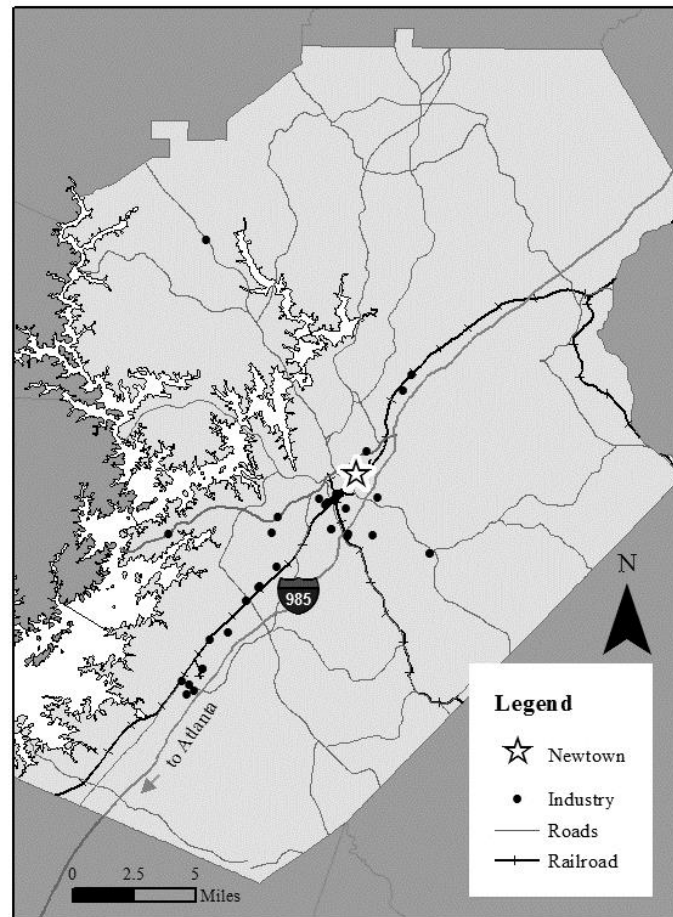
Figure 2.3: Location of Industries in Hall County

Newtown

The history of Newtown, a historically African-American neighborhood located just south of downtown Gainesville, is embedded in the race relations and racial formations of Gainesville. In 1936, a devastating tornado tore through Gainesville. The devastation was extensive, as a reporter from the Atlanta Constitution proclaimed "[p]ractically every downtown building was destroyed. More than 600 residents were swept away, not including those blasted out of the negro district. The negro section of the city was leveled by the blow. Hardly a home remained standing" (Farrell 1936). For some African-American residents, the tornado had a greater meaning. The deeply religious community elders had a strong sense that "the tornado

represented retributive justice for the city's racial sins . . . The tornado's unusual trail figures in a long told story, undocumented, that the twin twisters followed the route of a lynching, a path along which two black men accused of rape were dragged behind a wagon" (Spears 1998, 8). The debris from the destruction was placed in the municipal landfill, which was subsequently filled in. Soon after, the new African-American neighborhood, originally called New Town, but later shortened to Newtown, was built atop the landfill on the outskirts of town. The houses, built using federal Reconstruction Finance Corporations loans, were "28- by 22- feet, with a fireplace and cold running water," there were no indoor bathrooms, nor hot water (Spears 1998, 11). The four bedroom houses, sold by a non-profit organization, paled in comparison to the houses re-built for white families using federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation loans.

When Newtown was built, to the south of the neighborhood was rural farmland. In Newtown, the streets were unpaved and open sewers lined the streets. Community members remember playing on the unpaved streets digging for "treasures", old bottles, trinkets, and pieces of metal, relics from the landfill (field notes September 9 2011). In 1954, the Purina Mill was constructed just south of Newtown. In 1966, the Cargill Plant was constructed to the southwest of the neighborhood. In 1967 a junkyard was constructed adjacent to their homes (See Figure 2.4). By the 1970's, the area to the south of Newtown was transformed from rural farmland into an industrial zone.

Newtown has changed dramatically since its founding – the streets are paved, there are sidewalks throughout the community, open sewers are covered, indoor plumbing is installed, and all the houses have running water and electricity, but the neighborhood continues to face environmental hardships. The neighborhood encompasses ten blocks with approximately 143 households and 350 African-American residents (ATRDSR 2001, 2002). There are fourteen
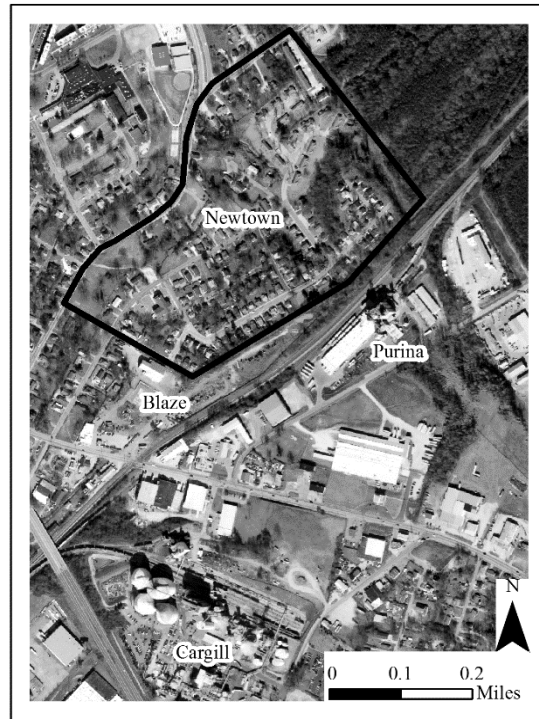
Figure 2.4: Location of Blaze, Purina, and Cargill in relationships to Newtown

polluting industries within a one-mile radius of Newtown, and the neighborhood directly borders

the active Norfolk Southern/CSX railroad track. A scrap metal recycling center, sits adjacent to

residential properties. Newtown residents contend that the concentrations of industries adjacent

to their neighborhood disrupt their quality of life and have caused disparate health impacts in

their community (Johnson, Heynen, Shepherd 2009; Spears 1998).

The scrap metal yard, Blaze Recycling and Metals (Blaze), which sits adjacent to the

properties that run along the Southside of the neighborhood poses the most immediate concern

for members of the community, especially the members of the NFC. The junkyard, or as the

industry prefers, the scrapyard[6], was established in 1967 by Carl Loef. In 1975, when Loef was

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[6] While the industry prefers the use of the term scrapyard, the majority of my research participants referred to Blaze
as a junkyard, therefore, throughout this dissertation, I too refer to Blaze as a junkyard.

planning on expanding Gainesville Scrap Iron and Metal, Newtown residents asked the city's Board of Zoning Appeals to reject the expansion request, but despite residents' concerns, the Board unanimously approved the request. Over the next twenty years, the junkyard continued to expand, each expansion contested by the neighborhood, and almost all expansions approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals (Fielding December 20, 2009). The NFC has actively been trying to get the junkyard moved from their community through legal and political processes for over thirty years. Despite their work, little has changed in respect to their noisy, dusty neighbor.

The Newtown Florist Club
Formation of the Newtown Florist Club

The NFC is an environmental and social justice organization that has been advocating for the Newtown community for over sixty years. The NFC "promotes youth development and organizes for social, economic, and environmental justice in Gainesville/Hall County, Georgia" (www.newtownfloristclub.org). The group, which is predominately made up of African-American women aged in their 60s and 70s, was formed in 1950 after neighborhood collections to provide flowers for a community member's funeral came up short. The women in the community formed a social club that collected dues, which at first were 10 cents per meeting. These dues used to purchase funeral flowers and support members of the community who were sick or caring for sick family members. In this way they formalized an existing informal system of care. When someone in the community died, club members served as flower bearers at the funeral, processing the flowers into the church dressed in black in the winter and white in the summer, with a red rose pinned to their lapels, to offer a sense of solidarity and support to the family that lost their loved one.

The NFC provided a space for the women of Newtown to come together, to support each other, and to socialize. Through these relationships, overtime, the women became advocates on

behalf of their community. The women who were involved with the NFC at the beginning who are still alive and actively participating in the organization identify the club's first involvement in activism when they organized community activities for neighborhood children, who were left out of the all-white afterschool activities.[7] In the 1960s, the women formed youth groups to offer after school and summer activities for the neighborhood children. Through the civil rights movement, they fought for equal treatment for their neighborhood, themselves, their families, and the African-American community in Gainesville. They lobbied the all-white city government for recreational facilities for African-American children, organized civil rights marches, fought for sidewalks, paved streets, and to eliminate poor housing conditions and outhouses, and hosted political meetings in their living rooms and around their kitchen tables (Spears 1998).

The Newtown Florist Club and the Environmental Justice Movement

By the 1970s, Newtown residents noticed visible, audible, and odorous daily impacts from the industries surrounding their neighborhood. Children who played outside would come inside covered in the fine, yellow-brown, dust that blanketed the neighborhood from the Purina Mills Factory. Refuse from the plant, mainly fermenting feed dust and decaying grain, was dumped into open sewers that ran through the neighborhood, creating an awful smell. In 1975, the NFC, with the assistance of Georgia Legal Aid, filed suit against Purina Mill for violations of the Georgia Water Quality Control Act. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) found Purina Mill in violation of the Act but it took over two years for changes to be made at the

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[7] The original members of the NFC were Ruby Wilkins, Mozetta Whelchel, Colean Castleberry, Elzora Davis, Ruth Cantrell, Annie Lou Ware, Amanda Keith, Geraldine Collins, Dora Harbin, Eloise Price, and Faye Bush. Faye Bush is the only original member of the NFC who was still alive and actively working with the club when I conducted my research. Her sister, Mozetta Whelchel was still living when I began working with the NFC but was no longer active in the club. Ms. Whelchel passed away in May 2010. Sarah Nash and Rose Johnson were also early participants in the club. Ms. Johnson is still active in the club. Ms. Nash passed away in January 2013, she was active in the club through 2012.

plant to address the concerns raised by the neighborhood (Spears 1998). While legal actions forced Purina Mills to clean up their operations, the neighborhood continued to notice daily impacts from the surrounding industries.

As the activism of the NFC expanded, they maintained their original mission of providing funeral flowers. They began to notice that many people in their neighborhood were dying of the same diseases, mainly throat, mouth, and lung cancer, and lupus. In 1990, they attended a meeting at a local church where they were introduced to the nascent environmental justice movement. It is at this point in their history that the women of the NFC identify as a turning point for them. Ms. Faye Bush, executive director and lifelong member of the NFC, points to this meeting as the moment when she first learned about the environment. They began making connections to the deaths in their neighborhood to the industry surrounding them. They came to identify not only as a community organization or a social justice organization, but also as an environmental justice organization.

Building on the 1982 protests in Warren County, North Carolina the environmental justice movement promotes the premises that everyone has "a basic right to live, work, play, go to school, and worship in a clean and healthy environment" (Bullard 2000, xiii). Even though discourse and activism surrounding environmental justice and environmental racism were popularized and incorporated into the mainstream in the 1990s, "[t]he struggle for environmental justice was not invented in the 1990s. People of color, individually and collectively, have waged a frontal assault against environmental injustices that predate the first Earth Day in 1970. Many of these struggles, however, were not framed as 'environmental' problems – rather they were seen as addressing 'social' problems" (Bullard 1993, 9; Taylor 2011). Regardless, the reframing

of "social" issues as "environmental" issues changes how the issues are presented, received, and interpreted, and impacts coalition building.

The environmental justice movement has its roots in the Civil Rights Movements, but also draws from the Anti-Toxic Movement, Native American struggles, the Labor Movement, and traditional or mainstream Environmental Movements (Cole and Foster 2001). As people became more aware of the connections between toxic pollution and health concerns, the organizing skills and strategies developed during the Civil Rights Movement were deployed to address the disproportionate distribution of toxic waste facilities in low income communities and communities of color.

Often, environmental justice "struggles emphasize justice, fairness and equity" (Bullard 1993, 7). While these notions are important, questions arise as to what equality would look like, and equality with whom. Shifting the rhetoric of EJ from a focus on justice, fairness, and equity to eliminating multiple forms of oppression and the processes of oppression recognizes the multi-faceted activism of those participating in the struggle for environmental justice because "[t]he focus of activists of color and their constituents reflects their life experiences of social, economic, and political disenfranchisement" (Bullard 1993, 7). By treating these processes of oppression not as discrete objects but as societal processes in space creates space to examine the structural causes of persistent injustices (Pulido 2000). This is necessary because "racism and sexism are not simply bodily or identity based; racism and sexism are also spatial acts and illustrate black women's geographic experiences and knowledges as they are made possible through domination" (McKittrick 2006, xviii).

As the environmental justice movement gained national attention, and the women of NFC became increasingly aware of this national discourse, they began to suspect that the industries

adjacent to their neighborhood were causing the health problems in their community. They

began to reframe themselves as an environmental justice organization, networking with the

larger environmental justice movement, and working to improve the environmental conditions in

their neighborhood.

Studying the Newtown Neighborhood

At the local level, NFC complained to city and state officials about the health problems in

their community, problems they attributed to the industries in their backyards. Their complaints

were often ignored. Eventually, NFC commissioned a number of studies to assess the health of

and the environmental impacts on the community due to adjacent industries. One study, carried

out by the Georgia Department of Human Resources, found higher than expected incidences of

mouth and throat cancer, but attributed the results to "lifestyle choices" (smoking and drinking),

not industrial exposure (McKinley and Williams 1990).

In 1995, the NFC petitioned the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

(ATSDR) to conduct a public health assessment due to their concerns that there were high levels

of cancer, lupus, and respiratory diseases in their community, which they believed where a result

of the industry that were adjacent to their homes. ATSDR concluded that surrounding industries

were "an indeterminable health hazard" based on a review of previous studies, three months of

air sampling at a higher elevation, adjacent to, not in the neighborhood and other cursory

environmental testing (ATSDR 2001, 2002; Roskie et al. 2008). An external review carried out

by an environmental consulting firm and researchers from the University of Georgia concluded

that methodological flaws and cursory data collection underrepresented health and environmental

impacts of industries on Newtown (Roskie et al. 2008).

For community members, the conclusions that there was no threat to human health from surrounding industries (2001/2002 ATSDR) was especially difficult as they watched their neighbors and loved ones die of the same diseases. The ATSDR report was particularly contentious for the women of the NFC. Not only did they feel their concerns were not being heard, but blame was being placed on them.[8] As Ms. Bush explains, "they said it was our lifestyle…. smoking and drinking. And a lot of the kids didn't even have a lifestyle, some of them died at an early age when they had lupus and that has been one of our hardest things to overcome because of what the state said back in those days" (field notes August 26, 2010). The ATSDR report has continued to be used as justification for state and local officials to not take action in Newtown because ATSDR concluded there was no problem in Newtown. In this way, local governmental officials delegitimize NFC's claims of environmental injustices, backing their assertions with "rational" and "scientific" claims. They re-frame the discussion in economic terms – stressing the necessity to balance the needs of the Newtown community with the needs of the industries, which are some of Gainesville's largest taxpayers and employers. Local governmental officials caution that a solution to the dispute between residents and the surrounding industries is one that requires them to balance the needs of residents and the industries (Fielding December 2009).

University professors and students, including myself, have also studied the Newtown community extensively. In some instances, researchers have briefly come into the community and collected data, in other instances, long-term relationships have been formed. Researchers

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[8] Although it was the 1990 Cancer Report that explicitly connected the cancer cluster in Newtown to lifestyle choices, since the 2001/2002 ATSDR report was a review of all past research, its conclusions, that there were no discernable public health threat, are often conflated with the conclusions of the other reports that it reviewed. The 2001/2002 ATSDR report has been taken as definitive for governmental officials and when it is referred to, it is often done in a way that combines the conclusions from prior reports into the conclusions of the 2001/2002 ATSDR report.

have sought to develop links between environmental contamination and disease in the

community (Spears 1998), have examined the role of religion and leadership (Perz 2002), have

studied to understand connections between environmental impact and perception (Johnson,

Heynen, and Shepherd 2009) and have preserved the community's oral history

(http://www.spelman.edu/_ezpost/data/22290.shtml; Spears 2008). Although Newtown has been

studied over and over again, community members, especially the women of NFC, do not feel as

if their concerns and experiences are being listened to, and if they are being listened to, they are

not being heard. They point to the disconnect between what researchers have found and their

lived experiences.

Collaborations

In 2007, the NFC formed a relationship with the lead attorney of the University of

Georgia's Land Use Clinic (LUC)[9]. A lawyer from GreenLaw, an environmental law firm

located in Atlanta, Georgia, contacted the LUC's managing lawyer to ask for assistance with the

Newtown case. The lawyer from GreenLaw felt there were issues regarding zoning and land use

in Newtown that she did not have the expertise to address but the LUC could address. As the

LUC's managing lawyer and her students became more involved with the NFC, she realized that

the scope of the problems went beyond her expertise. As a result, she began recruiting other

academics and professionals associated with the University of Georgia (UGA) and working in

the private sector in Atlanta to develop a team that could use complex problem solving

techniques to address the myriad concerns of the NFC.

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[9] The UGA Land Use Clinic, which began in 2002 and operated until 2012 was a clinical program of the UGA Law
School. It provided "innovative legal tools and strategies to help preserve land, water and scenic beauty while
promoting creation of communities responsive to human and environmental needs. The clinic provides tools and
research assistance to help local governments, state agencies, and non-profit organizations develop quality land use
and growth management policies and practices. The clinic also gives UGA law students an opportunity to develop
practical skills and provides them with knowledge of land use law and policy."
(http://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/landuse/)

The UGA team, for lack of a better name, focused on the main priority of the NFC, remedying the negative impacts of Blaze, which sits adjacent to the Newtown neighborhood.[10] The UGA team addressed the problem in a number of ways – first, they reviewed the research done on the community to determine if there were methodological flaws in the execution or conclusions from the studies. They also quantified material impacts of the junkyard on the community, specifically measuring noise and dust emissions in the neighborhood. Based on these results, new dust and noise ordinances were developed as potential additions to Gainesville's city code (Roskie et al. 2008). The UGA team presented this information to the Gainesville City Council and city manager in November 2008, but no changes were made to the city's ordinances as a result of this meeting.

The UGA team then turned their attention alternatives to address the concerns of the NFC. With the assistance of community development experts, they explored and attempted to facilitate a land swap, in which the City of Gainesville would provide a tract of land for Blaze Recycling to relocate on and in exchange, the city would take ownership of the tract of land where Blaze Recycling is currently located. The land swap was first proposed in 2009, the City of Gainesville had a follow up meeting with the chief officers and lawyers from Blaze, but as of now, the company has refused the land swap deal. The company claims that they like where they are located, are an asset to the community, and the neighborhood appreciates their presence. There is also speculation that they do not want to move because of infrastructure development

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[10] At the height of the UGA team's involvement with the NFC there were fifteen members including an environmental engineer, environmental toxicologist, lawyers (land use and environmental), geographers (human, research meteorologist, and climatologist), community economic development specialists, environmental sociologist, landscape architect, urban forester, and members of the NFC. Due to many factors, but primarily lack of funding and the managing attorney of the LUC's departure from UGA in 2012, the UGA remains loosely affiliated at this time but predominately inactive.

costs associated with moving as well as potential environmental contamination on their present site (interview with Author, March 27, 2013; field notes March 22, 2013).

To redress some of the specific concerns raised through the review of past research, the team's meteorologists and climatologists, Marshall Shepherd and Tom Mote, began to replicate some of the research done on the community in a more robust and participatory manner. Cassandra Johnson, an environmental sociologist with the U.S. Forest Service, conducted a community survey on perceptions of the environment (Johnson, Heynen, and Shepherd 2009). Nik Heynen worked with members of the NFC to discuss organizing strategies and worked with them to develop and implement a community garden. In addition to these projects, Heynen and I worked with the NFC leadership to develop a collaborative writing project with the goal of writing a book designed for activists and academics that highlighted the history of the NFC and used their best practices as tools for other environmental and social justice organizations and academics studying these issues.

In May 2011 members of the UGA team went to EPA Region 4 headquarters to present the Newtown case to Gwendolyn Keyes Fleming, the EPA Region 4 regional administrator at the time, and her staff. Fleming had become interested in the Newtown case after she was invited to be the keynote speaker at their Martin Luther King Day celebration in January 2011. After being taken on a toxic tour by Ms. Bush prior to the march, she pledged to see how EPA Region 4 could help the NFC address the environmental injustices facing their community. At the meeting, members of the UGA team and NFC leadership asked Fleming and her staff to intervene on behalf of the community and use their leverage as a federal agency to encourage Blaze to accept the land swap currently being offered to them by the City of Gainesville.

Instead, after two years of planning, EPA Region 4 carried out a collaborative problem solving training session in March 2013 (see Chapter 6).

The role of EPA and the City of Gainesville cannot only be understood in relationship to the policies they implement. In contrast, while there is an institutional culture at EPA region 4 and the City of Gainesville, these institutions are also made up of individuals. The individuals simultaneously structure and are structured by their respective institutions. Moreover, while the individuals often act as the representative of their organization, and therefore take on the characteristics of the organization, each individual also has their own lived experiences, which guide their actions within the organization. Tensions arise when their own lived experiences do not align with the institutional pressure placed on them, but there are creative ways that they work within the system to change their institutions to reflect their lived experiences.

The history of Gainesville and the NFC provide a context within which the interactions between these organizations can be examined in the context of the fatal couplings of difference and power. They also provide a background upon which to examine the contemporary interactions between the City of Gainesville, the NFC, and EPA Region 4. While their histories are unique, they also demonstrate similarities between other environmental justice communities across the country. These similarities help to connect the lived experiences of injustices, which when distributed geographically can often seem disconnected. The empirical case study also provides a scene upon which to analyze the political and social processes that work together to create these geographically separated but experientially connected processes. I now turn to a discussion on how using Black feminist theory to ground theories on the racial state can lend understanding to the perpetuation of environmental justice communities.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The production and maintenance of environmental justice communities result from the social, political, and economic processes that impact everyday lived experiences. To understand the connection between these processes, I integrate the theoretical frameworks of Black feminism and the theories about the constitution of the racial state. More explicitly, I use Black feminist thought to ground and better embody theories of the racial state, to contextualize how individuals are impacted by the racial state and how they engage with structural processes of discrimination and injustice. By situating this research in the context of the racial state and using Black feminist thought to situate these theories, I couple structural processes of oppression with the day-to-day experiences of those living these injustices. This combination animates the racial state and draws attention to the integration and interrelationship between the factors that develop and perpetuate injustices.

In this chapter, I highlight the three components of Black feminism most pertinent to my research: intersectionality, the production of knowledge, and the lived experience. Then I review Omi and Winant's (2014) and Goldberg's (2002) conceptions of the racial state in order to integrate Black feminism and the racial state. I then turn my attention to how using Black feminism and the racial state expands critical analyses of environmental injustices. In conclusion, I argue that integrating Black feminism and the racial state is one way to critically examine the processes that produce and perpetuate persistent injustices.

Black Feminism

Black feminist thought provides a framework to examine the complexity of the

interactions between environmental justice activists and environmental regulators. Activists'

multi-tiered response to combat the fatal couplings of injustices reflects the "structural,

disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power [that] work together to produce

particular patterns of domination" (Collins 2009, 218). I use intersectionality, the production of

knowledge, and lived experience to examine these complexities and how community members

contest and perpetuate these injustices.

Black feminism, like all manifestations of feminism, represents an array of political and

personal viewpoints.[11] Even with this diversity, Guy-Sheftall (1995) argues that all Black

feminists share five common understandings about the conditions of African-American women.

First, African-American women face a special form of oppression from racism, sexism, and

classism because of their racial and gender identities along with their limited access to economic

resources. Second, this "triple jeopardy" creates problems, needs, and concerns that are different

from those of White women and African-American men. Third, African-American women have

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[11] There is not just debate between those that choose to identify as Black feminists, but also between those who identify as Black feminist, womanists, or those who intentionally do not identify with either term. Womanist is a terms coined by Alice Walker in reaction to what was seen as a feminist movement dominated by the concerns of white women at the expense of women of color. Womanist is derived from a Southern African-American phrase, womanish, which "usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or *willful* behavior" (Walker 2004 ,xi). While in one of her four definitions of womanist, Walker defines a womanist as a Black feminist or feminist of color, she also sets the definition apart from feminism, specifically focusing on the survival of the entire people, and in her often quoted conclusion declares that "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender" (Walker 2004, xii). While some scholars argue that the terms have the same or similar meetings, others focus on their differences. Many Black nationalists have embraced the terms womanist in direct opposition to what they see as an inherently racist white feminist movement. On the other hand, those that concentrate on Walker's notion of Black women as universalists and emphasize integration/assimilation. Finally there are those that straddle the two extremes and advocate for a pluralism (Collins 1996). Collins (1996) argues that there is no term that adequately encompasses those that call themselves womanist and black feminists. She argues for an approach that goes "beyond naming by applying main ideas contributed by both womanists and black feminist to the over-arching issue of analyzing the centrality of gender in shaping a range of relationships within African-American communities" (Collins 1996, 15). Throughout this dissertation I use the term Black feminism or Black feminist thought because it best reflects the views of the scholars I draw upon, but I also recognize the influence and importance of womanist contributions.

to work towards both gender and racial equality, and fourth, there is no inherent contradiction in this simultaneous struggle nor in the struggle to end other forms of oppression. Finally, the commitment to the liberation of African-Americans and women (and specifically to African-American women) is rooted in their lived experience.

These characteristics arise from a shared recognition of the long and diverse history of Black oppression upon which Black feminist theories and movements are based. In *The Black Feminist Manifesto,* the members of the Combahee River Collective (1995[1977], 235) contend that "[c]ontemporary black feminism is the outgrowth of countless generations of personal sacrifice, militancy, and work by our mothers and sisters." Recognizing the historical contributions and achievements of African-American women reinstates them in broader discourses of white feminist theory *and* the histories of Black liberation, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Power Movement, narratives from which they are often excluded. Despite this historical exclusion, since the 1800s, African-American women have been doing the work of feminists –working to end of all forms of oppression (Guy-Sheftall 1995; hooks 2000; Hull, Scott, and Smith 1982; James, Foster, and Guy-Sheftall 2009; James and Sharpley-Whiting 2000; Smith 2000).

Scholars often identify the beginning of the Women's Rights Movement as the moment when women took an active role in the abolitionist movement, but Black feminists argue that for African-American women, it began with slavery itself through everyday forms of resistance, resilience, and survival (Guy-Sheftall 1995). Through the 1800s, African-American women such as Maria Miller Stewart, Sojourner Truth, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper spoke out against the evils of slavery and in favor of the rights of *all* women. In 1892, Anna Julia Cooper published the first book length Black feminist text *A Voice from the South: By a Women from the*

South. In the book, she argues that African-American women have a unique position in society, they do not only have to deal with racial oppression, but also oppression due to their status as women, and they are therefore excluded in the categories based on race and on gender. African-American women, such as Cooper, Julia A. J. Foote, Gertrude Bustill Mossell, Mary Church Terrell, and Ida Wells-Barnett worked for racial and gender equality and through their speeches and writing challenged "Victorian notions of true womanhood and rigid racial categories" (James and Sharpley-Whiting 2000, 2).

In the 1960s and 1970s "[e]ven if the words 'black feminism' were rarely used, questions and debates about black women's sexuality, the intersection of race and sex, and the nature of black women's political, economic, and social roles were certainly not in short supply" (James and Sharpley-Whiting 2000, 3-4). Activists, scholars, and writers emerged through the Feminist Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Power Movement. Many expressed discontent with the racism in the Feminist Movement and sexism in the Civil Rights and Black Liberation Movements. Black feminist and other African-American women activists believed that multiple forms of oppression needed to be addressed simultaneously because "[i]f black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression" (The Combahee River Collective 1995[1977]).

Contemporary Black feminism brings together theoretical discussions of power and oppression with the knowledge African-American women develop through their struggle for survival and liberation while living under multiple forms of oppression. "By embracing a paradigm of intersecting oppression of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation, as well as African-American women's individual and collective agency within them, Black feminist

thought reconceptualizes the social relations of domination and resistance" (Collins 2009, 291).

Collins (1998, 198-199) identifies three questions that form the basis of Black feminist

epistemology, "First, does this social theory speak the truth to people about the reality of their

lives? . . . [Second] does this social theory equip people to resist oppression? Is this social theory

functional as a tool for social change? . . . Finally, does this critical social theory move people to

struggle?" In this way, Collins emphasizes self-definition, self-valuation, and self-reliance in

developing Black feminist thought as a tool to fight against the multiple forms of oppression.

There are facets of Black feminism through which to examine environmental justice

communities: (1) intersectionality, (2) forms of knowledge, and (3) lived experiences. The

remainder of this section is dedicated to a discussion of these three elements. Before I proceed, I

acknowledge that for many Black feminists, "[l]iving life as an African American women is a

necessary prerequisite for producing black feminist thought because within black women's

communities thought is validated and produced with reference to a particular set of historical,

material, and epistemological conditions" (2000 [1989], 196). Collins (2000 [1989], 206-7),

goes on to add that "Black men, white women, and members of other race, class, and gender

groups should be encouraged to interpret, teach, and critique the black feminist thought produced

by African American women." In this spirit, I draw upon, interpret, and engage with Black

feminist thought, but I do not see myself as producing Black feminist thought.

Multiple Jeopardies/Intersectionality

In *A Voice from the South: By a Women from the South* Anna Julia Cooper (1988)

discusses the importance of race and gender in African-American women's lives. Writing in

1892, she contends that "The colored woman of to-day occupies, one may say, a unique position

in their country. In a period of itself transitional and unsettled, her status seems one of the least

ascertainable and definitive of all forces, which make for our civilization. She is confronted by both a women question and a race problem, and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both" (Cooper 45, 1995 [1892]). This recognition of a "race problem" and a "women question" is the first written account of what Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), drawing on a long history of African-American women writers and activists, termed intersectionality.

Intersectionality is an "analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape Black women's experiences and, in turn, are shaped by Black women" (Collins 2009, 320). Elise Johnson McDougald (1995[1925]), a journalist and teacher, wrote about what she called the double burden of African-American women – racism and sexism. For her, the double burden created specific challenges for African-American women, as they were subject to pressure both from outside and from within their group**.** In 1970, Frances Beale (1995[1970]), a journalist and civil rights activist, named African-American women's double burden a double jeopardy. Deborah K. King (1995[1988]) expanded this notion to include multiple jeopardies. She argued that the multiple oppressions experienced by African-American women were not additive, instead, they were multiplicative – you could not deal with one and not the others. Pauli Murray (1995 [1970], 186), poignantly articulated the unique experiences of African-American women in her discussion of Jane Crow:

> Jane Crow refers to the entire range of assumptions, attitudes, stereotypes, customs, and arrangements that have robbed women of a positive self-concept and prevented them from participating fully in society as equals with men. Traditionally, racism and sexism in the United States have shared some common origins, displayed similar manifestations, reinforced one another, and are so deeply intertwined in the country's institutions that the successful outcome of the struggle against racism will depend in large part upon the simultaneous elimination of all discrimination based upon sex.

Just in using the term Jane Crow, in contrast to the commonly used Jim Crow, Murray brings attention to the lived experience of women of color who have to contend not only with the racial ramifications of Jim Crow, but simultaneously with the gendered and racial ramifications of Jane Crow. This is further compounded by other forms of oppression that impact women of color's lived experiences. Living under this *matrix of domination,* which Collins (2009, 246) defines as the "overall social organization within which intersecting oppressions originate, develop, and are contained," shapes Black women's lives and influences how they make sense of the world. Attention to African-American women's lived experiences through the matrix of domination is necessary in understanding the production of knowledge by and about them.

Crenshaw (1989, 1991) developed the theories of intersectionality within a legal framework to address the experiences of African-American women, whose compounding experiences as both African-Americans and women were undermined when taken through a gender or a racial perspective. Intersectionality addresses the concerns "that projects aimed at conceptualizing and remedying racial or gender subordination through a single vector end up implicitly positioning the subject of that subordination as universally male in the case of a single-axis antiracist analysis, or as universally white, in the case of single-axis feminist analysis" (Spade 2013, 1031). Intersectionality is not just an exhaustive list of social categories, instead, it integrates the production and compounding nature of multiple identities in a way that helps "invent and inhabit identities that register the effects of differentiated and uneven power, permitting them to envision and enact new social relations grounded in multiple axes of intersecting, situating knowledge." (Chun, Lipsitz, and Shin 2013, 917).

Intersectionality has been critiqued as narrowly focusing on the experiences of women of color by solely integrating race and gender, but as research that utilizes intersectionality as a

framework or as a method demonstrate, identities can be analyzed in many ways. Factors such as racism, sexism, imperialism, class exploitation, language discrimination, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, age, and ability have be considered (Carbado 2013; Chun, Lipsitz and Shin 2013; Collins 2009). Moreover, while intersectionality has theoretical value, it is difficult to operationalize because it is not possible to focus on all aspects of identity in all settings and situations. Therefore, as the researcher, it is necessary to make decisions on what to focus on. These choices reflect the specifics of the case study, but as Carbado (2013) contends in his advancement of his theory of color blind intersectionality, or the ways that whiteness produces categories but is invisible or unarticulated in the process, the choices of what axes of difference you chose and exclude have analytical consequences because "framing whiteness outside intersectionality legitimizes a broader epistemic universe in which the racial presence, racial difference, and racial particularity of white people travel invisibly and undisturbed as race-neutral phenomena over and against the racial presence, racial difference, and racial particularity of people of color" (Carbado 2013, 823-24). It is therefore necessary to pay analytical attention not only to the ways that intersecting identities impact communities of color, but also the ways that invisible or unacknowledged aspects of identities, such as whiteness contribute to the matrix of domination.

Knowledge

Implicit in discussions of knowledge production are questions of who has the "authority" to create and validate knowledge and what does and does not count as theory. In the U.S. "a scholar making a knowledge claim typically must convince a scholarly community controlled by elite White avowedly heterosexual men holding U.S. citizenship that a given claim is justified" (Collins 2009, 271). This is reflected in the language used to produce theory, how theory is represented, who has the ability to create theory and how theory is perceived. The language used

to express theory often excludes people from processes of knowledge production because "Highly abstract theory written in language deemed theoretical and drawing upon the work of already known Northern-centric theorists garner authority of theory but exclude those outside the circuits of reproduction of such theoretical knowledges" (Raghuram and Madge 2008: 222). By incorporating other forms of knowledge, scholars can disrupt these exclusionary practices of knowledge production, expand what counts as knowledge and how knowledge is produced.

Collins (2009) identifies two interconnected forms of knowledge: everyday, commonplace knowledge and specialized, expert knowledge that she argues exist together and therefore should be considered together. Just as in academic settings, in regulatory and legal frameworks, power structures legitimatize specialized, expert knowledge and delegitimize counter narratives as folk wisdom and raw experiences. (Allen 2003; Checker 2005; Collins 1998; Corburn 2005; Spears 2004; Sze 2007). I legitimize lived experience as common sense knowledge and argue it should be considered alongside specialist knowledge. This does not detract from the importance of specialized knowledge; instead, it offers a counterbalance and question the limitations of regulatory and legal frameworks based solely on expert knowledge.

The production of knowledge and what counts as knowledge are just two of the concerns of Black feminists. The third is what to do with the knowledge once it is produced. Collins (2009, 35) argues that "knowledge for knowledge's sake is not enough – Black feminist thought must both be tied to Black women's lived experiences and aim to better those experiences in some fashion." This element of praxis – of not just creating, but implementing and making change through theory, guides Black feminists' work. This is not to say that theory is not important, instead, as hooks (2000, 114) argues, both theory and practice "are important and absolutely necessary for envisioning and making a successful feminist movement, one that will

mobilize groups of people to transform society" (hooks 2000, 114). I integrate theory and praxis by giving analytical significance to the lived experiences of African-American women.

Lived Experience

Analytical attention to the lived experiences of African-American women provides one avenue through which everyday and commonplace knowledge is incorporated into research and theory. This provides a framework to examine how fatal couplings of difference and power are experienced by people, and what it means for a person to live in a community devastated by environmental injustices. hooks (2000, 16) argues that for her as an African-American woman, and in research on lives of African-American women African-American women have "no institutionalized 'other' that we may discriminate against, exploit, or oppress," therefore, their lived experiences often "directly challenges the prevailing classist, sexist, racist social structure and its concomitant ideology." In this way, African-American women's experiences not only impact their worldview, but they also experience and interpret a different reality than the dominant groups (Collins 2000 [1989]). By explicitly privileging African-American women's lived experiences as a legitimate form of knowledge, different tellings and narratives arise questioning dominant narratives.

Attention to individuals' lived experiences highlights how the interactions between power structures and individuals create, perpetuate, and contest these structures. Not only do intersecting oppressions impact people's lives but also they also influence the ways that people can and do contest these processes. It is through their stories of opposition, not just reflected in traditional forms of protest and political engagement, but in everyday forms of resistance that the strength and resilience of communities emerges. These processes occur within the context of the

racial state, it is with this in mind, that I turn to a discussion of the racial state as a framework to illuminate how persistent injustices impact the lived experiences of African-American women.

The Racial State

Race forms, disciplines, and rules the modern state (Goldberg 2002). Through racial projects places of persistent injustice are created and maintained. Environmental justice activists live, work, and play within the racial state. They feel the role the (racial) state plays in their oppression, even though they may not articulate it as the racial state. While their activism often focuses on their immediate concerns of the health and welfare of their community, they are often not able to make substantial change in their communities until they address broader processes oppression. The theoretical lens of the racial state contextualizes how processes of race, racism, and power impact the experiences of activists who live in environmental justice communities.

Goldberg (2002) contends there are two historical constructions of race: historicism and naturalism, each with a different legacy. Through historicism, which attributes racial differences to historical process, and naturalism, which attributes racial differences to natural processes/phenomena, "starting in the sixteenth century racial thinking and racist articulation became increasingly normalized and naturalized throughout modern European societies and their spheres of influence. Race was rendered integral to the emergence, proliferations, and reproductions of world systems" (Goldberg 2002, 4). An emphasis on homogenizing nation-states as a form of control, led to an increased racialization within legal and social practices to erase differences and marginalize those that were considered "different." According to Goldberg, all (modern) states are racial states; therefore contemporary constructions of race rely on these histories and are perpetuated by the racial state.

Goldberg contributes to state theory by problematizing the racial categories of the state. The "theoretical literature on state formation is virtually silent about the racial dimensions of the modern state. And the theoretical literature on race and racism . . . until very recently has largely been avoided in any comprehensive fashion the implication of the state in racial formation and racist exclusion" (Goldberg 2002, 2). Goldberg's direct engagement with the impacts of race on the formation and perpetuation of the state emphasizes that regardless of it being explicitly acknowledged or not, race embodies the state. Further, by making race the central focus of state formation, Goldberg (2002, 246-7) argues that "the sociocultural embeddedness of race – its forms and contents, modes and effects of routinization and penetration into state formation and order – has been basic to fashioning the personality of the modern state. Race has shaped modern social character as both a state of existence and forms of rule" (Goldberg 2002, 246-7). He advocates for people to not consider what the system would look like if race had not been the main organizing factor in state formation, but instead to consider what possibilities exist in the future to eliminate the role of race within the state without resorting to current notions of racelessness, which he contends exacerbates the racial state. Still Goldberg's theory on the racial state remains abstract and difficult to translate into everyday lived experiences.

Omi and Winant's (2014) articulation of the racial state offer a slightly more grounded engagement with the racial state. They start with the premise that there has always been a racial system in the U.S. and that all "major institutions and social relationships of U.S. society–law, political organizations, economic relationships, religion, cultural life, residential patterns–have been structured from the beginning by this system" (Omi and Winant 2014, 140). For them, there has always been a historical concern with the politics of race through exclusion and repression. Through racial conflicts the state is "penetrated and structured by the very interests

whose conflicts it seeks to stabilize and control" and persists at every level of society (Omi and Winant 2014, 148). Understandings of race are never static, instead, racial formations are embedded within legal and government systems and shape our understandings of race. Through racial projects contemporary manifestations of the racial state are negotiated and changed.

Importantly, Omi and Winant acknowledge the role racial minorities play in developing their own conceptions of racial identity. Even when the state was the most racially oppressive, it did not maintain complete control over racial meanings; instead, through music, stories, traditions, religion, and family ties, oppressed groups simultaneously formed identities and resisted state oppression. In this way, culture became a form of resistance to counter the invisibility imposed on people of color by the state. The development of oppositional cultures coincided with racial minorities either moving outward, towards the margins of society, or inward, within oneself, one's family, or ones community.

While similarities exist between the theorization of the racial state by Goldberg and Omi and Winant, Goldberg's emphasis on the structural embeddedness of race, and Omi and Winant's emphasis on racial formations and the role of social movements highlight differences in their approaches. Goldberg contends that while Omi and Winant's engagement with the racial state "is helpful in posing the problem, in drawing attention to the central implication of the state in racial definition and management, and in *outlining* a theory about how the state assumes racially conceived and racially expressive projects. The structure of their proposed theory nonetheless presumes a conceptual discreteness about the state and race" (Goldberg 2002, 3-4, italics in original). Unlike Omi and Winant, who do not address how race was developed in relationship to the state, beyond arguing the race in its contemporary inception emerged with the colonialization of the Americans, Goldberg develops a historical co-articulation of race and the

state. Within this co-articulation, it is not possible to consider the state without considering the role of race or to consider race without considering the role of the state. In this way, the fatal coupling of difference and power becomes embedded within the state, not just a result of state actions.

Even though Omi and Winant (2014, 108) recognize that the "master category of race profoundly shaped gender oppression" they argue that race's role is unique, and that "race has become the *template* of both difference and inequality" (Omi and Winant 2014, 106). Kandaswamy (2012, 24), writing before Omi and Winant's third edition of Racial Formations came out, critiques their theoretical framework for neglecting the interrelated processes that connect the historical production of race and gender.[12] She argues that "racial formation is fundamentally a gendered and sexualized processes" (Kandaswamy 2012, 24). Furthermore, she asserts that integrating notions of intersectionality with the racial project itself and the relationship between the state and social movements provides an avenue through which scholars can further analyze the historical embeddedness of race, gender, sexuality, and class. Recognizing the central role of gender in processes of racialization, forces attention onto the ways that women of color's bodies have been viewed, conceived of, and developed throughout history. By recognizing the processes that produce what Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2002) has referred to as the "gendered racial state" highlights the often invisible role of race in gender formations and gender in racial formations.

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[12] In the third edition of *Racial Formation in the United States,* Omi and Winant (2014) expand their engagement with gender and intersectionality. They have removed the sections of the book that Kandaswamy directly critiques, namely the sections that draw on second wave feminism to argue that gender is grounded biologically while race is not. Even with the more sophisticated engagement with gender, I contend that Kandaswamy's (2012, 30) main arguments, that Omi and Winant's framework "presumes that race and racial politics evolve in isolation from other axes of power and difference" is still salient.

Cazenave (2011) offers a third engagement with the racial state. He situates conceptions of the racial state in the urban context through his definition of the Urban Racial State (URS), or the "political structure and processes of a city and its suburbs that manage race relations in ways that foster and sustain both its own immediate political interests and, ultimately, white racial supremacy" (Cazenave 2011, xi). He identifies three forms of URS - (1) "racially oblivious URS," the most prevalent manifestation of the URS, ignores the plight of the racially oppressed, they are blind to systematic racism and oblivious for the need to change; (2) "racially ameliorative URS," which change racial policies and practices to ameliorate the conditions or extend services to those at the racial bottom; and, (3) "racially oppressive URS," which crack down strongly on racial insurgency. Cazenave's focus on the urban racial state offers one example of how abstract theories of the racial state can be grounded to address the impacts of the racial state at the local level. When taken in conjunction with Omi and Winant's and Goldberg's theories on the racial state the oblivious urban racial state provides an analytical lens to examine the role of urban development and urban policy decisions in the development and perpetuation of environmental justice communities.

There has been little work done that has explicitly situated environmental justice research within the context of the racial state. Kurtz (2009) contends that incorporating the racial state into environmental justice research would develop a deeper analysis of how the state fosters and responds to conditions of racialized environmental justice. While she acknowledges that environmental justice scholars implicitly acknowledge the interrelatedness of the state and racism, she argues that "[w]ithout a more sophisticated consideration of the racialized nature of the state, our understandings of racially oriented [environmental justice] activism – its successes,

failures and remaining possibilities with regard to the state – will remain woefully incomplete" (Kurtz 2009, 684).

Historically, environmental justice research has focused on distributional justice, focusing on the siting of hazardous waste facilities and other sources of environmental contamination, which established the existence of environmental injustice and environmental racism (Brown 1995; Bullard 2000, 1993; Bullard et al. 2007; Mohai, Pellow, and Timmons 2009; Mohai and Saha 2007; UCC 1987). There has been a recent move towards a research agenda that examines the underlying processes which perpetuate environmental racism and environmental injustice (Buckingham and Kulcur 2009; Holifield 2009; Holifield, Porter and Walker 2009; Pulido 1996a, 2000; Stein 2004; Sze 2007; Sze et al. 2009; Walker 2009). Pulido (2000, 12) contends that this shift was necessary because by focusing on citing industrial facilities, environmental justice activists and researchers do not address the underlying structural problems that lead to disproportionate environmental impact on communities of color and, therefore, "miss the role of structural and hegemonic forms of racism in contributing to such inequalities." Pulido further argues that broader urban patterns need to be considered so that researchers do not just look at why there are more toxic polluters in communities of color, but also why there are no toxic polluters' in white communities, and furthermore, why there are communities of color and white communities in the first place. Integrating the racial state with Black feminist thought, creates analytical space to analyze the role of individuals in racial projects and racial formations to further understand the underlying processes which lead to places of environmental injustice.

Grounding the Racial State through Black Feminist Thought

Not everyone experiences racism in the same way, instead "different racial/ethnic groups experience racism in distinct kinds of ways, which lead to various forms of domination, subordination, and exploitation, as well as specific forms of resistance . . . too often people of color are treated as a homogenous group, without sufficient attention to the diversity of racism and its many expressions" (Pulido 2002, 763). These multiple experiences of racism necessitates that injustices be contextualized not only within the racial state, but also within the experiences of those living these injustices.

Recognizing the context within which communities of color live, the state's actions to maintain the status quo, and the actions taken by communities of color to resist inequalities creates a dialogue where contextualized understandings of the racial state emerge. It is within these dialogues, at the points of conflict and disagreement, where I analyze the racial state. Since the state is not static, but is continually being (re)created, economic, legal, cultural, and social processes legitimize and construct the racial state (Goldberg 2002). Furthermore, race is not stagnant, it is continually being defined and redefined through political and legal processes (Haney-Lopez 2006; Omi and Winant 2014; Roediger 2005). Regardless, race cannot be ignored because "race is strategic; race does ideological and political work" (Omi and Winant 2014, 111). Other aspects of identity are equally important in these processes. Intersecting identities influence how people participate in the racial state, either as resistors, reinforcers, or a combination of the two. These intertwined processes also impact how knowledge is developed, distributed and perpetuated.

Feminist and critical race theorists contend that theoretical perspectives should not be developed solely to understand oppression, but to create change to combat oppression (Collins

2009; Delgado and Stefancic 2001; hooks 2000; McDowell 1999; Moss and Falconer Al-Hindi 2008). Theories of the racial state provide critical understandings of the relationship between race and the state, but they lack applicability. To address this disconnect, I reconceptualize theories of the racial state by thinking of them as a practice to engage in, rather than as just a production of knowledge (Raghuram and Madge 2008). By bringing discussions of the lived experience into theoretical notions of the racial state, these theories can be brought into practice. Furthermore, by not looking at the state and capital "as abstract, nameless, and faceless entities," but instead, by focusing on "how dominant – and dominated – economic/ethnic blocs in each region respond to the restructuring process" the conflicting role individuals play in creating these structures becomes apparent, as does the ways the systems are, and can be, contested (Woods 2002, 64).

Giving analytical priority to the experiences, values, and stories of environmental justice activists makes their geographies "lived, possible, and imaginable" (McKittrick 2006, xii). This facilitates an understanding of the racial state that acknowledges the historical development of the state *and* acknowledges how the (racial) state impacts the collective lives of individuals. Additionally, it brings attention to the role African-American women play in combating existing racial formations through their daily lives. Acts of everyday resistance are critical to understanding how people live with and combat the racial state. Drawing on Black feminist thought and the racial state, there are four themes that structure my analysis: (1) landscape and place, (2) the lived experience, (3) everyday forms of resistance and (4) invisibility.

Landscape and Place

The representation and imagination of a landscape, the material topography and the interpretation of that topography, indicates what is valued within a place (Jackson 2000;

Cosgrove 1984; Creswell 2004). Places are embedded with power and this power controls dominant narratives of place (Cresswell 2004; Massey 1994; Mitchell 1996; 2013). Therefore, place needs to be considered with specific attention to meaning and power relations. Places are also not static they are fluid and constantly changing. Places can represent multiple things to multiple people and their meaning changes depending on who is occupying the place and how they are using it (Massey 1994; Pratt 1998). It is necessary to deliberately examine the relationship between race and the landscape because "*all* American landscapes are racialized,*"* even if they are normalized and thought of as race-less, or white, such as in the suburbs (Delaney 2002; Schein 2006, 4). The relationship between the physical landscape and the meaning given to them articulates the reality that "physical geographies are bound up in, rather than simply in backdrop to, social and environmental processes, it follows that the materiality of the environment is racialized by contemporary demographic patterns as shaped by historic precedent" (McKittrick and Wood 2007, 3). Explicitly focusing on African-American women's landscapes and the stories they tell to animate and develop these landscapes brings attention to the role of the racial state in people's lives.

Space contextualizes the development of social movements, and this in turn influences their mobilization, mechanisms and processes. Social spaces are articulations of social relations, which have spatial forms (Massey 1994). They are not just neutral vessels for social movements, instead, space "constitutes and structures relationships and networks (including the processes that produce gender, race, and class identities); situates social and cultural life including repertoires of contention; is integral to the attribution of threats and opportunities; is implicit in many types of category formation; and is central to scale-jumping strategies that aim to alter discrepancies in power among political contestants" (Martin and Miller 2003, 144-5). Place differs from space in

that while space is the broad context within which social movements develop and function, place

"refers to the ways in which social activists and thought are geographically constituted in

discrete settings, and how this constitution affects that activists and thought" (Miller and Martin

2000, 16). Place needs to be considered with specific attention given to meaning, power,

connection to place and identity. The relationship between identity and place is complicated and

variable and people can inhabit multiple identities in multiple spaces (Pratt 1998).

Social movements "seek to strategically manipulate, subvert and resignify places that

symbolize priorities and imaginaries they are contesting; to defend places that stand for their

priorities and imaginaries; and to produce new spaces where such visions can be practiced,

within that place and beyond" (Leitner et al 2008: 161). A connection to place does not

necessarily mean a defense or romanticization of the local, instead, place can be used as a

conceptual connection upon which social movements can operate on multiple scales (Escobar

2001).

The racial state is articulated and contested through everyday actions. Embedding

landscapes and place with intersecting power hierarchies articulates geographic understandings

of how these processes define, exclude, and include people (Peake and Kobayashi 2002). It is

also indicative of what activists know and how they experience the racial state. People of color

are keenly aware of how race structures their lives and their geographies. The relationship

between African-American women and place can tell us a great deal about a place because

"black women have an investment in space, and spatial politics, precisely because they have

been relegated to the margins of knowledge and have therefore been *imagined* as outside the

production of space" (McKittrick 2006, 54). Even though their knowledges are often ignored,

the knowledges that emerge from their lived experiences of the racial state provide counter narratives to the state's narratives.

Lived Experience

Living in environmental justice communities provides people of color with a perspective on injustice and a knowledge of place born out of these experiences. While everyone has insights based on their personal experiences of place, how they choose to act on these experiences is different for every person. By emphasizing lived experiences and knowledges of environmental injustices, environmental justice activists use their lived experience and stories about their experiences as an organizing strategy. Additionally, it brings to light the tensions that arise between the intent and impact of environmental regulations, and how everyday forms of resistance work to contest the compounding socio-political processes that develop and perpetuate places of persistent injustice.

Narratives and stories that animate environmental justice communities highlight day-to-day survival, which can be taken for granted within academic research. They also bring attention to the multiple forms of resistance, beyond traditional political action, that women of color engage in because "for as long as black women have known our numerous discriminations, we have also resisted those oppressions. Our day-to-day survival as well as our organized political actions have demonstrated the tenacity of our struggle against subordination" (King 1995[1988], 294). The experiences and stories told by women who are actively opposing injustices in their communities brings to light actions and processes which might be overlooked in meta-narratives about environmental justice activism.

Everyday Forms of Resistance

Social movements become the point of contestation where race is transformed and injustices are contested. With that being said, the role of women, especially women of color are often obscured in studies of social movements because their participation and leadership take on different roles than men and is often attributed to the male leadership (Collier-Thomas and Franklin 2001; Hanson 2003; Isoke 2013; Naples 1998a, 1998b; Orleck 2005; Robnett 1997; Williams 2004). This is due in part to the representation of their work as helping their community, doing what they need to do, and working for their families and children's survival.

The forms of activism used by women of color, whether the women acknowledge it as activism or not, "reveals in its organizing and analysis its own peculiar power" (James 2009 [1999], 370). Examining the complexity and particularities of the resistance and power of African-American women activists challenges the political and social forces that perpetuate injustices and the racial state. Attention to intersectionality and lived experiences provides a context within which everyday forms of resistance and non-traditional forms of activism, such as storytelling, are given as much analytical attention as traditional forms of activism. This rich tradition creates a community and an alternative narrative other than the dominant paradigm of a doomed forgotten place.

Furthermore, Collins (2000 [1989]) argues that dominant paradigms of the activism of oppressed groups claims that oppressed groups either have no independent interpretation of their domination separate from the narratives developed by the dominant group or that subordinate groups are less capable of articulating their experiences from their own standpoint. She contests these paradigms and instead contends that "African American women have been neither passive victims of nor willing accomplices to their own domination . . . black women have a self-defined

standpoint on their own oppression" (Collins 2000 [1989], 184). In this ways, the everyday actions of activists challenge not only the environmental injustices their communities face but also through the contestation of racial formations and other identity formations – class, education, and gender – they contest the racial state.

The strategies of people who live in communities with few resources, but no lack of resourcefulness, brings to light how individuals and organizations "develop the capacity to combine themselves into extraordinary forces and forms" (Gilmore 2008, 22). Gilmore argues that these capacities are the basis for liberatory social movements, "*Resilience* enables a question to be flexible rather than brittle, such that changing circumstances and surprising discoveries keep a project connected with its purpose rather than defeated by the unexpected." (Gilmore 2008, 38 italics in the original). MacKinnon and Derikson (2012) critique the notion of resilience as inherently conservative and tending towards a restoration of the existing system. They advocate for an emphasis on resourcefulness, which "is meant to problematize both the uneven distribution of material resources and the associated inability of disadvantaged groups and communities to access the levers of social change" (MacKinnon and Derickson 2012, 263). While I am sympathetic to their critique, within critical race studies and Black feminist thought, the use of the word resilience emphasizes the spirit and tenacity of individuals who are resisting multiple forms of oppression. That is not to say that the concept of resourcefulness is irrelevant, in contrast, it offers a complementary strategy that resilient individuals can employ.

Everyday acts of resistance are deeply spatialized, at their core, they are political projects that connect the past and present to "unearth, invoke, reenact, and most importantly, reenvision historic legacies of struggle against injustice" (Isoke 2012, 2). African-American women "take the harshest realities of urban containment and create wellsprings of possibility for positive

social action. Using the wisdom gleaned from dedicating their lives to actively reimaging the social, political, and physical landscape of the city, black women talk back and act against urban despair" (Isoke 2012, 2). Through their actions, they are not trying to increase participation in the current system, they are instead, reimaging what that system can and should look like (Finney 2013, 2014; Isoke 2012; Kelley 2002; White 2011).

Since slavery, when survival in and of itself was a form of resistance, African-American women have "created sites of self-determination under seemingly impossible circumstances" (Li 2010, 2). Through storytelling and bearing witness they passed on knowledge, taught each other, spoke out against the atrocities begin enacted against them and their families, and connected their individual experiences with systematic oppressions (Fulton 2006; Ross 2008; Tagore 2009). Storytelling represents an everyday form of resistance for African-American women. One way African-American women have used political storytelling is as a tool to retake control of their landscape. For example, Monica White (2011, 18) argues that the women of D-Town farms in Detroit use gardening as form of resistance to redefine deteriorating urban environments, counter oppressive systems and "create outdoor, living, learning, and healing spaces for themselves and for members the community" by transforming abandoned vacant lots into urban/community gardens. Through reclaiming place, they are also asserting their visibility on the landscape.

Invisibility

One role of the racial state is to normalize whiteness, which in turn perpetuates white privilege and notions of a color-blind society (Lipsitz 2006; Bonilla-Silva 2006; Wise 2008, 2013; Rothenberg 2004). Race becomes so normalized that it becomes invisible in daily discourses, but the material inequalities within society, necessitate us to questions "how can it be rendered visible" (Price 2009, 153)? Explicitly paying attention to whiteness on the landscape

highlights different representations and material realities of the visible, dominant white communities and invisible or selectively visible communities of color.

The legacy of the integrated evolution of race and the state renders the role of race in all aspects of people's lives as almost invisible, even if the material consequences of racial inequality are experiences through their lived experiences of the racial state. In urban areas, communities of color are often rendered invisible on the landscape through their exclusion in the urban processes that create cities. While communities of color's everyday lives and experiences are often invisible, they are simultaneously hyper-visible in their construction as the "other" and in negative constructions of "othered" spaces such as the ghetto (Ducre 2006). Because of the invisibility of communities of color, the material realities of their lives are often ignored or rendered unimportant. This invisibility contributes to the perpetuation of persistent injustices – if you do not see that industrial processing facilities are built next to people's homes because people's homes are not visible, how you can see the injustices of this geographic proximity?

Communities of color themselves, and the processes which create these communities, may be difficult to see "not only because sociospatial denial, objectification, and capitalist value systems render them invisible, but also because the places and spaces of blackness are adversely shaped by the basic rules of traditional geographies" (McKittrick 2006, 8-9). Furthermore, the invisibility of communities of color are directly linked to white privilege and the maintenance of the status quo because "racialized spaces are perceived to be invisible and the politics and policymakers fail to take into account the needs of its inhabitants . . . While policymakers respond to appeals from corporate and other affluent interests, the voices of the occupants within racialized spaces seems absent" (Ducre 2006, 116). The relationship between white communities and communities of color, and the visibility of one and the selected invisibility of

the other, has material consequences. The lack of engagement and acknowledgement of white privilege works to further make these privileges invisible and does not create an incentive for those in power, or who benefit from white privilege, to disrupt the status quo.

Within the racial state, communities of color are often rendered invisible on the landscape. As McKittrick and Woods (2007, 7) argue, "A black sense of place, and black geographic knowledge are both undermined by hegemonic spatial practices (of, say, segregation and neglect) and seemingly unavailable as a world view." To understand the role that the racial state plays in maintenance and perpetuation of environmental injustices it is necessary to investigate the role of storytelling in the perpetuating of these processes.

Telling Stories, Producing Knowledge

Women of color have long used storytelling as both a formal and informal form of activism. The art of storytelling became a political act of resistance by providing a way of resisting voicelessness and erasure (Banks-Wallace, 2002; Fulton, 2006; Hua, 2013; Tagore, 2009; Wanzo, 2009). As Loretta Ross (2008, page 65, italics in original), a lifelong activist, explains:

> As an African American feminist, I come from a verbal, storytelling culture with deep roots. For me, storytelling is about survival. Storytelling is how we passed on knowledge and culture, values and behaviors . . . Storytelling is how we saved our lives when reading was forbidden, knowledge was hidden, and cultural continuity was shattered. We weaved together the threads of our collective experiences to create quilts of iconic stories of triumphs, of failures, of dreams, and of realities. But most of all, the stories were about possibilities. Through stories we could *imagine,* arguably the most powerful word in any language. Through our imaginations, our stories denied our oppressions and offered both spiritual solace and practical advice to survive a hostile world and build communities in which we would thrive. Through stories and storytelling we could examine and explore the meanings of our lives.

It also provided a way for individual women and their experiences to be connected to systematic oppressions and the everyday violence of living as a women of color (Tagore, 2006).

During slavery, through surviving and engaging in everyday forms of resistance, women created "sites of self-determination under seemingly impossible circumstances" (Li, 2010, 2). Stories provided an opportunity for African-Americans to express their experiences, to make sense of, and pass on wisdom, and to make sure their truths were not lost in the dominant version of history (Banks-Wallace 2002; Fosl 2008; Fulton 2006; Ross 2008; Tagore 2009). Since there were few public spaces for speaking and few people could write, storytelling and oral histories became a way to form habitual and collective memories (Fulton, 2006). As the stories about and the use of storytelling by activists such as Fannie Lou Hamer, Rigoberta Menchu, and Anne Braden demonstrate, stories were also used to create a collective consciousness and inspire sociopolitical action (Fosl 2008). Within geography, there is growing interest in stories and storytelling. Some within the discipline argue that disciplinary trends of looking at stories as a "site for thinking through the workings of power, knowledge, and geographical formations at the most intimate scale" has reached its scholarly limits (Cameron 2012, 574). Others such as Cameron (2012) and Woods (2002) argue that geographers are pushing the limits of stories by using stories and oral histories to examine physical, social, cultural, economic, and political geographies concurrently. Drawing primarily on Gibson-Graham's conceptions of 'performative ontological politics' (2008) and 'cultivation of alternative subjectivities' (2006), Cameron (2012) argues that stories can be used as acts of politics and political motivation to transform social, political, and economic worlds. Moreover, Price (2009, 160) contends that while geographers have begun to make "significant contributions to understanding narratives in a powerful way in which the world is shaped and lived, we have yet to fully capitalize on the transformative power of storytelling." Although stories can be transformative, they can also work to maintain the status quo, it depends on who is telling the story, and the goals they are trying to achieve.

Stories are the "chief literary form that tries to find meaning in an overwhelmingly crowded and disordered chronological reality" (Cronon 1992, 1349). A person's chronological reality is an embodiment of their experiences, their position within society, and their embodiment of difference. Through stories, we connect individual experiences with broader, structural processes. In this way, people can use stories to connect to others experiences and to unpack the abstract notions of discrimination (Bell 2010). They therefore permit the concurrent analysis of individual experiences and systemic power structures and highlights their political importance. Not only that, "Narrative remains our chief moral compass in the world. Because we use them to motivate and explain our actions, the stories we tell change the way we act in the world" (Cronon 1992, 1375) Storytelling is used to bring attention to issues, to give people different perspectives, and to create change either through policy decisions or changes in public opinion (Collins 1998; Pratt 2009; Gibson-Graham 2006, 2008; Cameron 2012).

Stories can also give voice to the experiences of individuals and communities of color to counteract a feeling of isolation and self-blame (Delgado and Stefancic 2001). Stories are cathartic; they can be used as a way to examine the past, to move beyond the oppression and terror, and to learn from the past. "The longing to tell one's story and the process of telling is symbolically a gesture of longing to recover the past in such a way that one experiences both a sense of reunion and a sense of release" (hooks 1989, 159). The liberating processes stories can have on the teller, and at times on the listener, are compounded when these stories are intentionally used for political gain. Woods (2002 65) urges that "Oral histories focusing on individuals, officials, agencies, and organizations must be incorporated in geographical scholarship and pedagogy." By acknowledging the tellers as situated knowers and examining

how the stories are told and heard in place, the realities and processes of living and contesting

injustices becomes evident.

Stock Stories in the Racial State

The stories told about a place reflect, reinforce or counter existing social, cultural, political,

and economic hierarchies. They can be acts of resistance or support the status quo. Bell (2010)

defines stories that reiterate and reinforce normalized dominant conceptions of societies as

"stock stories", the standard, typical, or familiar stories told by those in power through historical

and literary documents. They represent a dominant narrative but have the strategic goal,

consciously or unconsciously, of maintaining existing hierarchies. Stock stories are not just told,

they are also embedded in the landscape through memorialization and representation (Alderman

and Inwood, 2013; Alderman 2006, 2009; Inwood and Martin, 2008; Mitchell, 1996; 2013).

Through economic, social, political, and legal practices "collective memories, narratives of

community, invented traditions, and shared environmental ideals and fears are repeated,

performed, contested and stabilized in the landscape's material form" (Duncan and Duncan,

2006, 159).

Stock stories work to create a sense of 'normalness' by ordering the world and developing

conceptions of reality (Hoelscher, 2004). This is not done passively, instead, storytelling is a

deliberately interactive process by which we make sense of the world. In this way, stories

provide a bridge between individual experiences and systematic processes. By examining stories

a concurrent analysis of individual experiences and systemic power structures unfolds (Bell

2010; Delgado 1989). Storytelling can also be used to bring attention to issues, to present

alternative perspectives, to influence policy decisions or change public opinion (Cameron 2012;

Collins 1998; Cronon 1992; Dickinson 2012; Delgado 1989; Gibson-Graham 2006, 2008; hooks 2009; Houston 2013; Oslender 2007; Pratt 2009; Wanzo 2009).

Storytelling as Resistance, Storytelling as Activism

Stories are also told in different places for different reasons. They can be used to disrupt, question, and reevaluate conceptions of identity, belonging, and relationships, but these same stories, depending on how they are told and interpreted can maintain rather than disrupt the status quo (Pratt, 2009). The places where stories are told, who tells them, and who hears them impacts what is said and how the stories are interpreted. This is particularly salient when people of color, especially women of color, tell their stories (Collins 1998; Polletta 2006). Often, the transition of a story from the private realm to the public realm brings broader political meaning to the story and the storyteller (Oslender, 2007). Oslender (2007) argues that for Black Colombian populations, their oral traditions and stories, which are cultural manifestations, become manifestations and sites of subaltern cultural politics. By examining the story itself, as well as the ways stories are told in private and public spheres, these stories can be powerful political tools to challenge dominant discourses and representations of space. In this way, storytelling can be used as an everyday form of resistance to deliberately change the narrative of place (Collins 2009; hooks 1981; 1989; 2009; Isoke 2014; Martin and Miller 2003; Naples 1998a). Since it is stories that naturalize places, the people in the places, and the socio-spatial processes that make these places, it is also stories can be tools that contest, disrupt and transform these places (Price 2009).

For environmental justice activists, stories are a way to "connect biographical, political, philosophical and place-based meanings of environmental injustice" (Houston, 2013, 419). They also bridge multiple, local struggles of geographically dispersed groups by highlighting

similarities in experiences. In this way, they make the unimaginable imaginable and provide a framework for multiple, seemingly disconnected, injustices to be considered in tandem (Houston, 2013). Accordingly, environmental justice activists challenge dominant narratives of the environment and the linear progression of history that is often used to justify the existence of environmental injustices. In this way, environmental justice activists bring attention not only to the environmental harms in their community, but also to the ways the fatal coupling of difference and power impacts their lived experiences. Their stories of living environmental injustices intentionally and unintentionally highlight and work against the hegemonic processes that create these places. Since environmental justice activists:

> must confront multiple sources of domination that include economic marginalization, patriarchy, nationalism, or racism, it is difficult to discern where the environmental part of the struggle begins and where it ends. Indeed, trying to do so may misrepresent the very nature of the struggle as it suggests that environmental encounters are not colored by political economic structures. (Pulido, 1996c, 193)

In their stories, by interweaving multiple oppressions they face, they are not only connecting their physical and social geographies, but also highlight that these processes are inextricable linked, and must be confronted together.

Storytelling brings people together, stimulates investment in communities, and brings attention to the tellers' lived experiences. Activists use stories to make their place and their lived experience of place visible on the landscape - to make their conception of their place and their experience in their place matter. Stories are not told in a vacuum; instead, the stories, storytelling and the storyteller exemplify the social systems within which they operate. In this way place-making integrates the social, political, economic, and cultural processes that create our cities and shape the urban landscape (Creswell 2004; Fincher and Jacobs, 1998; Massey 1994; Martin and Miller 2000; Pratt 1999). Environmental justice activists' stories not only connect people to

place, they work as racial projects, redefining the meaning and place of communities of color within dominant discourses of place.

There is a concern that using stories and analyzing the activism of the NFC, and other women of color activists, in the context of stories will further delegitimize their voices and claims to knowledge production because they are telling stories, not objective truths. In the United States, stories are both celebrated and distrusted. A story is celebrated for "its authenticity, its passion, and its capacity to inspire not just empathy but action," but "we worry that stories are easily manipulated, that the line between art and artifice too often blurs" (Polletta, 2006, 2). This tension is deeply embedded in the privileging of rationality over emotion in public spheres of decision. While I recognize this tension, I contend that it is important to examine stories because (1) all people, those in power and those contesting these power structures tell stories, depending on the subjectivity of the teller, some of these stories are taken as truth (Delgado 1989) and (2) examining stories creates space for the lived experiences of marginalized groups to be considered as legitimate forms of knowledge production (Collins 1998, 2009; Fulton 2006; Isoke 2014; Hua 2013).

While stock stories can paint one-dimensional conceptions of communities of color and low-income communities, in reality, like all places, they are complex, multidimensional spaces filled with contradictions and tensions. Unlike the disparaging views perpetuated by stock stories, for those people living in these communities, they can represent safe spaces, spaces of community, spaces of acceptance (Collins 2000; Davis 1999; hooks Harris-Lacewell 2004; Isoke 2011). This does not negate the challenges faced in these spaces by systematic racist and classist policies, instead it speaks to the resistance, resourcefulness, and resilience of those living in these places. Through everyday forms of resistance and traditional forms of activism resistance stories

and emerging/transforming stories are used to deliberately change the narrative of their places (Bell 2010; Collins 2009; hooks 1981, 1989, 2009; Naples 1998; Martin and Miller 2000;).

In this way, community members use stories as a form of place-making activism (Martin and Miller 2000). Place-making is integrated with social, political, economic, and cultural processes that create our cities and shape the urban landscape (Martin and Miller 2000). When telling their stories, women activists of color purposefully situate themselves in place, and in doing so use stories to bring attention to the materiality of their lived experiences. One way they do this is through the creation of *place-frames*. Through *place-frames* "organizations discursively relate the conditions of the place – the common experiences of people in place – to their different agendas for collective action" (Martin 2003, 731). Through this they are not only trying to increase their participation in current systems, but also working to redefine the system and re-imagine their role in relationship to the current political and social systems. By using stories rooted in place, activists create a social space where they can revise and reformulate their role in and story of their political resistance (Isoke 2012). They use these place frames not only to bring together the members of their community, but also as a way to use their embodied identities and lived experiences to bring attention to the injustices. Their stories therefore become a performance that simultaneously defines their activism and redefines their place as important (Houston 2013; Houston and Pulido 2002; Ku 2012).

Conclusion

Bringing Black feminism and the racial state into conversation as a lens to study the fatal couplings of difference and power provides a framework to critically engage with the causes and contestations of environmental justice communities. The state produces and perpetuates inequitable places, but those living these injustices and at times those charged with regulating

these injustices do not sit idly by and watch as these injustices occur. In contrast, through formal and informal activism they resist these processes, even though at times, their actions might actually be reinforcing the very injustices they are working against. Using Black feminist thought and the racial state together develops a more complete picture of the causes of environmental injustices and what can be done to remediate environmental racism.

When taken together, Black feminism and the racial state highlight how environmental justice activists contest the limits imposed on them by the places they live. Moreover, while there are individuals who become resigned to the endurances of these places of persistent injustice, the spirit and tenacity of the women of the NFC and other activists around the world highlights the continued resistance to these places. As Finney (2013, 3) argues, "There is still a lived space where resilience is experienced not simply as a response to their constraints, but as a proactive possibility. Resilience is not only about the ability of people to survive within the social, economic and political constraints that inform their lives. I am using resilience to also underscore the creative and innovative ways that people expand and transform their realities, often boldly going where no one has gone before." This is not to say that the changes are easy. In opposition, by examining environmental justice activism through the lens of Black feminism and the racial state it becomes evident that environmental justice activists are not only contesting the environmental problems in their community, they are challenging racial formations and the racial state. Through the following four empirical chapters, I apply this theoretical framework to the compounding socio-political processes that create and maintain environmental justice communities and one way activists contest these places. Before I turn to the empirical case study, I explain the methods and methodology used to carry out this project.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, I discuss the research design, data collection, and analytical methodology that informed this research project. I used qualitative research methods drawing on data from multiple sources to triangulated the data to "address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues," and thereby to construct its validity (Yin 2003, 98). I begin by situating my methodological approaches in feminist theory, Black feminist thought, storytelling, and everyday talk. I then discuss the qualitative research methods I used to gather data. I explain how I used narrative analysis and drew on my methodological framework to analyze my data. In conclusion, I discuss how my fluid positionality impacted and influenced the research process.

Methodology

The theoretical perspectives and methodological frameworks of feminist theory and Black feminist thought inform how I developed, conducted, and analyzed my research. By explicitly recognizing that knowledge is constructed, I scrutinized how research participants constructed knowledges and my interpretation of their knowledges. Throughout the dissertation, I incorporated multiple ways knowledge is formed, circulated, contested, and reinforced. To do this, I recognized that social theory is often circulated as decontextualized ideas among privileged intellectuals and is legitimized by and reflects the concerns of this group (Collins 1998). Using feminist research methods, Black feminist thought, positionality, and reflexivity, I directly engaged with power relations, political, social, and historical context, and construction of knowledge throughout the research process.

The tenants of feminist and Black feminist theory necessitate researchers to engage directly with their social and political motivations and the impacts of their research. Furthermore, the tenants of Black feminist epistemology challenge researchers to consider whether the theory they are developing speaks to the lived experiences of their research participants, whether the social theory is a tool for social change, whether it gives people tools to resist oppression, and whether it moves people to engage directly in struggles against injustice (Collins 1998, 198-199). Although I incorporated my research participants, particularly the women of the NFC into my research, in the end, as with all research projects, this was my research project and I made the final decisions regarding the course of the research, analysis, and writing. Additionally, although the research was based on a mutually beneficial relationship between my research participants and me, in the context of this project, it was an unequal relationship because I had the power to make the final decisions regarding all aspects of the research process (Hanson 1997; Mullings 1999; Auyero 2006; Moss 2002; Oberhauser 1997). To examine how these processes impacted my research, I directly engaged with notions of power, knowledge, and research context critically and reflexively.

I did not only investigate power relations, but also how power manifests itself geographically. In relationship to research design, I acknowledged that context mattered in the materiality of place – where I conducted interviews, where I engaged in participant observation, and how others perceived my participation – all impacted what was and was not said to me. In addition to place, I also considered temporal elements, specifically as they related to how my positionality and relationship with my research participants changed over time, and how their relationships with each other also changed over time. Context also impacted how I conducted my participant observation. At times, I did more than observe, at times I was an active participant.

Therefore, my own actions became part of the project that I was studying. This presented

challenges, but it also explicitly linked my engagement with the theoretical questions laid out in

this project with the pragmatic, political and social injustices which I was researching (Hanson

1997; Speed 2008; Collins 1998, 2009; Peake and Kobayashi 2002; Kobayashi 2003; Falconer

Al-Hindi and Kawabata 2002).

Storytelling and Everyday Talk

The use of narrative and the lived experience as a methodological framework facilitated

an engagement with forms of knowledge that are often delegitimized. Power legitimizes theory

and delegitimizes counter narratives as folk wisdom, raw experiences and common sense

(Collins 1998, xiii). By integrating social theoretical approaches with the lived experiences and

common senses through storytelling, I questioned not only knowledge creation, but also the role

of knowledge creation in political processes and activism.

To analyze stories effectively, I considered who told the story, the context in which the story

is told, and to what audience, and the way the story was interpreted and subsequently used.

These characteristics matter, because the way a story is interpreted is often contingent on who is

telling the story, especially when the stories are told by women, persons of color or other

marginalized peoples (Polletta 2006). Tensions over how stories are heard and interpreted

represent embedded privileging of rationality over emotion in public spheres. The women of the

NFC understand and use the power of stories, but they are aware of how their positionality

influences how their stories are interpreted, if they are heard at all. They also understand that the

context within which their stories are told and heard impacts the meaning of their stories.

In *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday talk and black political thought* Melissa

Harris-Lacewell (2004) explores how African-American political ideology is discussed,

established, and challenged through everyday talk in African-American spaces.   She argues that

while black political ideology is often thought of as homogenous, it is, and has always been,

heterogeneous. African-Americans "use everyday talk to jointly develop understandings of their

collective political interests" (Harris-Lacewell 2004, xxii). By everyday talk, I mean "the

ordinary kinds of communicating people do in schools, workplace, shops, and at public

meetings, as well as when they are at home or with their friends" (Tracy 2002, 7). The use of

"everyday talk" acknowledges that casual conversations have analytical value. It also

acknowledges that the conversations we have with others, be they our research participants, our

colleagues, our mentors, or our friends and family influence how we understand and make sense

of our research (Kohl and McCutcheon, 2014).

For communities of color, "everyday talk" is also spatial, reflecting the intersection of

physical and social geographies. Since communities of color are often excluded from the

broader public sphere, they use racialized public and private places to share information, build

relationships, and challenge beliefs they hold about themselves and others (Battle-Walters 2004;

Harris-Lacewell 2004; Liebow 2003; May 2001).   Using "everyday talk" as a way to gather data

and make sense of the lived experiences of the women of the NFC provided me with access to

forms of knowledge that were only available through these processes. It is also a way to gather

multiple, sometimes conflicting view points, from within an organization. Using "everyday talk"

brings to light the heterogeneity of experiences within a community, rather than relying on a

uniformed experience.

Bell (2010, 30) argues that "stories are not simply personal or idiosyncratic but are

produced and communicated within specific historical contests and social locations that shape

their meanings." Using myriad forms of stories – personal narratives, promotional materials,

everyday talk, archival documents, legal documents, historical documents – I created a more

complete sense of the historical context and the experiences of those living and regulating

environmental injustices. Through the methods presented below, I indicate how I implemented

the theoretical methodology presented here to collect and analyze the data for this project.

Methods

This research was carried out in four phases (See Table 4.1). While the phases began in

chronological order, there was significant overlap in the implementation of the phases. Despite

the overlaps, I layout the research methods in chronological order to clarify how each phase of

the research built off of earlier phases.

Table 4.1: Summary of Research Methods

Research Phase	Action/Source	Specific Details
Participant Observation	Participant Observation with members of the NFC, with EPA Region 4 during the planning of the collaborative problem solving workshop, and with the UGA team	Approximately 1000 hours over five years (2009 – 2014)
Archival Research	NFC Private Archives, Gainesville Time, City of Gainesville website, EPA Region 4 archives	Approximately 300 documents from the NFC Private Archives, 30 Newspaper articles, 10 City of Gainesville Policies and promotional materials, 20 EPA speeches and policy documents
Semi-Structured Interviews	Members of the NFC, City of Gainesville officials (elected and career), Representatives of EPA region 4	31 Interviews ranging from 30 minutes to 2 hours

Phase I: Participant Observation

I began participant observation with the NFC in August 2009 through a clinical law class.

As required by the class, I visited Newtown weekly and worked on concrete tasks. I helped

prepare a grant application and developed an internal strategy document that summarized the

contributions of collaborators to a specific project. The grant writing introduced me to the history of the NFC, their past actions, and their future goals. The internal strategy document required that I assess their past strategy documents and interview stakeholders that were participating in a complex problem solving exercise to address the multiple challenges facing the community. During my weekly visits, I worked with the NFC's Executive Director on day-to-day operations of the club. While this often included basic word processing skills, fundraising solicitations, and event planning, it provided me with insight into the role I could play in assisting the NFC as I moved forward with my research.

In addition to affording me the opportunity to become acquainted with the NFC, their history, and members, my weekly visits also served as a way to introduce myself to the members of NFC and to establish relationships with them. Further, it demonstrated my commitment to working with them rather than doing research on them. This is was necessary due to the Club's history with research. They have been studied a lot (see Chapter 2) and while they have developed positive working relationships with some researchers, they have often felt exploited and excluded from research, rather than part of the process.

Upon completion of my class, I continued to work with the NFC upon approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subjects research. As well as working on day-to-day operations of the Club, I also began to work on a collective writing project. Nik Heynen, a professor in the Geography Department at the University of Georgia (and my advisor) spearheaded the collective writing project. The goal was to bring together all of the stakeholders that were working with the NFC at the time to write a book that captured the club's history, presented the various approaches members have taken to address the problems facing their community, and highlighted their best practices gleaned from their sixty year history.

When I began working with the NFC, club members were weary of another researcher coming to do research on them. I explicitly respected this distrust and worked to build a relationship where I was not doing research on them, but I was doing research with them. It was during the early development of the book project that I had a frank discussion with the leadership of the NFC about my research and necessary degree requirements. While the book project was designed to be a collaborative writing project that was authored by the NFC Writing Collective, we discussed the importance for my academic success that I produce unique and individual research in the form of a dissertation and journal articles. We discussed my commitment to having them be active participants in my research, but that if they were not comfortable with my role as researcher, then I would find another research site to continue my research. The NFC leadership decided that I could continue working with them and produce my own independent research in the process. While I did not work with the members of the NFC to develop research questions, we discussed my project in depth. We also discussed what I could contribute to the club. This negotiation led to a mutually beneficial relationship where we were all invested in one another's success.

My presence at the NFC's office provided me opportunities to participate in and witness everyday talk with the people who worked in the office, NFC board members, and visitors to the office. Through extensive field notes I recorded topics that were discussed and highlighted aspects of the conversation, such as how the conversation was received and reflections on how the conversations interacted with my positionality. Over time each day became more fluid and the guarded nature of our conversations changed, although I continued to recognize that code switching occurred and that topics may have been discussed differently or not at all because it was cross-racial talk (Auer 2013).

Through this phase of the research I identified the stakeholders with whom the NFC interacted with and who played a role in the perpetuation, contestations, and redefinition of places of persistent injustice. I identified the City of Gainesville, adjacent industries, specifically Cargill, Purina Mills, and Blaze Recycling, University partners, other activist groups and EPA Region 4 as important actors. It was through participant observation that I became involved in the planning of the collaborative problem solving workshop orchestrated by EPA Region 4. I participated in conference calls and meetings leading up to the training as well as the training itself. Once these partners were identified in combination with Phase II (archival research), I would be best able to answer the questions laid out in this project by focusing on the NFC, the City of Gainesville, and EPA Region 4.

Phase II: Archival Research

Phase II consisted of identifying and collecting archival research on the relationships to the NFC, EPA Region IV, and the City of Gainesville to one another. The archival sources included news media, public documents, private archives of the NFC, public announcements, and the City of Gainesville and EPA Region IV websites. In collecting archival material, I took note of voice, power, and interpretation and triangulated the data collected (Roche 2005, Yin 2003, Harris 2001). While archival research is often the first phase of research to provide context for the research project, in this instance, the establishment of relationships through participant observation was necessary to determine whether the NFC would be willing to work with me and to identify which archives would best address the objectives laid out in this project.

The NFC's private archives consist of meeting minutes, newsletters, correspondences, newspaper articles relating to the club, programs from events and conferences, personal correspondences, legal documents, brochures and training material, video interviews, video

recordings of conferences and trainings, and educational materials that encompass the operating

tenure of the club.[13] While the archive is not complete and does not tell the entire history of the

NFC, it provided a perspective on how the club presents itself publically and wants to be

remembered. Additionally, while there was a wealth of information in the archives, it was

incredibly disorganized. The lack of organization presented challenges, because supporting

documents may exist that I could not find that would have made my case stronger. On the other

hand, I engaged with information that I might not have examined had the archives been

organized thematically.

The NFC's private archives were supplemented by the archives of Gainesville's local

paper, *The Gainesville Daily Times*, which was established in 1947, and changed its name to The

Times in 1972 (http://www.gainesvilletimes.com/flat/aboutus/). The Times' archives are

available on-line from 2005 and available at the Hall County Library prior to that. Newspaper

coverage provided another perspective on the historical actions of the NFC, and was used to

triangulate the information gathered from the Club's archives and interviews with Club members

(Yin 2003).   As the local newspaper, The Times provides an overview of how the city is

presented and what it deems is important.   In addition to newspaper archives, planning

documents, such as the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, and tourism and promotional and tourism

materials were collected from the city of Gainesville's official website. This provided insight

into the ways that the city chose to represent itself publicly. I also analyzed relevant City

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[13] The NFC archives consists of documents stored in filing cabinets and in filing cabinets throughout their office. There are approximately six four drawer filing cabinet and over 100 one to two inch three ring binders filled with materials. There are also club meeting minutes dating back to the beginning of the club. The NFC is currently in discussions with the University of Georgia Russell Library to formally archive their materials. While not all the material was relevant, nor did I have an opportunity to analyze all of the materials, I spent three months attempting to organize the archives material so gained at least a cursory understanding of what was available. This also enabled me to access specific material that was relevant to the questions I was asking through this dissertation. In the end, the NFC archival material provided the majority of the background information, and I analyzed the material collected through participant observation and semi-structured interviews.

Ordinances and Codes, which are available through Municode Library

(http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=10820).

I also performed archival research to provide a context within which EPA Region 4 operated, primarily through the EPA and EPA Region 4 websites. I examined policy statements and public speeches by EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and Regional Administrator Gwendolyn Keyes Fleming. I also analyzed federal laws and regulations, and other material produced by the agency. I focused on materials particularly pertaining to environmental justice and to the relationship between agency technocrats and community members.

Phase III: Semi-Structured Interviews

Phase III consisted of semi-structured interviews with members of the NFC, publically elected and appointed officials from the city of Gainesville, and representatives from EPA Region 4. I conducted 31 semi-structured interviews over a three-year period from April 2010 to August 2013. The majority of the interviews were conducted one-on-one in person. Due to logistical and practical concerns, some interviews were conducted in small groups (up to three people) and some interviews were conducted over the phone. The group interviews were conducted with colleagues who had established relationships. During phone interviews I could not observe body language or other non-verbal cues. To compensate, I paid extra attention to verbal cues during the conversation.

Semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity for individuals to explain their understandings of place, race and the environment and to explain the relationships between the NFC, the city of Gainesville, and EPA Region 4. All interviews addressed broad themes of understandings of the environment, the relationships between these understandings and their job/activism, their understanding of race and how their race impacts their lives, relationships

between race and the environment, and their interactions with the NFC, the city of Gainesville, and EPA Region IV. The specific questions asked of interview participants varied depending on who the interview was with. Interview question guides can be found in Appendix A.

I chose research participants by identifying individuals who would achieve "representativeness or typicality of the setting, individuals, or activities selected" (Maxwell 2005, 89). I relied on the snowball method (Yin 2003), asking research participants to identify other potential research participants, to develop my interview sample. All interviews were conducted using open-ended questions. During open-ended interviews relevant questions are asked, but the researcher maintains a level of flexibility to direct the questions depending on what is said during the conversation (Dunn 2005). Throughout the interviews I paid attention to place, how my interviewees reacted to my questions, and knowledge in relationship to the subjects we discussed (Elwood and Martin 2000, Mullings 1999). Through the course of my interviews, I also learned to pay attention to moments of silence and to let the interviewee indicate through verbal and non-verbal cues when it was time to move on to the next question. By becoming comfortable with silences, I got more in-depth and insightful information from research participants. In accordance with my IRB protocol, all research participants signed a participation consent form (see Appendix B). Research participants were given the option of either remaining anonymous or due to their public position, have their names used. All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and later transcribed into written documents.

I identified members of the NFC to interview through participant observation and recommendations from the NFC Executive Director. I also asked interview participants if there was anyone else that I should interview. Due to researcher fatigue (the members of the NFC

have been researched extensively) it was difficult to get NFC members to participate in interviews. In total, I interviewed 5 members of the NFC. Three interview participants were in leadership positions and the remainder were on the executive board. I conducted three formal interviews with Faye Bush, executive director of the NFC. I also recorded her giving a toxic tour.

I identified research participants at EPA Region 4 through relationships I developed with members of the Office of Environmental Justice who were working with the members of the NFC. At the time I conducted interviews, there were five members of the Office of Environmental Justice. I interviewed everyone in the office. Due to the small staff of the Office of Environmental Justice, I also interviewed four community engagement staff in the Superfund Division of EPA Region 4. Since many of the Superfund sites are in environmental justice communities and the community engagement staff works directly with communities, they provided insight similar to those people working in the Office of Environmental Justice. To provide a contrast to those employees working directly with communities with an explicit environmental justice focus, I interviewed seven EPA Region 4 staff members in technical, regulatory, or policy positions. I identified these participants through the snowball method, relying on recommendations from individuals with whom I had established relationships. I also contacted all division heads via email addresses accessed from the EPA Region 4 website to request interviews with them or representatives from their offices. This was predominately unsuccessful, but I obtained a cross-section of representatives from EPA Region 4 through the other two methods.

I identified representatives of the City of Gainesville in two ways. First, I contacted all five elected officials via mail and followed up with phone calls. Addresses and phone numbers

for all elected officials were available on the City of Gainesville website. I obtained interviews with three out of the five elected officials, the other two officials never responded to my letter nor to my repeated follow up phone calls. I also identified members of the City of Gainesville staff whose jobs were most relevant to the questions I was asking, specifically the city manager, the assistant city managers and those in the Planning Division of the Community Development Department. Through snowball sampling, I identified and spoke to all the relevant employees who work for the city of Gainesville.

Throughout this dissertation when quoting or referencing research participants, when first and last names or just last names are used they represent the true identities of the research participants, and when only first names are used these represent pseudonyms. Due to the small size of the Office of Environmental Justice to further protect identities, I combined those working in the Office of Environmental Justice and the Community Outreach Coordinators by only indicating whether employees focus on community outreach and environmental justice. Furthermore, due to gender imbalances in the positions (there were only two female city officials, two male community outreach and environmental justice employees, and two females with science/technical focus) I attempted to pick gender-neutral pseudonyms and do not use gender specific identifying information. I did this because I felt this was the only way to assure the anonymity of my research participants. At times when gender was relevant, I indicated that a male or female research participant made the comment but do not use their pseudonym. All research participants were asked to self-identify racially, therefore when racial identities are attributed to research participants, they indicate how the person choose to self-identify.

Phase IV: Data analysis

To analyze the data collected through the course of this research, I relied primarily on narrative analysis. Narrative analysis takes stories, the telling of stories, and the researchers role as storyteller as the object of investigation (Riessman 1993). Furthermore, narrative analysis "interrogate[s] intention and language – *how* and *why* incidents are storied, not simply the context to which language refers" (Riessman 2008, 11, italics in the original). In this way, it makes "visible and audible taken-for-granted practices, processes, and structural and cultural features of our everyday social worlds" (Chase 2005, 664). Narrative analysis recognizes the role of research and research subjects in the co-production of knowledge. It recognizes that as a researcher I cannot give voices to my research participants, but through the research process, I heard their voices, I recorded their voices, and I interpreted their voices by attending to, telling, transcribing, analyzing, and reading the stories of research participants (Riessman 1993).

I used narrative analysis to analyze the stories told to me by research participants through semi-structured interviews and participant observation, archival newspaper articles and histories about Gainesville and the NFC, my participant observation experiences, and the story that unfolded through the course of the research as I tried to make sense of and piece together the different perspectives that arose from the NFC, the representatives from EPA Region IV, and the representatives of the City of Gainesville. Narrative analysis was particularly well suited for this project because of the situated, strategic, and political work that stories do (Riessman 2008). By recognizing the socially situated nature of stories, examining their setting, their intended audience, and their particular purpose, I made connections between individual experiences and the societal structures within which these stories were told (Chase 2005, Bell 2010). Though

narrative analysis, I explicitly engaged with the role I played as researcher in the development and analysis of the stories laid out in this dissertation.

I recognize that not all of the data gathered through this research was in narrative form. That does not mean that this information was less valuable than the narratives that developed. Instead, I drew on discourse analysis to analyze the non-narrative aspects of the dissertation and the make sense of the narrative that emerged. Critical discourse analysis, building on Foucault's theories of knowledge and discourse (1972), constructs social realities that we experience as real through the "power of incomplete, ambiguous, and contradictory discourses" (Phillips and Hardy 2002, 1). I critically analyzed the context within which what was said was said, and focuses attention on how language influences power through social practices (Fairclough 1995).

Data Organization and Coding

Initial data analysis consisted of organizing and reducing data according to the preliminary themes drawn from theories laid out in this dissertation (such as "racialized space", "environment as home", "institutional racism", "color-blind racism"). I paid close attention to themes that emerged through participant observation and open-ended interviews, specifically the six compounding processes that influence environmental justice communities: urban planning, regulatory processes, scale of analysis, the role of science, political economy, and cultural capital. Archival documents, transcripts of interviews, and participant observation field notes were all analyzed together as textual data. Information deemed not relevant to the research questions was not analyzed at this time. However, while organizing data and reducing data based on relevance for my research questions, I was attentive to discrepant data so as to challenge my analysis and ensure that I did not find only what I set out to look for, nor pre-ordain the results.

I used Scrivener, a project management and writing tool, to organize my data. After the data was organized, I used Scriver to code the data around themes that had emerged from the theoretical framework and empirical data, such as invisibility, intent vs. impact, perception, and role of EPA and local government. Throughout the research process, I paid close attention to the role I played as researcher and to the ways my positionality influenced the process.

Positionality

Positionality forces researchers to takes into account the situated nature of knowledge, to critically examine their own position in relationship to their research subject and "*write this into our research practice* rather than continue to hanker after some idealized equality between us" (McDowell 1992, 409, italics in original). Researchers do this by exploring the power relationships that develop through the course of the research process. In this way they can highlight how "Facets of the self – institutional privilege, for examples, as well as aspects of social identity – are articulated as 'positions' in a multidimensional geography of power relations" (Rose 1997, 307 – 308). For some, engagement with positionality constitutes a laundry list of axes of difference that may or may not impact their research process and for others it is a complex engagement with the impacts and influences that these axes of difference have on the entire research process (Kohl and McCutcheon, 2014).

The extent to which positionality is critically examined throughout the research process depends in part on the level and extent of reflexivity or self-reflexivity the researcher employs. Reflexivity is "self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious *analytical* scrutiny of the self as researcher . . . it induces self-discovery and can lead to insights and new hypotheses about the research question" (England 1994, 82). Furthermore, through processes of self-reflexivity, the researcher continually "assess and reevaluates one's positionality and

assumptions as a researcher" (Oberhauser 1997, 167). While self-reflexivity is an integral part of the research process, so are the reflexive processes that emerge from formal and informal conversations with colleagues, friends, family, mentors, and research participants. Using "kitchen table reflexivity" with others, I used these conversations as a reflexive sounding board to make sense of my experiences and the role my positionality played in these processes (Kohl and McCutcheon, 2014).

Through reflexive processes I examined my social position in relationship to my research participants, how social relations impacted these interactions, the politics of social identity and their impact on research, the role of power and identity in our everyday lives, and a reflection of the power dynamics which dictate research processes (Dowling 2005; England 1994; McDowell 1992; Nagar 1997; Rose 1997;). While many human geographers have embraced notions of reflexivity, many remain hesitant because of the challenges and difficulty in being truly reflexive. What follows is a summation of my positionality, how it changed throughout the course of the project, and engagement with the impacts this had on my research.

Being in a room where everyone looks different from me always makes me more aware of my identity. At the same time, as a white woman, I know when race is concerned, when I am in those situations, more often than not, it is because I put myself into these positions. As a researcher of race and justice, the fact that I notice my skin color is important, the fact that I recognize the power that comes with it is important, but what is also important, and what is often not considered, is the fluid nature of racial formations across space and time. Even though it is impossible to separate the different facets of my identity, and the complexity of how I perceive myself pales in comparison to how society sees me, through the research process I paid attention

to how different facets of identity impacted my access to information and how people spoke to

me across space and time.

As a researcher, I tried to think about identity and positionality beyond the laundry-list

identifiers of race, class, gender, sexuality, education, ability, and the ever-present etcetera (even

those this list is valuable and plays into how you interact with people and how they perceive

you). When I began working in Newtown, identity and power were always on my mind, not just

because I was so "different" from the women I was working with, but also because of the history

of these women and their community which had being "researched." After one of my first trips

to Gainesville, I summarized my feelings in my field notes:

> Overall it was an interesting meeting, but it raised a lot of concerns for me about
> my role in and relationship to research. I felt very much like an outsider in the
> meeting, I felt like an intruder that was there to listen to what people had to say, in
> some ways I felt like a spy. I also felt like I had no right to be where I was, I was
> not a member of the community, I was younger than all the participants, I'm
> white, I'm not from Gainesville and I'm not even from the south. All of these
> things made me feel uncomfortable in my role, and not sure of what my role is or
> is going to be. I think that participating in community functions and meetings
> will become more comfortable as I get more used to the people in the community
> and the people in the community get used to me and real relationships are
> developed … the uncomfortableness I experience at the beginning of a research
> project makes me uneasy about the project as a whole . . . My uncomfortable
> feelings may be related to my understandings of power structures, my general
> personality when in a new setting, an insider/outsider perspective, or more likely a
> combination of all three. It is likely that some of these emotions will fade as I
> continue to interact with the members of the Newtown community, and as I
> become more comfortable with them and them with me. At the same time, I think
> that the questions that this experience raised for me is important in considering
> both my approach to research and my future engagement with research. (field
> notes, August 24, 2009)

While these feelings and emotions could have inhibited my ability to move forward with this

research project, they instead provided a framework with which to proceed reflexively. I was a

researcher, I was an outsider, but I was also a person. To truly be reflexive in my research, it

was necessary to both continually be aware of my identity and to also ignore it, to focus on the individual relationships, rather than societal classifications.

As I spent more time in Newtown, the original feelings of discomfort faded, but I continued to reassess my positionality and how it impacted what I saw, what I heard, and how I interpreted the situations around me. The importance of this became especially evident during the summer of 2010, when a student intern spent the summer working with me in Gainesville. The student was an African-American female from a small town outside of Augusta, Georgia. She was gregarious, outgoing, and full of life. Her initial interactions with the community members did not have the same hesitancy I began with and which sometimes surfaced in situations where I was uncomfortable. She continually commented that the women reminded her of her Grandmother. She brought up subjects that I had hesitated to bring up, and she got different answers, answers that seemed more honest, to questions I had previously asked. I do not know if it was personality, positionality, or a combination of both (which I think was the case) but it reminded me that as much as I was accepted by the community, that I was different from the community.

At the same time, I did and still do feel part of the community. Ms. Faye told me about her family, she asked about mine. Before I had my first baby, the women threw a surprise baby shower, and just the fact that I was there, and I was writing my dissertation about their experiences meant something. The decision they came to that I could work with them for my dissertation was not one they took lightly. I did not even bring up the subject until I had worked with them for four months on another project completely unrelated to my dissertation. It was an honest conversation, I would like to work with them, but in order for me to work with them, I

had to write about them. It was at the moment that they agreed that I knew they had accepted me for who I was, they wanted me to succeed, not just for myself, but also for them.

My positionality in relation to the women of the NFC changed overtime. This was most evident in a meeting with a consultant charged with conducting the EPA collaborative problem solving workshop. During the meeting, Ms. Johnson was expressing her frustrations with the training and with the injustices in Gainesville. She was questioning what could be done and what should be done to change the material conditions of Gainesville's Southside. At one point in the discussion, she turned to me and said "Ellen, what do you think, you're practically one of us." This simple comment, which was made in an off-handed way, for me encompasses the evolution and complexity of my positionality. On paper, when you listed out my axes of difference – I was not one of them; when you compared life experiences, I was not one of them; but I had become "practically one of them." My position had changed through relationship building, interactions, and my commitment to work with them and not doing research on them. It re-emphasized the reality that the relationship between researcher and research participants is not stagnant, it is one that is continually negotiated.

My fluid positionality did not just impact my interactions with the members of the NFC, it also impacted my interactions with other research participants from EPA Region 4 and the City of Gainesville. My interactions with these individuals were not as in-depth as my relationships with the members of the NFC primarily because most of my interactions were based on interviews. Therefore, while my positionality influenced these processes, different aspects of my positionality were emphasized.

My introduction to the research participants from EPA Region 4 occurred through participant observation with the NFC. At the beginning, for the representatives of EPA Region

4, I was a PhD student working with the NFC. My affiliation with the University of Georgia lent me legitimacy and facilitated my ability to schedule interviews with the EPA Region 4 staff. During in-person interviews, I had anticipated that research participants of color would be hesitant to talk about their experiences of race, since I had not established a relationship with them prior to the interviews. While I will never know if their answers would have been different if they had been talking to another person of color I was surprised at the candidness with which they spoke to me about race, discrimination, and injustice, both their own experiences and the experiences of those people they worked with.

My introduction to the representatives of the City of Gainesville was through formal solicitation methods. With all but one research participant who participated in the EPA collaborative problem-solving workshop, I did not disclose my affiliation with the NFC because I wanted city officials to speak freely about the NFC and Gainesville's Southside. After one interview with an elected official and one interview with a city employee, they acted as gatekeepers to introduce me to more people in the city government with whom they felt would address specific aspects of research. My affiliation with the University of Georgia also increased my access to members of the government. Additionally, as a white female student, I believe I was viewed as non-threatening. I believe their views of me as non-threatening facilitated successful interviews, even though I am unsure if they expressed all their views on race and the environment.

Questions of power and positionality did not fade through the research and writing process. Instead, they became more poignant and relevant to my analysis as I encountered specific problems. First, how do I apply a productive critique to an organization that I feel protective of, and how do I do it in a way that contributes to broader theoretical discussion? Put

another way, how do I generalize the lived experiences of these women without losing the power and passion of their stories? Second, how do I negotiate my role as a teller of their story when it is, and always will be, their story, not my story, because it will never be my story? Finally, the ways I tell their story and how people interpret what I am saying is always going to say more about me than about the women of the NFC. I want to both honor them with my work, but at the same time, be thorough and critical in my analysis. At the end of the day, I can tell their story, but I do not live their story, I go home to my house, to my family. This recognition is crucial to remember as you read my story about their story. Because in the end, that's all it can ever be.

CHAPTER 5

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK:
URBAN PLANNING AND REGULATORY PROCESSES

I think that the debate has always been, and may always be what is deliberate and what is the product of the way that, well, quite frankly, land use is governed in this country.

Mason, EPA Region 4, August 15, 2013

Driving through Gainesville, urban planning decisions, and at times the lack of urban planning decisions, are seen everywhere. As you enter the city through one of the "gateway corridors" you see industries along the railroad tracks and Interstate 985, the main highway that leads south to Atlanta. Local businesses and restaurants cluster around the square along with city government buildings and county and federal courthouses. Historic homes lead you down Green Street, gated communities circle Lake Lanier. The commercial box stores that line the main arteries heading out of downtown to the north, east, and west stand in sharp contrast to the industries that shepherd you south out of the city. The layout of the city is not benign, as in all cities, it reflects racial histories, and as you look closer to the layout of the city and who lives where, the consequences of historic planning decisions emerge. You notice that there are predominately African-American and Latino/a communities living next to the industries. The parks and green space that define the residential areas on the city's Northside are obviously missing from the city's Southside. Athens Street, which was once the heart of the African-American business district, is a series of boarded up businesses, storefront churches and convenience stores. The differences between these vibrant and depressed economic areas, the

green spaces and urban sidewalk jungles, and proximity to industries are not all necessary because of contemporary urban planning decisions, but most are the legacy of past decisions and the fatal coupling of difference and power that left tangible marks on the landscape.

The making of neighborhoods has never been a passive process. Neighborhoods are formed through the active process of placemaking. Neighborhoods result from urban planning practices, the development and enforcement of regulations, and the stories told about the place from multiple perspectives make the place what it is. Stories about a place are not just told by individuals but they can also be read in the histories of planning decisions, the physical layout of the city, in what regulations are written, and how they are enforced. To understand a place, you need to read and listen to all of these stories together.

The explicit and implicit racial influences on urban planning and zoning decisions laid the groundwork for places of persistent injustice by codifying existing unequal and unjust development patterns. The indelible mark of these decisions is evident in the fact that across the country even though cities are becoming more diverse, there is a persistence of segregation of African-Americans and Latino/as from other groups and low-diversity white dominated census tracks (Holloway et al. 2012). Often since industries and other incompatible land use decisions were made prior to contemporary zoning laws, the industries and other nuisance land uses are often grandfathered in existing legislation, leaving residents with little legal recourse to improve the quality of their neighborhoods.

Historical Urban Planning Processes

Wilson (2002, 32) argues that it is necessary to contextualize discussions of race historically and geographically because "to avoid a critical discourse on race, the U.S has become a society – a land – 'without memory.'" He argues that we need to engage with history,

not to return to the past, but so that we can adequately critique and understand the present. In environmental justice communities, histories are imprinted onto the landscape as a physical manifestation of these processes. By reflecting and reinforcing existing social relations, these histories are embedded in the landscape; the result of interactions between community members and the forces that create these places, most frequently, local government.

Urban planning began in the United States in the early 1900s. Since its inception, zoning and comprehensive urban planning were used as tools to "create the racially bifurcated social geography of most contemporary American cities" (Silver 1997, 26). The first zoning requirements, the 1899 height restriction in Washington, D.C., were soon followed by other zoning and land use decisions. In 1908, Los Angeles adopted the first citywide land use zoning ordinance to protect residential areas from industrial uses (Silver 1997).   In 1915 in *Hadacheck v. Sebastian* and definitively in 1926, in *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Corporation,* the Supreme Court upheld the right of local communities to zone as part of the police powers that the U.S. Constitution reserves for the states. In 1910, Baltimore enacted the first explicitly racial zoning ordinance and other cities quickly followed. While the 1917 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Buchanan v. Warley* ruled that Louisville, Kentucky's racial zoning ordinance was unconstitutional, racial zoning continued through comprehensive planning in practice, if not in law (Silver 1997).

In the 1930s and 1940s, cities developed new tools and relied on federal funding for programs such as public housing, road construction, and slum clearance to socially engineer segregated cities. Practices such as using streets and highways to erect racial barriers, siting of public housing for African-American occupancy, slum clearance, neighborhood planning, private deed restrictions and racially charged real estate practices contributed to the formation and

maintenance of segregated cities (Silver 1997, 37-38).   These were developed in conjunction with exclusionary tools in local zoning ordinances such as exclusion of multi-family homes, restrictions on the numbers of bedrooms in multi-family dwellings, exclusion of mobile homes, minimum building size requirements, minimum lot size requirements, and minimum lot width requirements that further segregated communities (Williams 1975 quoted in Ritzdrof 1997, 46).

These racially exclusionary were supported, starting with New Deal policies such as the Home Owners Loan Corporation, the Federal Housing Administration, the Veterans Administration, the U.S. Housing Authority, the Public Housing Administration, and the Housing and Home Finance Agency, by the federal government. All of these agencies accepted the notion of the "infiltration" theory, which was explained by Arthur M. Weimer and Homer Hoyt in their 1948 book *Principles of Urban Real Estate.* The theory dictates that "When 'two or more incompatible groups' occupied a neighborhood . . . 'The tendency is for the group having the least regard for the maintenance of real estate standards to drive out the other group . . . The infiltration of additional representatives of the dominant group operates to put a blight on the neighborhood'" (Hoagland 1955 as quoted in Mohl 1997, 65). These agencies set the standards for homeowners insurance and loan processes, which further exacerbated the decline of inner city or designated "blighted" areas and the proliferation of white flight and suburban expansion.

Historical land use decisions such as red lining and legal segregation left residual segregated urban development patterns in U.S. cities. These processes have perpetuated the unequal development and the existence of communities of color and white communities as well as wealthy communities and poorer communities. Since industries are located in communities of color and poorer communities the processes that lead to the existence of these communities

needs to be examined alongside the injustices faced by these communities (Pulido 2000).

Furthermore, zoning and planning boards, which rarely have representatives from low income or

communities of color, make contemporary zoning decisions (Thomas and Ritzdorf 1997). Since

people living in environmental justice communities most often do not have representation on

these boards, decisions made about their communities are made without their voice as a direct

decision maker.

Urban renewal in Gainesville provides a poignant example of how urban planning

processes altered the physical landscape and influenced contemporary relationships between

community members and local governments. Urban renewal began with the Housing Act of

1949 and officially ended in 1973, although projects funded before 1973 continued through the

1980s. Urban renewal projects were designed to eliminate substandard housing, revitalized city

economies, construct good housing, and reduce de facto segregation. It was primarily done

through clearance and rebuilding directed by local agencies and supported by federal subsidies

(Levy 2000). It is important to emphasis that urban renewal projects were also "spatialized

racial projects because imagineers deployed blight discourse, which pathologized neighborhoods

of color and their inhabitants, to justify state intervention" (Lai 2012, 154).

Urban renewal projects specifically targeted low income and communities of color. In

these neighborhoods, housing stock decreased which decreased vacancy rates and tightened the

housing market. Cheap housing stock was replaced by commercial properties or new high-

quality; expensive housing located in traditionally poor and minority communities. This drove

out the people who had historically inhabited these areas. Since they were forced to relocate,

community ties and bonds were broken (Levy 2000).

In Gainesville, urban renewal started in 1964.   A 1960 brochure published by the City of

Gainesville advocating for the approval of urban renewal projects contends that:

> Most of Gainesville's citizens live in structurally sound and well-maintained
> homes. Some of the city's neighborhoods are among the finest in the state, and
> there is a distinct pride which local residents have in the quality of housing in
> their community. The drawing on the cover does little to represent this high
> quality. Yet this is more than an artist's sketch. Such housing exists in
> significant numbers - *one out of every five dwellings in Gainesville is in this
> condition* - a situation which breeds human misery. Nor are these houses tucked
> away in some obscure corner of–the city - the particular cover house is a five-
> minute walk from City Hall and the Square. It is this situation, in one
> neighborhood, to which this brochure is addressed. For these are the conditions
> which can strangle the economic health of a city, and Gainesville's future will be
> determined by an ability to solve the housing problems in the Fair Street
> Community. (City of Gainesville 1960, 1, italics in original)

The brochure goes on to describe the problems of "slums." They "are expensive and each

taxpayer contributes to the costs . . . Slums, if left alone, spread to better areas . . .slums repel

rather than attract economic growth and prosperity" (City of Gainesville 1960, 1). The solution,

was urban renewal:

> A local program designed to redevelop decayed and decaying residential areas. In
> southeast Gainesville renovating or removing deteriorated structures or replacing
> them with standard homes will only partially solve the problem; the conditions in
> this area are so extensive that such actions would not reach the root of the real
> problem. Sound housing, in order to remain sound, must have a healthy
> environment - free of traffic and of businesses mixed with homes there must be
> schools, parks, and plenty of open space. If an area is to be reclaimed, there must
> be lasting safeguards built into its design which would preserve it (City of
> Gainesville 1960, 3).

And the project was designed to address the conditions in the Newtown/Fair Street area, as was

explained in the brochure:

> Who are the people in the Southeast General Renewal Area and in what kinds of
> houses do they live? This section of Gainesville houses over 98 percent of the
> Negro population, although one of every four households is occupied by whites.
> Living conditions in the area are perhaps the poorest in the city. Houses are
> intermixed with stores, offices and factories, resulting in wholesale deterioration
> of dwellings - 85 percent of the families are living in housing which are

substandard - requiring either major or minor repair. Pockets of dilapidated houses face dead-end alleys. Common privies serve homes whose front yard is a dirt alley, absent of either green or open area. With less than seven percent of the city's land, the Fair Street Community contains 76 per cent of Gainesville's slum housing (City of Gainesville 1960, 4).

Bob Hamrick, a city council member who got involved in city politics to support Urban Renewal

remembers it as:

> [a] federal program that was available to local areas that they could revitalize areas, certainly the city took advantage of this, it was I believe by popular vote, and this is where the government would purchase properties and then revitalize or re-zone or whatever. You would have a plan, this would be for commercial or whatever, and you would implement the plan of the urban renewal. Particularly with residential sections it seemed to be bogged down but it provided great incentive for the city to upgrade and modernize, it had a lot of particularly homes that were under served with water and sewer and things of that nature, and certainly, they came in and put in the infrastructure that would promote good healthy growth. (Hamrick, interview with author, March 16, 2013)

Lyndon Johnson visited Gainesville in May 1964 to promote his "War on Poverty" and "Great

Society" plans. In Gainesville, the Ninth District Opportunity Community Action Agency,

established in 1967, administered many of the programs. Hamrick remembers the urban renewal

projects as a good thing - changes that brought growth to the city. For him the primary outcome

of urban renewal projects was the improvement of the housing stock. Which along with the

improvement in the medical facilities and governmental services, made Gainesville a more

attractive place to live for (white) skilled workers:

> Number one of course, the improvement of housing much substandard housing was present, that to me, in that particular area that was covered was greatly enhanced . . . the expansion of the hospital and the growth there, . . . just the improvement in your various departments of the city government that could enhance the service that was provided. (Hamrick, interview with author, March 16, 2013)

In this way, Hamrick argues that Urban Renewal provided the opportunity for Gainesville to diversify its industrial base. Ms. Faye, like many in the African-American community, remember urban renewal differently, she recalls:

> Faye Bush: If you look back when Urban Renewal came through here, our houses where up that way [pointing towards downtown Gainesville]. They pushed us over here [pointing south towards the industries]. And when Lyndon Johnson came through here he didn't say move the black people, he said, clean that up and develop their houses and make it a better place, you know to live. But you see the city went in there and they just took all that land and pushed everybody out here

> Ellen: So before Urban Renewal, the black community moved closer to downtown, like where the bank was, and the hotel was, and after Urban Renewal, they just pushed everybody further south?

> Faye Bush: And see they, the land that was, that they had for sale for you to purchase to buy a house, you had to go in there and get a loan and start building within sixty days. Ain't no way for us to do that, so we call all our councilman back then, Ms. Ruby, and all them, we said, you know, we can't do that. Then they, put it up to another month, and Ms. Figurous, she had to be a teacher or somebody like that, she was able to get a loan, we wasn't able to get no loan to start no house like that. And then the city wasn't able to sell all the lots so they put some apartments . . .

> EK: And then with Urban Renewal, they bulldozed all the slum houses?

> Faye Bush: They took some of the people out, there was this old lady, she worked with us, down at the plant and she died, and she had worked so hard for her house and they took it and tore it down (interview with author, April 7, 2012)

These sentiments are echoed in a 2011 report prepared for the city of Gainesville by a cultural resources consulting group (Brockington 2011). For the African-American community, urban renewal programs had lasting effects as they "largely destroyed the historically black business corridor that once thrived along Athens Street" (Brockington 2011, 85). This historical redevelopment had immediate economic and social impacts on the African-American community, the spaces they congregated no longer existed and the heart of the African-American business district was destroyed, along with many of the Black owned businesses. It also had lasting impacts on the perception of the city's role in urban planning and development. Ms.

Bush, time and again, echoes the sentiment that "It's amazing to be me that during urban renewal we didn't have a choice and they took our land and took us everywhere but they give Blaze [the current scrapyard operator on the southern border of Newtown] an option" (field notes September 9, 2011). While the laws on eminent domain are different for the case of Blaze and how they were used during urban renewal, for Ms. Bush and many in her community the impact of urban renewal were devastating.   To the community it is unfathomable that the same laws cannot be used to improve the conditions of their neighborhood.

Eminent domain laws in Georgia have become more pro-business and cities can no longer confiscate properties and use the property for economic develop. As, Taylor explains, this limits how the city can use their powers of eminent domain in relationship to current land use problems like the scrap yard operator, Blaze:

> There are certain limitations on what we can do for [Blaze] now because . . . the Georgia Constitutions got in and limited and there . . . are only certain things. I mean you can no longer - it's not like we could tell Blaze, hey look we'd like to buy your property okay and or I'm going to do imminent domain and I'm going to do it for an economic development purpose because the city has limited resources and so the money that we put in of buying and cleaning up your property, then I would need to turn around and sell it, so I can recoup some of the cost. Say it all this limited time of our ability to do that, so it would be buying it and cleaning it up. (Interview with author, March 27, 2013)

For communities of color, who every day live with the impacts of these policy decisions, the historical processes and contrasts with contemporary manifestations of these policy decisions impacts their perceptions of the local government and influences how they believe they are perceived by the local government, regardless of policies' intent and who was responsible for making the decisions.

"I'm Ready to Move Forward:" Urban Planning and the Racial State

The interaction between the intentionality of historic inequitable urban processes and contemporary white privilege works to undermine the rectification of these historical wrongs. Environmental justice communities were created through historical processes; they remain so through the maintenance of the status quo. If historical land use decisions are not explicitly addressed and rectified local governments and planners, perhaps unintentionally, perpetuate unjust development patterns. City planners recognize the historical wrongs that lead to inequitable land use, but they point to these processes to explain existing injustices, rather than looking at how their own actions contribute to these processes. Bailey, who works for the city of Gainesville, explained the environmental differences between the North and South sides of Gainesville as "the simple fact that it's just the development patterns for 60, 70 years that have occurred because of -- and I think it all really has hinged around the location of the railroad. I think the railroad has had a huge impact on what gets developed for more industrial purposes" (interview with author, March 27, 2013). While historical legacies should not be denied or ignored, the 'that is just the way it is because that is what history has given us' mentality fosters an environment where city planners and policy makers can ignore their role in the development and implementation of current policies and practices that at a minimum maintain and more often than not perpetuate these inequalities.

City officials also expressed frustration that they are blamed for past historical injustices. Parker, who also works for the city of Gainesville contended, "We, whoever is here today gets lumped in there with those who made mistakes years ago. You know, none of us were here" (interview with author, March 27, 2013). Bailey echoed similar sentiments:

> Some of the issues that have occurred, you know, 60 plus years ago, it's hard to
> answer for something like that, you know? And it's just -- I can't. I can't answer

for why things were done so many years ago. (interview with author, March 27, 2013)

At the same time, while they do not want to be blamed for the existing injustices, those officials who recognized existing injustices, and not all did, expressed a desire for change. Parker contextualized his/her remarks by saying "I'm ready to move forward. I'm ready to start taking action steps to try and resolve some of these historical injustices," Bailey finished off his/her remarks by saying, "but we do what we can today to hopefully improve it."

These desires to improve conditions in the city do not negate the complexities of how to accomplish change. The political will to create meaningful change does not always exist, and in those instances, city officials fall back on the excuse that not only did they not create the problem but they are currently limited by existing regulatory structures. As Taylor, who also works for the city of Gainesville, explained:

> People are a little more hesitant about [the location of Blaze] because none of us created this situation, none of us that are here now created any of that and we want to do everything we can to help, but there are limits to what can be done and that's the hard part. (interview with author, March 27, 2013)

A tension exists that was ubiquitous with city officials between the blame placed on history - it is not our fault, it is the fault of history – and the mentality of we have to move forward but there are limits to what we can do.

These attitudes are contextualized by Gainesville city officials' "post-racial" attitudes of, "I don't see color, I just see people." All of the city employees I spoke with self-identified as white, all but one of the elected officials self-identified as white. All of the white city employees and elected officials indicated that race was not an important way they identified themselves. Most added that race was not or should not be important in society. For them, race did not impact their daily lives, and while other axes of difference, such as gender and class, were

identified as important, race was something that we should move beyond, and more often than not, something they have moved beyond. In the context of the racial state and white privilege, the narratives of city officials of the importance of race in their own lives cannot be separated from their understanding of the impacts of race on the urban environment. The narrative that racial injustice is a thing of the past hides the systemic injustices that exist and the impact of the legacies of injustices. Without addressing these tensions and recognizing how these historical legacies are engrained on the landscape, the status quo is supported and injustices persist.

Historical accountability is not necessary to remedy historical injustices; instead, it is the desire to move on without redressing underlying injustices directly that is problematic. In this instance, moving Blaze, which was pointed to by city officials as a way to redress historical wrongs would improve the quality of life of the people living in Newtown, but it would not solve the historical injustices facing their community. Furthermore, while city officials have expressed a desire to move Blaze, they have yet to show the political will to actually create conditions where Blaze moves. In this way, they recognize a potential solution, but the political stakes for making change are too high. Since they are not the ones that created the problem, they do not feel the necessity to be the ones to implement the politically unpopular policies that would redress the root causes of these injustices.

"We was Kind of Left Out:" Intention versus Impact

Another factor that influences urban and environmental policy is the tension between the intent and impact of these policies. I argue that urban planners focus on the intention of urban and environmental policies and the theoretical impacts of their policy decision. This does not always align with the practical and material impacts of these policies. In contrast, community members focus their attention on impacts because they live with the consequences of these

policies regardless of their intent. For example, the stated intention of urban renewal was to eliminate substandard housing and desegregate neighborhoods (it is important to contextualize these intentions within the racial history of housing policies at this time), instead, these projects tightened housing markets for low income residents and destroyed neighborhoods by displacing residents and severing community ties (Lai 2012; Levy 2000; Krumholz 1997; Shipp 1997). Differences between the intention and impact of these policies are simultaneously caused by and lead to an actual or perceived disconnect between governmental officials, who develop the policies, and community members, who live the policies. This can be due to lack of communication, lack of participation, differences in perceptions, difference in scale of focus (immediate neighborhood versus larger city or region), or different measures of success (economic, social, quality of life). Regardless of the cause, the tensions between impact and intent can play a vital role in the maintenance of places of persistent injustice.

In 1977, in *Metropolitan Housing Development Corporation v. Village of Arlington Heights* the Supreme Court ruled that Arlington Heights' refusal to allow an area to be rezoned for racially integrated low- and moderate-income housing had a discriminatory impact, but since Arlington Heights' decision not to rezone was not *intentionally* racially discriminatory, therefore, Arlington Heights had acted legitimately (Ritzdorf 1997). This ruling made it more difficult for communities of color to contest inequitable planning decisions because they now had to prove intent. Too often the burden of proof was raised to unobtainable levels. In instances where community members experience potentially physically harmful impacts, like the co-location of toxic waste facilities in communities of color, without discriminatory intention, there is no legal redress under the fourteenth amendment (Foster and Cole 2001).

The differentiation between intention and impact is key to understanding some of the tensions between the perspectives of city officials and community members. Differences can also arise in how impacts are measured, over what scale, and what criteria are used - what is of immediate importance to city officials can be different than the immediate concerns of those living the impacts of the policies. The assessment of these differences is not objective, instead, they are subjective, leading to different perspectives and interpretations of the impacts and consequences of these decisions. The consequence of city officials' focus on the intent and anticipated impacts in contrast, to community members' focus on actual impacts, regardless of the intentions, can lead to physical manifestations of inequality or it can influence the relationship and trust between community members and local governments.

The coupling of differences in intention/impact and perception has played itself out in Gainesville time and again. One example that Ms. Bush often points to is the formation of the Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) in Gainesville.[14] There are different interpretations of how decisions were made by the NPUs, the intentions behind their first actions and the impact these decisions had during the planning processes. From the cities perspective, the NPUs created "an institutional mechanism for continual, detailed land use planning that will be a bottom-up planning approach" (http://www.gainesville.org/special-projects#NPUs), as Terry, who works for the city of Gainesville explains,

> Our first Neighborhood Planning Unit, it was the Newtown and Fair Street all that area . . . Some people have participated and some haven't . . . So, I think that's one step to figure out, you know, the mission and goals of that Neighborhood Planning Unit. (interview with author, Terry, April 1, 2013)

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[14] Neighborhood planning units are "designated by city governments as a neighborhood or group of neighborhoods, whose residents have more local input on things that are or are likely to affect the area. NPUs are organized differently in each city, but generally each is headed by a volunteer group of civic leaders and acts somewhat like a larger-scale homeowners association." The Fair Street NPU, which includes the Newtown neighborhood was established in 2005 (http://www.gainesville.org/special-projects#NPUs)

From Ms. Faye's perspective, she was asked to participate in the NPU process and she did, she went to meetings, she voiced her opinion, but in the end, the first action taken by the NPU did not include Newtown, instead, the Fair Street neighborhood was rezoned and Newtown was left out. As she told a Gainesville Times reporter after a community meeting, "We went to all the meetings, and we was kind of left out, and when we asked what happened to Newtown, they said that we could be recognized next year . . . We were just left out of the loop, to tell you the truth" (Faye Bush as quoted in Fielding February 1, 2010).

The NPU's first action was to change the zoning designation of the Fair Street neighborhood from Residential-II (R-II),[15] and Planned Unit Development (P-U-D),[16] which allows for mixed use development to Neighborhood Conservation (N-C)[17], which is designed to preserve the historic nature of the community while providing for limited development. The first round of re-zoning included 129 parcels in the Fair Street Neighborhood configured around Summit Street and did not include any parcels in Newtown (Fielding November 4, 2009). From the city's perspective, both Fair Street and Newtown were part of the same neighborhood, but they ignored the micro-scalar politics of place (Chapter 6). Furthermore, it was the city's

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[15] Residential-II is designed "to provide for single-family, two-family and multi-family residential development, along with other uses that are compatible with a residential environment such as recreational, educational and religious facilities." (Sec. 9-5-4-1. Purpose and intent. Gainesville, Georgia Code of Ordinance, http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=10820)

[16] Planned Unit Development is designed "to provide for maximum flexibility in the mixture and arrangement of land uses. The PUD zoning district provides for planned unit developments and mixed use developments but provides separate design specifications for both. This district provides for unique and innovative land developments that will meet the objectives of the city's comprehensive plan. Development in this zoning district is characterized by a unified site design for the entire development." (Sec. 9-7-1-1. Purpose and intent generally. Gainesville, Georgia Code of Ordinance, http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=10820)

[17] The N-C neighborhood conservation district is established to allow the transition of older residential areas to primarily low- to moderate-density single-family residential development, along with other uses that are compatible with a residential environment such as recreational, educational and religious facilities. This district is intended to implement the city comprehensive plan's suburban, medium-density residential future land use category with density not to exceed two (2) dwelling units per acre. This district is also intended to provide for new, high-quality infill residential development that maintains community character, and ensures stable, long-term property values and neighborhoods, at higher densities than the base density of the zoning district, subject to compatibility standards and/or pursuant to a specific neighborhood plan." (Sec. 9-5-3-1. Purpose and intent. Gainesville, Georgia Code of Ordinance. http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=10820)

intention to rezone the area in phases, first the 126 parcels around Summit Street and then in the second phase, parcels in Newtown. The impact for the members of the NFC was a further sense of exclusion and the sense that while they participated fully in the process their participation was not fully respected because their anticipated results were not achieved (field notes March 7, 2013).

What complicates this example even more is that Ms. Bush has expressed apprehension about Newtown being rezoned as PUD because she is concerned that it will limit the ability of future development in the area, especially if they are able to relocate Blaze. While her apprehension was motivated by her concerns regarding the future of the Blaze property, the process of rezoning is parcel by parcel so the inclusion of the Blaze property was never in question in the re-zoning process. Furthermore, in June 2011, the city expand the rezoning process to include 252 parcels including the Newtown neighborhood, but Ms. Bush still points to the exclusion of Newtown in the first round of rezoning as why she no longer participates in the NPU process and why she does not trust the city.

This example might strike some as insignificant but in the relationship between members of the NFC and the local government, this example is critical. For the women of the NFC, it is indicative of the historic injustices their community has faced and it compounds their already deep seeded mistrust of local government. And while others might argue that this is not a question of differences in intention and impact but instead a difference in perspective, I argue that the two must be considered in tandem. Impact is always relative and the interpretation of the impact can result from different perceptions. As Bailey (interview with the author, March 27, 2013), who works for the city of Gainesville conceded, when asked about environmental injustices in Gainesville, when "you're living in the community, you have a more heightened

sense of the impacts, you know, whereas somebody that's not living in the neighborhood is not

living it, you know, every day."

Even though regulators focus on the intent of ordinances and regulations, they are not

unaware of the tension between intent and impact. Unlike community members who focus on

policy decisions that impact their daily lives, city officials' focus on unintended consequences of

policies designed to address a specific problem, industry or aspect of development. As Taylor

(interview with author, March 27, 2013), explained:

> I think the hard thing from the city standpoint, you look at the regulations and
> regulations have to apply to everybody . . . So, you're maybe focused on one
> person, but there is such a ripple of unintended consequences sometimes. I'm
> going to pass this and next thing you know it's gone here and rippled on out and
> your like, oh I didn't mean for it to that, or I didn't do that or I didn't intend for
> that, or I didn't intend for this.

City officials' recognition of the importance of considering unintended consequences of policy

decisions, does not necessarily translate into attention to the different perspectives of impacts of

policies. While this is evident in urban planning decisions, it also occurs during the development

and implementation of urban and environmental regulations.

How the Environment is Regulated

While urban planning provides the framework within which urban environments are

governed, it is regulations, at the local, state, and federal level that dictate the day-to-day

operations of these places. Regulations are often presented as neutral, benign, and objective

entities. Especially with environmental regulation, the guise of science is used to exert an aura

of neutrality (see Chapter 6). In reality, regulations are tied up in political, economic, social, and

cultural processes.   This is evident through, among other things, what is and is not regulated,

how regulations are designed, and how they are implemented. For environmental justice

communities, these processes are further influenced by their lack of participation, representation,

political efficacy, and social capital (see Chapter 7). In the remainder of this chapter, I examine

the contrasts between actual limits of regulations verses community perceptions of what

regulations should do to tease out how regulations, which are designed to protect communities,

instead, contribute to the injustices facing these places.

For those living in environmental justice communities, the very laws they believe should

protect them are often the same ones limiting their legal recourse to improve the conditions in

their communities. Furthermore, environmental laws, do not eliminate the emissions of

environmental pollutants, instead they limit the emissions to acceptable levels for human and

ecosystem health. As Hunter, who works for EPA Region 4, explained:

> We're [at EPA] in the business of permitting . . .some people would say . . . we're
> permitting pollution . . . We do that in a way that we think that will -- That we're
> not endangering the quality of drinking water, but it's still a discharge . . .if you're
> discharging some, you know, sewage . . . it's designed in a way that won't
> negatively impact the environment. (Interview with author, June 10, 2013)

Environmental regulators recognize the complexity of the relationship between their job of

protecting the environment and human health, and the political, economic, and social

environments within which they work. As Cameron, who also works for EPA Region 4,

articulates in comparing his/her approach to environmental regulation and the approach of

environmental justice communities:

> [Environmental justice communities] probably would be looking for more
> protections than I think maybe . . . I take into account. I know that industry has to
> survive, we have to have industry there is no doubt about it and I would want to
> make sure people are protected and maybe not to the extent that they think they
> deserve to be protected. (Interview with author, June 6, 2012)

Regardless, in the end, regulators are limited in what they can do because:

> There is some flexibility on how we do our job, but at the end of the day, you
> know, we're an executive agency. Congress passes laws. We enforce them. And
> you know, we have -- We work within the balance of the laws that we're given,

and you know, that's how we do our job. (Jesse, interview with author, March 4, 2013)

These limitations do not take away from their recognition of the disconnect between what they can do and what community members expect them to do:

> There are regulated industries that do release regulated levels of chemicals to their environment, and everything that we have at statute -- statutes and regulation and in science, says that that's still protecting human health, but it doesn't make them feel like it is. It's their community. (Mason, interview with author, August 15, 2013)

To address this tension, environmental regulators find creative ways to work within the confines of their regulatory mandates while attempting to address the needs of community members.

"I have a different lens:" Race, gender, and regulations

Representatives of EPA's lived experiences are often different from those living in environmental justice communities. As government employees, they often have the financial means to not live in environmental justice communities. This does not mean they are not unaware or at times intimately connected to the struggles of environmental justice. This is especially true for individuals who are responsible for community outreach through the Office of Environmental Justice and Superfund Community Involvement Coordinators (CIC)[18]. Eight of the nine community outreach/ environmental justice employees I spoke with self-identified as African-American.[19] The African-American CICs spoke freely about the importance of race and their African-American identity in their approach to their job. They were also quick to point out

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[18] Superfund CICs are "the conduit between communities and technical staff working on Superfund and Federal Facilities projects. Community Involvement Coordinators (CICs) are assigned to specific projects to assist communities in their interaction with EPA and ensure that technical staff is aware of issues that concern the public in relation to the work EPA is doing. As liaisons between technical project managers and the community, CICs provide opportunities for two-way communication throughout the life of a project."
http://www.epa.gov/region4/superfund/programs/comminvolve/comminvolve.html

[19] At the time I conducted my interviews, the Office of Environmental Justice was its own department. They have since merged with the Office of Sustainability to form the Office of Environmental Justice and Sustainability. I did not interview members of the Office of Sustainability. I spoke with everyone who at the time of the interviews worked in the Office of Environmental Justice and half of the CICs.

that not all CIC's were African-American, although most were, and that being African-American

was not a prerequisite to do their jobs, but, in their opinions, it did help them do their job. Those

people who were involved in community outreach broadly or environmental justice specifically,

all had a narrative of how they came into the field, often it was embedded into a narrative of

family, race, and personal experience. For example:

> I realized that my family growing up in those rural areas in South Georgia actually dealt more with the environment than I would have thought. And so some of the social ethics you know just thinking about the fact that they had gardens, and my grandfather was on tractor using pesticides on a daily basis in the spring, harvesting his crops, and he was the share cropper and I'm feeding chickens and going to the hogs and the outhouse. You know it's just you know for me it was like the connection actually doing community involvement, brought back that connection so now when I go down there I'm like talking to my family about the environmental stuff, and I'm like do you all know those wells that we are drinking out of, a lot of people are still on wells and so it brought back a personal message to me. (Devon, interview with author, June, 25, 2012)

There are also narratives of injustice they, their families, or their communities experienced.

These narratives were either specifically about environmental injustices or more broadly about

their experiences living as a person of color. As Brice conveyed:

> I have a different lens . . . I say this because . . . my parents grew up in Chicago, I'm from Chicago. And my parents grew up in what was called, one of the poster child environmental justice communities in Chicago, Altgeld Gardens . . . this African American community on the Southside of Chicago . . . was surrounded by industrial facilities, a land fill, just a myriad of pollution impacts. Long story short, the people that lived in this community years ago when they got in their 60s they all got cancer, random all types of cancer, okay. And so I mean my parents are not alive today and I believe they died early because of the environmental, you know the pollution impacts, that they experienced as young children. Even though . . . when they became adults they didn't live there anymore they both got college degrees and moved out. But still when they were young children their lungs were exposed to the pollution. So I say all that to say that when I take off my EPA hat and I'm in the community I have a different level of compassion around the work because it hit my home . . . You know what I'm saying? My personal home. And so I understand when I hear community folks complaining and trying to figure out how we get EPA and other federal agencies involved in bringing solutions to their community. (Brice, interview with author, June 6, 2012)

Racialized experiences played a strong role in the motivation of the career employees as to why they did their job, why environmental justice work and community outreach work was critical to EPA's mission and how they choose approach their job.

Race was not the only axes of difference which people attributed to their motivation for their environmental work, gender, specifically womanhood, especially motherhood, where identified as a motivator and influence on their engagement with regulatory processes. It was often the role of motherhood that EPA employees pointed to that connected them to community members. They may live in different places, their class identification may be different, but they all worry about their children.[20] As one female participant explained,

> you go in communities and you hear such a story people tell about where they live and how they have been impacted . . . you hear about children because I have young children and you think gosh I would never live in that community, but you know some people don't have a choice and then it makes me just realize that we have to be real advocates for people who don't have a voice so that they don't have to, just because you are poor it doesn't mean you cannot have a plain environment you don't deserve that. (Interview with author, June 6, 2012)

For these women, their personal experiences of motherhood and as women, influenced their approach to environmental regulation and how they interacted with communities that were or felt they were facing environmental injustices. The intersecting identities of race and gender lead them to what they identify as a more compassionate approach to environmental management:

> I have a different level of compassion in addition to just me being a trained professional to do this work. You know I'm in my heart I have a different level of compassion because I know what – I kind of know where they are coming from most of the time. (Interview with author, June 6, 2012)

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[20] While there are plenty of fathers who care deeply about their children and their children's well-fare, during the interviews that I conducted, the male participants did not identify their roles as fathers as an important way they identified, nor did they indicate that their role as fathers was a way for them to connect to the community. I only interview two males who were specifically involved in community outreach or environmental justice, but at the time of the interviews, they were the only one males working in the Office of Environmental Justice or one as a Superfund Community Involvement Coordinator

Approaching environmental regulation through the lens of race and gender complicates the

notion of the EPA as a monolithic governmental organization. As Robertson (2010)

demonstrates, the EPA is made up of individuals, and each of those people have complicated

lived experiences, and these lived experiences motivate and influence their decision making

processes. They are motivated by these experiences and these experiences lead to complicated

relationships with the regulations they are charged with enforcing:

> I think that regulations are good . . . They have their place, but I think that there's something else to go along with the regulation, and that is the human regulations. How do -- You just can't say this is a law and we're going to pass this law, and this is the Clean Water Act or this is the Clean Air Act, and we're abiding by regulations, because sometimes regulations can -- Because often times when you're doing permits, you know, you're permitting a facility. You're really actually saying, I'm going to permit you to emit X amount of pollutants. (Casey, interview with author, June 6, 2012)

The tension between what they can do, what they want to do, and what they think should be done

influences their day-to-day actions.

"We're EPA . . .[people think] we can do whatever:" Regulatory authority and practices

The mission of the EPA is to "protect human health and the environment"

(www.epa.gov). They are funded by congressional appropriations and are tasked with

implementing the laws and regulations that congress or the executive branch mandate.

Communities do not always see it that way:

> When we come in [to communities] a lot of times, I think people think we're EPA, we're the federal government, we can do whatever we have the will to do . . . And I think it's important for people to understand that we're very much limited by our laws and regulations. That's all we have the authority to do, and you know, you always see other things that, you know, can be done. (Interview with author, Jesse, March 4, 2013)

Representatives of EPA empathized with communities and struggled with the disconnect

between what they are authorized to do, and what they would like to do:

> You know . . . it frustrates me that, you know, we can spend millions of dollars cleaning up the site, but we can't spend $100,000 building a community center. You know, I understand why, but it's still frustrating. (Jesse, March 4, 2013)

They see their role not just as environmental regulators but as sympathetic listeners to the communities' concerns:

> You just respectfully explain, you know, what the facts are, you know, what our limitations are, listen sympathetically. A lot of times, you know, they do have a problem, you know, and I wouldn't want that in my yard any more than they do, but most people understand when you explain to them and educate them about, you know, what the situation is, and not -- don't say that every time that works out, but most of the times it does (interview with author, Hunter, June 10, 2013)

They understand and they take seriously their mandate of protecting human health and the environment, but they also recognize that at times, in some of the communities they serve, there are other concerns that go beyond the environment that also need to be met.

Regardless of the passion, compassion, and experiences driving their work, the regulatory authority granted to them by Congress limits EPA employees. Laws are never clear cut and there are always multiple ways to interpret regulations and these interpretations, as Skylar, who works for the City of Gainesville, explains are always political:

> We are in a political environment that's where we are and I understand that, it's not a perfect world at all. And I tell people some people get upset because we have our code and can I just go to the code and read and that's all the information I need. I know what I can and can't do and I wish it were that simple. If it were then you wouldn't need a staff to help interpret that code. And our codes are different. For instance our land development code are zoning ordinances essentially. That's something that we wrote, I mean we had a consultant help us, but we created it. We adopted it locally. We understand why it was written the way it was written. We understand the areas that are gray and murky. Every situation is different. We understand as we call it the spirit of the code. (Interview with author, March 20, 2013)

This is especially pertinent for environmental justice communities because research has shown that environmental regulations are unevenly enforced in communities of color and low-income

communities especially as regulators are limited by the funds they have to enforce regulations (Bullard 2000).

Just as there are differences in how regulations are interpreted by regulators, there are also differences between how communities perceive regulations and the actual parameters of the regulations. This creates challenges for the regulators, as part of their job becomes explaining what they can and cannot do, and for community members, as they try to make sense of what regulatory tools they can rely on to make changes in their communities. This process is further complicated because environmental regulations are not clear-cut. For EPA employees who work directly with communities, to them, their job entails more than just explaining EPA role in the community and EPA's regulatory limits. They see themselves as liaisons between the community and the government. They recognize that they cannot effectively do their job if they are continually telling community members that x, y, and z are out of their regulatory purview, instead, they work within the regulatory framework provided to them by EPA to do what needs to be done. They find other governmental agencies that might be able to address some of the community's concerns. They talk to local governments to try to find solutions to problems. They act as liaisons between the community and other power brokers in the community. They try to make connections so solutions can be found to the problems communities identify. Within these processes there is a constant negotiation between governmental authority and the expectations and perceptions of community members:

> I think there's different expectations, you know, sort of at the individual level . . . We have to operate just under the authority that we have under the different statutes, and a lot of times people, you know, just want EPA or some other government organization to just fix their problem. And a lot of times we have different tools we can use, but sometimes we don't have authority to do that. Maybe some other government agency has it. Maybe nobody has it. (Hunter, June 10, 2013)

For the regulators, the task then becomes multi-faceted, they are not only interpreting and

implementing environmental regulations and negotiating with other regulatory agencies, they are

also managing expectations of what the EPA can and cannot do:

> We occasionally have to refer to it as lowering expectations, because when folks have something that really makes them feel uneasy or unsafe in their communities, they look at the EPA and have great expectations for what our name would indicate that we ought to be able to do, and those perceptions are very real, so we spend a lot of time explaining kind of the difference between those expectations, and what we can actually accomplish (Mason August 15, 2013)

The process of lowering expectations does not take away from the empathy that all the

representatives of EPA I spoke with expressed for community members faced with either real or

perceived environmental dangers. They all coupled their personal frustrations with the limits of

their authority, and as Jaden, a CIC explained, while they have to balance community

expectations with the authority of EPA, there are ways they can meet community needs to

effectively do their job:

> So they [community members] think when the EPA comes to town for Superfund site we get the big hammer and we're going to hit the local government and municipal council on top of their head, and make them do right by them and so part of what I found that I've spend an ordinate amount of time doing is sort of just massaging over that . . . I'm teaching the basic civics that's it. I understand your anxiety I understand you feel like your community is being ostracized and over looked and disempowered. However this is the process, and we're here for this but for your process I have to give them something so that they can hear me for what I'm there for. And so that takes a little more time but you know for the CIC which I would say all of us are doing, we take the time to really hear what their issues are and then if we are in a meeting with city council members, or mayors or something we could say you know these people have been complaining they say for years about dumping, over in their community you know anything about that, or maybe you could maybe talk to them or send someone to check it out. (Interview with author, Jaden, June 25, 2012)

In this way, while they feel limited in what they are able to do, they also expand the notion of

what is possible to achieve within their regulatory limits.

The representatives of EPA Region 4 I spoke with approached the limitations of EPA in various ways, primarily, they listen to constituents, they emphasize the importance of explaining and educating communities about the power and limitations of EPA, they work within EPA to create broader policy changes to address the deficits they see in the field, and they work to create liaisons with other federal, state, and local agencies who might create the change they are unable to create. They feel strongly that it is not enough to just implement regulations, as Mason explains:

> Whether or not we can answer or have the authority to respond to their concerns is really a secondary issue to being open and to work hard to have [conversations and communication], and make it possible for them to know with whom and how to communicate their concerns. (Mason, August 15, 2013)

Morgan, who I interviewed with Mason, added that:

> it's almost a daily occurrence for many of us to be on the phone with citizens who are -- who have expectations that we should come in, for example, and -- to use this as an example, shut down an industry, because they feel or allege, or maybe have some evidence of impacts on their communities for their health, and so they would hope that we could just come in and shut the doors for that industry and stop their pollutants from being allowed to continue to be placed into their environment as they would define it. And as [Mason] said, we often end up having to talk with people for hours on end about what we can do, what the states can do, and what maybe a local authority might be able to help them with. (Morgan, August 15, 2013)

In addition to listening, the representatives of EPA I spoke with felt that to do their job effectively, they had to try to help anyway that they could:

> First and foremost you listen, you ask the questions. What is it that a community wants, why do you want it, and then also explain EPA's position in terms of how we can even provide to meet that want or the challenges that we have in meeting it. Sometimes the communities may want to improve their environment that is not for EPA to do, for example if they want a health assessment that is something we rely on ATSDR to do, or if they want a health center, or something along those lines, or maybe it's something that only a local government can provide. So, we work to try to identify who it is that can provide that, and to the extent we can, use our own contacts for things to make calls or to put communities in touch with people who directly address that. (Alex, June 25, 2012)

The efforts of the career employees, does not always translate into trusting relationships between EPA and the community. While career employees do not necessarily change with national political power shifts, the leadership at the national and regional level are political appointees and reflect the values and priorities of the presidential administration. The emphasis on environmental justice and community outreach has varied since Clinton's 1994 executive order on environmental justice, with emphasis decreasing during the Bush era and reemerging as a priority during the Obama administration (Roskie, Ferguson, Kohl 2010). Lisa Jackson, EPA Administer during President Obama's first term in office, made environmental justice and community outreach one of her seven pillars of the EPA (www.epa.gov), and it remains a priority under Gina McCarthy. The administrative priorities impact the work of the career employees:

> Well the community and environmental justice is really a priority under this administration and that's not to knock anyone's particular administration but just to say that priorities change as administrations change. And if the people at the top of the pyramid are saying these are the things we want to focus on then, that trickles down to the regional level and that's what our, I guess it gets tied into our, our performance appraisals for those people doing the technical work now they have to acknowledge. I'm acknowledging whether this is an environmental justice community or not and I did these things to ensure that it was or wasn't. So if they're being evaluated and it impacts their performance or' how they're evaluated then, of course they're going to reach out to us more because that's a grey area for them. (Jaden, interview with author, June 25, 2012)

Regardless, historical legacies of the relationships between EPA and community members, and continued misconceptions of what the EPA is and is not capable of leads to mistrust between community members and EPA and other environmental regulators.

Conclusion

Environmental justice communities are not passive byproducts of long ago planning decisions. They are contemporary manifestations of historical urban planning processes that are

embedded in the racial state and maintained by contemporary land use and regulatory decisions. When examined through the lens of the fatal coupling of difference and power, the excuse that historic incompatible land uses would never happen now, and while we want to address them there are regulatory challenges to do so, and we therefore need to move on from these discussions reflects a form of white privilege/denial. In most instances, white communities, particular middle and upper class white communities, are not forced to face or live with the negative consequences of historic land use planning because these decisions were designed to protect them and their communities (Delaney 1998, 2002; Lipsitz 2006, 2011; Schein 2006). Furthermore, by using the excuse of history injustices are perpetuated. Through this perpetuation city officials are re-enforcing historical wrongs (maybe passively). Until they directly engage with fixing the historical norms they are contributing to the perpetuation on the racial state.

While urban planners have a level of autonomy, in the end, like environmental regulators, they work within a political system and are limited by the authority granted to them. The lack of political authority to create change can create further barriers or act as a scapegoat to make change. Regulators and community members approach conceptions of regulations and urban planning decisions differently. While regulators focus on the intent of regulations, community members live the impacts of their decisions. This tension leads to different understandings of the regulation and can lead to mistrust between regulators and community members. This is not to say that environmental regulators ignore the concerns of community members, in contrast, members of EPA region 4 often work within their regulatory framework to build liaisons with other organizations at the federal, state, and local level to meet the needs to community members that they cannot address.

Environmental justice communities are first shaped by the legacies of historic urban planning decisions. These legacies manifest themselves on the physical landscape as well as in the ways that contemporary planning decisions are made. The tensions between intent and impact of regulation and what regulators can and cannot do adds more obstacles that communities have to overcome as they strive to provide sufficient evidence to meet the necessary burden of proof placed on them to make change. Against the energy and demand for change, governmental officials utilize historical processes as a self-fulfilling rational for environmental justice communities, as a justification to maintain the status quo, intentionally or unintentionally. This creates yet another nearly insurmountable obstacle, an environment where activists need to demonstrate how the passivity or inactions of regulators is maintaining the conditions in their community. It is much easier for people to prove that something someone is doing is causing a problem, rather than something that someone is not doing is causing a problem. Additionally, regulators and court precedent on intention, rather than impact, privileges the actions and thoughts of regulators over the experiences of people living in environmental justice communities. This is not to say that all regulators sit idly by and watch injustices persist. On the contrary, there are many individuals who work within the regulatory framework provided to them to try to work with communities to over the challenges facing their communities. This is in part due to the fact that they recognize the differences that arise in how problems and solutions to environmental problems are defined, and the role scientific knowledge plays in these processes. Yet they are working to minimize the effects on environmental justice communities, rather than the root causes that create the problems in the place. I now turn my attention to a discussion of the role scale of analysis, varying definitions of who is and should be involved in

decision-making processes, and what counts as viable scientific evidence in decision making-processes.

CHAPTER 6

DEFINING THE PROBLEM, DEFINING THE SOLUTION

In October 2010, as part of the celebrations surrounding their 60th anniversary, the NFC

hosted a conference on private-public collaborations. They wanted to bring together city

officials, church officials, university partners, and other non-profits they had worked with,

successfully and unsuccessfully, throughout their history to discuss what makes good

partnerships and how they could move forward together to address the concerns facing Newtown

and other similar communities. The conference opened with a keynote speech by Dr. Darrell

Rodgers, who at the time was the Associate Director for Community Environmental Health at

the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). For many members of the

NFC, there was some concern and conflicting feelings of having a representative of ATSDR be

the keynote speaker. It was after all the 2000/2001 ATSDR report that concluded that the data

did not suggest that there was a threat to public health caused by industrial facilities or the

location of the community over a landfill. It was this report, combined with and often conflated

with the 1990 cancer study that attributed high rates of cancer to "lifestyle choices" not

surrounding industries, that governmental officials in Gainesville use as "scientific justification"

to delegitimize the claims of the members of the NFC (ATSDR 2000/2001, McKinley and

Williams 1990). NFC members also hoped that Dr. Rodger's participation, and his newly

created position that focused on the relationship between communities who ATSDR serves and

ATSDR scientists, was an indication of a potential to build a new relationship between the

community and ATSDR.

As an African-American male scientist trained in community health, Dr. Rodgers saw his role at ATSDR as liaison between community concerns and the scientific processes. He began by acknowledging the distinction between himself as a governmental official and the community. For the agency, this was just a project, one of the many projects they work on, maybe simultaneously. It was part of a job they might care passionately about, but nonetheless, it was a job. On the other hand, for the community members, this was their life - it was not a job, most likely they had another job, and if they choose to formally work with a nonprofit or just lived in the community, they were living the realities of the problems on a daily basis. They could not just hang up their lab coats at the end of day and go home because this was their home.

He continued by emphasizing that lack of evidence does not prove lack of the existence of a problem; it just means that the problem has not yet been proven to exist. By looking at the same questions from different perspectives, asking different questions, and as the science changes, different answers may arise. In conclusion, he encouraged community members to be persistent and involve as many people as possible in the process, because from the government's perspective, people involved represents a measure of resources, and resources are a measure of power.

The message of the changing role of science, the difference between the perspective of government scientists and community members, and the importance of persistence resonated with the members of the NFC, however they were also concerned and skeptical. For me, Dr. Rodgers' comments raised questions about the relationship between science, communities, and problem framing. If the solution to the problem was contingent on defining the problem, how can community members make their voices heard through this process? How can community members engage with the continually changing scientific evidence that drives the regulatory

policies? How can community members prove that there are problems in their community if the existing science does not meet the required threshold of burden of proof? How could they get the scientists to ask and answer the questions that would help them prove that the industries surrounding their homes were causing problems that they knew they were living every day?

The way a problem is framed dictates the solution that people are looking for and in turn dictates the range of potential solutions they will discover. The ways that people define a problem can be based on a myriad of professional and personal factors - individual experiences, technical training, their subjectivity, and at times, the solutions that are feasible. It is also dictated by the factors that are considered, be they economic, environmental, social, health, or some combination of these factors (Allen 2003). Environmental justice activists are not only trying to define the scientific questions to redress the problems facing their communities, they are also faced with how to frame their activism, are they addressing issues of social justice, environmental justice, or a combination of the two? Are there potential benefits or negative consequences to the framing they choose? While they are often facing both environmental and social injustices, the decision on problem definition often depends on which framework they believe will get them more attention, resources, and potential collaborators (Bullard 2000; Cole and Foster 2001; Checker 2005; Pezzullo and Sandler 2007).

Even when activists successfully frame the problems their community face in a way that brings attention, resources, and collaborators to address their issues, it does not negate the challenges for regulators and activists as they approach complicated situations of environmental injustice, as Mason explains:

> There are some places that it's very challenging to find a direct tie to regulation where we can say, alright, there's problem A, here's solution B. We have that certainly, but we do run into less clear situations (interview with author, August 15, 2013).

As a result, activists get tired and frustrated of being told that if they just approach the problem from this direction things will change. As Ms. Bush expresses time and again, activists want action, she wants things to change, she wants a commitment to action, not a commitment to talking (field notes December 13, 2011).

The definition of the problem should not disconnected from individuals' lived experiences. People define problems in distinct ways, employ different strategies and tactics, and identify and seek varying solutions. In her research on childhood asthma campaigns in New York City, Julie Sze (2007, 93) demonstrates that race and gender "shape the perception of the problem and the activism to remediate it." In this way, "[r]ace matters not only in how environmental justice activists have come to understand environmental problems, but also in how they understand themselves in relations to those problems." (Allen, Daro, and Holland 2007, 114). Even though environmental justice activists often chose race as an identifying and unifying factor at the national scale, it does not negate nor decrease the importance of other identifying factors at the individual scale of the organization (Pulido 1996b; Buckingham and Kulcur, 2009). Furthermore, the fatal coupling of difference and power over multiple scales and expertise influences how problems are defined and what constitutes viable evidence to prove that the lived experiences of environmental injustices are validated in regulatory framework and meet the burden of proof required by law.

Different Goals, Scales, and Solutions

The scale at which problems are defined and solutions are sought influences what is seen and what possible outcomes exist. While within regulatory processes, scale is often talked about in a concrete nesting manner, scale is instead, a relational, power-laden processes that is used to

reinforce or challenge existing power structures (Leitner et al. 2008, Pulido 2000). The critical engagement with scale and its influence on our understandings of place is necessary because:

> scale is a way to locate how power socially produces differences between places and therefore brings into focus how a singular scale or geographic totality carries within it intricacies and connective social processes which can, and do, impact upon multiscalar areas. Second, because singular scales or totalities are relational, and not naturally hierarchical, they are materially and discursively alterable, able to be reconfigured locally and therefore within wider social contexts. (McKittrick 2006, 83)

In geography, "geographic scale is conceptualized as socially constituted rather than ontologically pre-given, and that the geographic scales constructed are themselves implication in the constitution of social, economic, and political processes" (Delaney and Leitner 1997: 93). They are therefore fluid, changing and have different meanings, to different people, over different times. Scale is inherent in the strategies used by social movements. By considering scales as socially constructed, researchers can examine the ways use scale in their tactics and strategies, what scale they choose to act on, and how scale is constructed by activists, governments, and third party organizations (Miller and Martin 2000). This does not mean that all activists agree on what scales to use, instead, difficulties can arise when there is conflict over which scales to use in what situations (Leitner at al. 2008).

The power and malleability of scale is used by those in power and social movements to define the scope of any given problem. Scale can be used to make environmental issues appear and disappear. Moreover, scale frames and counter-frames can be developed to name a problem, place blame on others, or claim a problem (Kurtz 2003, 2002). In this way, disparities in negative and positive impacts can be strategically deployed using multiple scales to address the concerns of the environmental justice activists, industries and local officials. It for this reasons that Pulido (2000) challenges geographers to bring questions of scale into our analysis of

environmental racisms, not as distinct objects but as social processes because engaging with scale as a set analytic category, can at times hide as much as reveal notions of injustice.

For communities of color, the engagement with scale in contesting injustices takes on a greater meaning because intersecting oppressions of race, class, and gender are not just bodily or identity based; they are also spatial acts (McKittrick 2006). Since race and space are mutually constituted, to fully understand each one, you need to understand how they work together in relation to power structures (Delaney 2002; Gilmore 2002). Considering how scale is used and contested through the lens of racial formations and the racial state brings attention to both how scale is used to reinforce and contests places of persistent injustice.

Conflicts between what scale can and should be used to define a problem depend on the subjectivities of the individual or entity defining the scale of analysis. Local governments balance the environmental impacts on an often small, politically disenfranchised area with the economic benefits to the city or region as a whole. For communities and environmental justice activists, the contrast between the hyper local – those people directly impacted by an industry – and the local – those that are peripherally impacted – impacts how people define the problem and influences who is directly invested in solving the problem. In all these instances, the definition of the local, who is included, who is not, and what are the competing interests of the multiple hyper-local communities are relevant in the definition of and solutions sought by activists. The scale of analysis is also relative, for example, the federal government might consider small scale a regional approach, while a local government might consider a small scale approach to be on a neighborhood scale.

The reality of how scale is used is never simple and clear cut. At times, multiple scales are used simultaneously or one scale of analysis is privileged for one set of decisions, while

another scale is privileged for another set of decisions. Either intentionally or unintentionally, regulators and activists alike will most often seek the scale of analysis that will produce their desired outcomes (Kurtz 2002, 2003; Allen 2003). Therefore, although instances of environmental injustice are often presented as existing on one scale, they instead, exist on multiple and overlapping geographical and political scales. Environmental justice activists use these multiple and sometimes contradictory scales of analysis to make sense of the problem (Kurtz 2002) and pursue justice.

"I'm optimistic and this is a first step:" EPA's collaborative problem solving workshop

In March 2013, EPA Region 4 conducted a one and a half day collaborative problem solving training workshop (the workshop) in Gainesville. The workshop was the culmination of two years of planning in response to an initial request, made in May 2011, by the NFC for EPA Region 4's assistance to act as a mediator to encourage Blaze to accept the land swap being offered by the City of Gainesville. The micro-scalar conflicts that were highlighted during the workshop demonstrate the use of scale in goal setting, the impact of different conceptions of "we" in identifying problems and solutions, and the problems that occur when there is an assumption that certain groups should speak as one group.

The workshop was held March 22-23, 2013. The two years it took to plan the meeting reflected the desires of EPA Region 4 to hold a successful training and the multiple viewpoints they were trying to incorporate:

> We had to step back, there are different views, and there are different viewpoints, and we want to do it right the first time, and even though it seems like it might be a little late, we think that it's the best approach so that no one would be in the dark. (field notes, March 29, 2012)

The slow pace of bureaucratic processes, negotiation of funds, the form of the training, and attempts to gain community buy-in all took longer than expected. In the initial planning phases,

representatives from EPA Region 4's Office of Environmental Justice met with representatives

of Cargill, Blaze, Purina, and Milliken, the dominant industry operating on Gainesville's

Southside, to explain the process. The companies offered initially optimistic assessments of

participating in the process, but the community remained unconvinced. EPA officials tried to

placate their concerns, about the slow pace of the project and the concerns about the direction of

the project, as one representative said during one of many conference calls:

> I understand your frustration, and all that I can say from this office is that it
> worked in other committees and I'm optimistic and this is a first step. I can't
> promise you that after this training is, that I can only present you some essential
> tools that [we] can use to work together to solving the issues that you're having.
> We're going to present this information to you, and it's been very effective in the
> past. It allows the person on the other side of the table to understand what the
> other side of the table is saying. All of those things we're saying, and we're going
> to present the seven steps of community problem solving to improve. (field notes,
> December 13, 2011)

In fall 2012, EPA Region 4 contracted with a professional facilitator who conducted a

community assessment and was charged with co-leading the workshop. In follow-up meetings

with Purina and Milliken, industry representatives expressed their views that they complied with

all of EPA regulations, they had no problems with the community, and until there were direct

problems they would not participate in the process. Cargill never participated in the follow-up

interviews. Blaze, who was the focus of the NFC concerns, maintained their stance that they are

an asset to the community and the community liked having them there. They were the only

industry to participate in the training even though their representative only participated in day

one of the training.

Leading up to the training, members of the NFC were still unclear as to the purpose and

intent of the training. They had requested assistance from EPA Region 4 to help them move

Blaze from their neighborhood, and they were unclear as to how this training would help in that

process. The day before the training, Ms. Johnson expressed her concerns:

> My concern is that they are going to try to stretch it out so far that they aren't
> going to try to do anything – all I think that they're doing is trying to get people to
> understand environmental justice – that seems to be the goal of this conversation
> – I really think that that will be helpful because coming from us, they don't want
> to hear about environmental justice, but EPA might, I think we might be able to
> start a conversations on environmental justice as it effects environmental justice –
> are we just going to be talking about the Southside or all of Gainesville, it effects
> people are all sides, we need to know what we're going to be focusing on – not
> the whole city and county of Gainesville – wherever environmental justice
> impacts people we should talk about – this grew out of the thing they tried to do
> before and they come back and trying to do it because they didn't do it right
> before (field notes, March 21, 2013)

She also went on to express concerns about the participation of city and county officials:

> I don't think that city, the county or the industry conceptually can connect to
> environmental justice because they have not been deprived of a right to do
> anything – but the thing that EPA might be able to do that may be helpful, is that
> they may be able to introduce the notion and impact of environmental justice that
> whoever is there that hasn't been impacted will be able to understand and begin to
> conceptualize – I think that this is the only thing that will come out of it – they
> will hear a governmental other than that I don't see it – that is a big plus because
> it may make . . .When we talked about the Southside and this whole thing boiled
> up from the junkyard – since the city and the county are so connected – I don't
> think that it can be that, because some of the other people with their own
> community interests. (Rose Johnson, field notes, March 29, 2013)

The concerns of Ms. Johnson and the NFC reflect their engagement with the micro-scalar

politics of environmental injustices and local politics. First, there was the question of who the

project was for, was it for all of Gainesville, was it addressing the concerns of the NFC, was it

addressing the concerns of the Southside or of Gainesville's African-American population. The

scalar differences in defining the problem necessitates different solutions, and as was

demonstrated during the training, the lack of ability to collective define a problem inhibited the

group from beginning to work together to address the community's environmental justice

concerns.

In the end, the stated goal of the workshop was "To offer a positive, non-adversarial model to engage various stakeholders to create a collective vision of the health and sustainability of the entire community." The workshop which was facilitated by two representatives of the EPA Office of Environmental Justice and a contracted facilitator.   It was attended by 27 people included three representatives from the City of Gainesville, although only one person from the city stayed for the entire training, one representative from Blaze, who did not return on the second day, one representative from Hall County, one representative from Georgia EPD, a representative from GreenLaw, an environmental law firm based in Atlanta, four representatives from EPA, three people (including myself) affiliated with the University of Georgia, and thirteen community members representing NFC, Concerned Citizens of Gainesville/Hall County (CC) and Veterans & Community Outreach Foundation (VCOF).[21]

The training was loosely based on the successful development of the community organization ReGensis, which was the outcome of a community led environmental justice campaign in Spartanburg, South Carolina. While the success of the Spartanburg case was lauded during the training (the EPA Region 4 representatives showed a video outlining the case and led a follow-up discussion) and held up as an example of success during the planning process, there are significant distinctions between the Spartanburg case and the case in Gainesville. First, in Spartanburg's Arkwright and Forest Park communities, the industries and two hazardous waste sites were in violation of EPA regulations. The two waste sites were declared superfund sites and later brownfields sites and were eligible for federal funding for clean-up. Second, city and county officials recognized the problems in the community, and primarily motivated by the EPA

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[21] CC focuses their efforts on unincorporated Hall County south of Gainesville. Their interests extend into the Southside of Gainesville, but the antagonism between the city and county governments forces them to continually negotiate between the two and limits their efforts within Gainesville city limits. The VCOF mission is "To promote a positive quality of life for economically disadvantaged youth and their families, honored veterans and current/ex-offenders through social services and community advocacy" (http://www.vcof.org/visionmissionvalues.htm).

violations, committed to work with community. Finally, the remaining operating chemical plant in the community agreed to work with ReGenesis through a facilitated dialogue. In Gainesville, as is often the case, the industries in question were not in violation of EPA regulations, nor were they abandoned waste sites. As is the case with many industries, just because they are within their regulatory rights, they can still negatively impact the community. At the same time, since they are within their regulatory rights, they do not have an immediate incentive to change their practices, even though incentives can be developed and produced. The representatives of EPA Region 4 emphasized the slow pace at which the successful partnership unfolded, but for the members of the NFC, who have been working to address community concerns surrounding the junkyard for over thirty years, the emphasis on patience was misguided.

While the training was met with mixed emotions and measures of success, it did highlight two factors regarding the role of scale in defining problems. First, there were multiple representations of "we" used intentionally or unintentionally to include and exclude populations. Second, there was an often misguided expectation of a unified African-American voice.

"Define we:" Who is the "we" of Gainesville?

In the midst of the first afternoon the workshop, the facilitator was leading the group in a discussion on issue identification, community vision, and strategic goal setting. The facilitator asked if people in the room had felt that this had been done already. A course of yeses and nos filled the room. The conversation that ensued highlighted that before issue identification, community visioning, and strategic goal setting could begin, the definition of we had to be clarified:

> EPA Facilitator: Is it your sense that [community visioning and strategic goal setting] has already been done? That there is in fact that you've gone through a number of processes, done issue identification, and have some sense of shared visioning and strategic goal setting?

Community Member #1 (LJ): As our own individual groups or as together?

EPA Facilitator: Well . . .

Community Member #2 (MM): Define we

EPA Facilitator: Sorry?

Community Member #2 (MM): Define we, somebody, I mean Rose said we have done that, we who?

Community Member #1 (LJ): Whose we?

Rose Johnson: That's why I made the distinction when I was talking about, we have done that, I'm speaking about Newtown's work, we have done it

Community Member #2 (MM): I see what you're saying

Rose Johnson: But we haven't done it as a community but we haven't done it as a collaborative processes with multiple stakeholders. (field notes March 22, 2013)

As the conversation continued and individuals tried to clarify what they meant by *we* or attempted to express their points without using *we*. Different people were using the word at different times to include and exclude groups. At times, the tone turned combative, as people used the word to accuse each other of not including everyone in the process, or to indicate that everyone that wanted to be included in a visioning and planning processes could have participated if they choose to. *We*, which is often used colloquially as a word of inclusion, was instead being used simultaneously to make distinctions about who was and was not included and to eliminate differences by homogenizing the experiences and opinions of the broader we.

We also evoked different scales. As individuals stumbled over their clarifications of *we*, the power of the word became evident. At times, *we* was used to invoke a geographical area - *we* Gainesville, *we* Hall County, *we* Gainesville-Hall County, *we* the Southside. Other times it evoked an institutional affiliation: *we* the city of Gainesville, *we* Hall County, *we* EPA, *we* the NFC, *we* CC, *we* VCOF. Or it was used to evoke a racial identity: *we* the African-American community, *we* communities of color, *we* the African-American community of Gainesville-Hall

County, *we* the African-Americans of the Southside.[22]   And in theory, while everyone was included who fit the defining criteria, in practice, depending on the speaker, the power dynamics they enacted, intentionally or unintentionally, non-dominant groups and individual's voices were lost in these statements of we.

While the discussion and lack of specification of *we* may seem benign, it represents processes of defining who belongs and who is excluded from place since "[p]laces are made through power relations which construct the rules which define boundaries. These boundaries are both social and spatial – they define who belongs to a place and who may be excluded, as well as the location or site of the experience" (McDowell 1999, 4). Furthermore, within scalar politics, the power of naming and claiming - who is and is not included has material and procedural consequences (Kurtz 2002), especially for communities of color operating in the racial state. In these instances, the use of *we* becomes a racial project, it works to reinforce existing racial formations and works to redefine who is and is not included (Omi and Winant 2014). When *we* is used in dominant discourse and stock stories, it plays a unifying role, indicating an inclusion of everyone, even though through the invisibility of whiteness it often refers to the dominant or white populations. Without distinguishing what *we* is being invoked the word becomes a tool to create a false sense of inclusion, which in turn perpetuates existing power structures and systems of oppression.

The multiple meanings of *we* and the differences in whether people feel included or excluded from a process, regardless of the intentions of those in power, is based on the

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[22] Through the course of these discussions, when expanding the discussion beyond the city limits of Gainesville, the conception of Gainesville/Hall County is invoked, there are two distinct governing bodies for the City of Gainesville and Hall County. Moreover, there is a great deal of tension between city and county officials, mostly in disputes over annexation of county land into the city and how to allocate special-purpose local-option sales tax (SPLOST) money (Weinman 2010, Mueller 2013). City employees claim that they have positive working relationships with their county counterparts and that the tensions are at the political level. Activists working primarily in Hall County, like CC, are weary of establishing working relationships with city of Gainesville officials in fear they might sour their working relationships with Hall County officials.

interpretation of the speaker and the listener. When Myrtle Figueras, the councilwomen from

Ward 3, where Newtown is located, joined the conversation in her attempt to construct a unified

Gainesville, she simultaneously recognized and dismissed different perspectives and opinions.

In doing so, she concurrently included and excluded the distinct populations that make up

Gainesville:

> May I please add, this was the idea of Neighborhood Planning Units, we had gone
> through a big visioning process. We even created a meeting called the "One
> Gainesville" because *we* and you said define we, we seem to not be able to work
> together as humans in Gainesville. We have several organizations and each one
> has their specific thing they work on and each one with their own board. But each
> has, we had a visioning process that includes the Newtown area, we have gone
> through the visioning process, we have a steering committee who works right now
> to try to help so we work on goals to try to incorporate to make all of us come into
> this visioning processes together and that we as a community decide how we want
> our community to look. We as a city cannot force any group to come to the table
> okay. But we all meet together at Fair Street school when it was open and we all
> of us worked together, but we have not chosen to do the collective things that
> we've planned (field notes March 22, 2013).

One of the EPA facilitators worked to deconstruct the above statement:

> EPA Facilitator: So I want to, if it's okay, I'm going to parse what you just said
> because you used "we" in multiple different ways,
>
> Myrtle Figueras: exactly
>
> EPA Facilitator: Which may or may not include everybody
>
> Myrtle Figueras: Okay
>
> EPA Facilitator: So several times you said we and it sounded like you were
> saying we but then you were saying there were some "we"s that weren't part of
> we that did this work
>
> Myrtle Figueras: You got it
>
> EPA Facilitator: So it's hard for me when you use we for all of those to know
> when we were involved and we were satisfied whether we were involved or not
>
> Myrtle Figueras: Exactly
>
> EPA Facilitator: You see what I'm saying?
>
> Myrtle Figueras: Believe it or not you have described us completely, because
> each one of us has a separate goal, and each community organization works, each
> one of us, each group of people has a valuable goal, okay, and every one of us, we
> have a valid way of doing stuff, yeah we do, but *we*, the big we, are not together

> okay and that hurts all of us and therefore promises are not being made. (field notes, March 22, 2013)

Later on in the discussion, she further asserted herself and her role in the government as one who listens and takes on all perspectives and unifies them in one conception of *we*:

> I have been serving the city council for 16 years. I hear what everybody says to me, I try my best to bring that process where everybody has a voice, we can't do it if folks don't show up at the table. So "we" the city, "we" the neighborhood, "we" have tried. (Myrtle Figueras, March 22, 2013)

Regardless of her sentiments, many members of the African-American community do not feel included when *we* is used to indicate the City of Gainesville or Hall County. This is based on their historic feelings of exclusion and lack of representation. As Ms. Bush explains, "No, the problem is that the commissioner that represents us on this side, they don't speak to us, they say they represent all of Gainesville" (Faye Bush, December 6, 2011). Recall, the city council member represents the area but is elected citywide. This scalar difference leaves the intense feelings that Newtown is being left behind. For Ms. Bush and other members of the African-American community this feeling of exclusion leaves them in a position where while they are a part of Gainesville, they are also excluded from the broader conceptions and construction of Gainesville.

In reflecting on the power of *we* after the training, a city official who attended the training, lamented the discussion was not taken further:

> I thought, well that wasn't -- I would like to see [the EPA facilitator] breakdown these barriers and I think, I thought that was what this process was about, it was about breaking down those barriers and transcending those lines of boundaries or territories that each of us have grabbed onto and try and I thought we were heading up when we were talking about the WEs, but I don't feel like we really resolved that in any way, not even on any level. So, it would have been very helpful for them to have broken the groups up so that you could have had the bureaucrat that you know . . . intermixed with Newtown and with the concerned citizens. I think that maybe that could have been a good step toward trying to

understand all sides and piece it all together better. (Interview with author, March 27, 2013)

S/he went on to add that:

> No matter how unified we are on an overarching concern or issue we want to tackle, we also have our different lenses that we're looking through because we're coming at in a different role, like I will always be coming at it from a government representative role. (Interview with author, March 27, 2013)

The recognition of different perspectives contrast with the unifying notion of *we* and one Gainesville.

"They Aren't All on the Same Page:" Expectation of a Unified Black Voice

The question of whether there is or should be one Gainesville highlights the strength of stock stories to homogenize places. As Bailey, who works for the City of Gainesville, explained, "I like to think of Gainesville as all of us as one community" (interview with author, March 27, 2013). This totalizing notion that homogenizes the city by eliminating differences further makes communities of color invisible. This leads to the expectation that there is a unified African-American voice, just as there is a unified conception of Gainesville. As one of the city officials who participated in the conference reflected,

> what I did think was very good is I thought that we emphasized what we as a staff and we as a city have been seeing for a while now and that's the fragmentation among the community, the residence and realizing that they aren't all on the same page, but not really sure understanding why. (Interview with author, March 27, 2013)

The expectation of a unified African-American voice challenges the conception of one unified Gainesville and simultaneously takes away from the individuality and agency of members of the African-American community. This becomes problematic when the dominant group exerts a notion of one, unified voice which silences all subgroups through their "inclusion" in the whole. Through the assertion that there should be a unified voice of the African-American community,

there is an implicit assumption that there is already a unified voice of the white community in Gainesville that is the *we* of Gainesville. In this way, through stock stories and the other-ing of the African-American community the invisible we of the white community is reinforced as the *we* of Gainesville. The contradiction of the construction of "one Gainesville," with the expectation of a unified voice from the African-American community, making the African-American community simultaneously part of and separate from Gainesville, highlights how "local geographies of race and racism contain their own specificities" (Delaney 1998, 94). .

What only arose peripherally during the training, but further exemplifies the use of we to make communities invisible, is the lack of representation and inclusion of Gainesville's Latino/a population. While they make up over 40% of the city's population they are excluded from the dominant narratives of the city. They have historically formed alliances with the African-American community, often around specific issues such as gang violence, but at the time of the training they were not working together on specific problems. Leaders of the NFC, VCOF, and CC, in subsequent meetings, recognized the lack of participation by the Latino/a population and they worked to broaden their outreach and include leaders from the Latino/a population.

The expectation of a unified African-American voice also works to obscure the micro-scalar politics and conflicts that influence how problems are defined. This is especially evident when conflicting scale frames are used to define the problem since they can work to undermine the cohesion of the particularisms of a place when considered at multiple micro-scales (Leitner et al. 2008; Kurtz 2003). Myrtle Figueras, a self-identified Black women, expresses:

> You know, and then the group who chooses to speak, fine, but I also live here, too, and I live with the people -- with the neighborhood who lives there, and young people will talk to me -- not young people. Everybody talks to me. Everybody feels as though Figueras is a part of the community also . . . I live in -- not directly in the DeSoto Street area, but I live on College Avenue. So I live in

south side Gainesville. So what affects them affects me. Okay? (laughs) (interview with the author, March 20, 2013)

In this way, she is identifies not only the complexity of her individual experience as both a member of the African-American community and a city council member, but also the micro-scalar specificities of identity politics. This complexity is reflected in the relationship between the three community organizations that participated in the workshop.

Although there is significant overlap in the mission statements and the focus of the NFC, VCOF, and CC, each of the organizations distinguish themselves from the others, either through their spatial distribution, their specific goals, and the populations they serve. While they have worked together in the past, and continue to do so in times of crisis, and share common membership, there is also a level of competition between them. They are all trying to achieve their individual goals and when their goals do not coincide directly with the immediate goals of the other organizations tension rise. They become insular, focusing on their own goals, in fear that if they do not maintain a singular focus, they will not accomplish them. Part of this arises from competition over resources because there are limited available resources from donors and time/in-kind resources from members of the organization and in community at-large. This leads to non-profit organizations having to fight each other for needed resources to address their specific concerns rather than cooperating together to address similar overarching goals. There is also a level of resentment of the resources that the NFC has leveraged over the years. This is often directed at their focus on moving Blaze, which for the women of the NFC is a top priority, but for others not in the immediate community, is just one of many problems. During the EPA workshop, it came up time and again from other participants, that their focus was not on moving Blaze and they were tired of talking about Blaze. This was particularly upsetting to the women

of the NFC who began the process of working with EPA Region 4 with the intention of finding a solution to their concerns with Blaze.

This is not to say that the multiple non-profits operating on Gainesville's Southside do not work together. In times of crisis, such as when the Klu Klux Klan planned to march through Newtown neighborhood in 1998 or in 2012 when an African American student at Gainesville High, despite having the highest GPA, was to be named co-valedictorian rather than sole valedictorian, they work together to address immediate threats but the alliances they form are often not maintained after the immediate crisis subsides (Hale 2012, field notes September 28, 2013). They recognize the benefits of coming together and presenting a unified voice when an immediate "threat" is impacting their community. They recognize that since the state and politics are organized around race, there is benefit in using their "shared 'cultural capital' [to] . . . develop a shared cultural toolkit (a repertoire of protest methods including nonviolent tactics)" to achieve their goals (Robnett 2002, 267). Furthermore, they recognize that the expectation of a unified voice necessitates that they come together to try to identify common issues they can work on together.

This does not mean they want to or are willing to lose their individual voices, instead, they are working together to develop strategies that leverages the expectation of a unified voice to their political advantage without losing their individual passions and focus. To this end, an outcome of the EPA training was that representatives of the NFC, VCOF, and CC identified influential members of the African-American community to form an alliance to work together to address the mutual concerns of African-Americans in Gainesville-Hall County.

"We Want Everyone to Cooperate in our Hopes:" Who is Benefiting?

For communities living in environmental justice communities, the micro-scale politics, how something is helping or hurting "my community," depends directly on how you define "my community." This matters because the discourse of scale and the scale at which impacts and benefits are measured can hide disparities within communities (Allen 2003; Kurtz 2002, 2003). By indicating that there is "one Gainesville" and to make decisions based on "one Gainesville" negates and therefore discounts the historical differences that had imprinted disparities onto the landscape (see Chapter 5).

Differences in scale are not always negative, they can be leveraged by activists to recast their concerns as the concerns of others, as I communicated in a discussion with Ms. Bush and Ms. Johnson in a strategy session leading up to the workshop:

> It is important to frame the interests in universal language of improving Gainesville (with attention to the irony that that is the same language that the city uses to exclude the Southside). In doing so, there needs to be visioning about what are the desires of the community and what do they want to get out of the process in a universal way – using language such as "we want everyone to cooperate in our hopes" and keeping things positive about what can be done was one good way to approach it. It involves a number of elements such as wanting a "healthy, safe, and secure community," access to services, involvement in the decision making process. (field notes, March 7, 2013)

It was the hope that by co-opting and reframing the discussion of the needs of the immediate community to include the entire city of Gainesville, the issue would no longer just be Newtown's issue, but Gainesville's issue. As a city employee stated during the EPA workshop:

> Focus in or don't focus in, but if its decided that we focus in to make it more manageable, more vital, what you will, what's important to remember is that whatever is good for that small part is eventually going to be good for the whole. Whatever's good for Gainesville is good for Hall County. So that's another way to look at. (March 22, 2013)

Regardless, competition over resources, the necessity of maintaining a unified vision to sustain their organization, and a desire to do what they need to do to achieve their goals, maintains divisions among the organizations, and continues to exacerbate micro-scalar differences.

Competition over resources, the expectations of a unified voice from the African-American community, and micro-scalar politics leads to distrust and competition between organizations rather than cooperation. In discussions with Ms. Bush and Ms. Johnson, leading up to the EPA training, we discussed alternative paradigms:

> even though [all the organizations'] end goals are different they have the same interests and in reality it shouldn't be an "or" situation, it should be an "and" situation because there is no reason the CC can't get sidewalks and NFC gets the junkyard moved – both would benefit both communities (because the way they were talking it would seem like the two are geographically really far apart and instead they are adjacent to one another so what is improved in one place will improve both places) (field notes March 21, 2013).

In one way, the formation of the Southside Alliance group is beginning to discuss how scalar politics and the expectations of a unified voice from the African-American community can be leveraged to create positive change in the community. In rethinking notions of scale, how they are used to include and exclude people from political processes, and questioning how their own relationships to scale influences their activism, the participants in the workshop began to "assert political aims through redefining and refusing to fully accept traditional geographic limitations" (McKittrick 2006, 83). In doing so, they are not just questioning micro-scalar politics but also what voices should be heard and what counts as viable knowledge through these decision-making processes.

The Science of Injustice

Whether in legal proceedings or in the development and enforcement of environmental regulations, science and what is considered viable scientific evidence influences how decisions

are made. This stems from a legal perspective, regulatory priorities, and the politics of science -

what counts as viable scientific knowledge, what is admissible in a court of law, and what level

of direction causation can be proven. The privileging of scientific evidence acts to disregard

lived experience of environmental justice community members as these experiences and stories

are written off as antidotal evidence at best or hysterical exaggerations at worst. What it means

to live in the shadow of industries and to watch how these industries impact your family and

your community are not considered viable evidence in a court of law. Furthermore, communities

are forced to try to prove a direct relationship between diseases and specific industries, which is

incredibly difficult, or to resort to tactics such as nuisance suits to prove that a specific industry

is sufficiently disturbing community members. The burden of proof in these instances is on the

community to prove that there is a problem, not on the industry to prove that there is not a

problem. This is particularly challenging in the context of the fatal coupling of difference and

power when low-income communities of color lack access and resources to engage in

complicated political, legal and scientific debates (Corburn 2005)

"Don't Feel Good About it:" Evidence, Experience and the Local Production of Knowledge

During one of our formal interviews, as Ms. Bush and I were discussing what influenced

her understanding of the environment, we had to pause our conversation as a CSX train passed.

As the training rumbled by whistling, as it did on a regular basis, loud enough to force whatever

conversation was occurring to stop, Ms. Bush shook her head and said with a laugh:

> I guess when I, if you can hear the train now and then after the train you'll hear
> the Blaze and I think it's just something its noise, its grain dust that come out on
> you all the time. I mean you live in fear that something might happen and you
> won't be able to get your peoples out of the community. (interview with author,
> April 7, 2012)

The fear, the unknown, the questions of how living next to industries impact their lives permeates the lives of the women of the NFC, as Ms. Johnson conveys:

> I won't even feel comfortable playing in the dirt, wouldn't want the kids to play in it, you know, even though they play in the playground on it or play in their front yards, I still won't think it's a good thing, don't feel good about it, don't feel comfortable with it, just don't. And um, I also think about what would happen to our community because we sit in a bowl if we had continuous rain or if we had a tornado or something destructive like that, what would happen to us here? You know because of the way we're situated in the land, you know, and what would happen to us if we had a train derailment, a toxic exposure, all of those things, you know, (interview with author, September 8, 2012)

The fears and concerns of the women of the NFC are considered unfounded by some. For Councilwomen Figueras, the complaints she hears on a normal basis are unfounded:

> You're destroying our homes with so many dirty businesses. Yes, they're dirty businesses, but it has been proven that it's not destroying anybody's health (interview with author, March 20, 2013)

The notion that it has been proven that the "dirty businesses" are not destroying anybody's health is a reference to a 1990 Cancer study, which is often conflated and attributed to the 2000/2001 ATSDR study, that concluded that the cancer clusters in the Newtown area was a result of "lifestyle choices" such as smoking and drinking (McKinley and Williams 1990). But as is discussed in detail in Chapter 2, an external review of the study identified methodological flaws and criticized the study for not even considering the possibility that the health concerns were a related to adjacent of industries (Roskie at al. 2008). Furthermore, the lack of evidence of a specific problem does not necessarily mean that the problem does not exist, it could just mean that the wrong questions are being asked, the wrong data is being considered, or the available science does not support the necessary questions that need to be asked.

Regardless, environmental regulations and questions of causation are based on available scientific data:

> [AT EPA we] start with the science, understanding the quote-unquote the environment, which is a matter of, on a large or small scale, being able to understand the facts, be that analytical as in chemistry or geography or the human inputs to those systems. We have to start with an understanding and definitions of what we can prove, and that's the scientific version of the word proof, before we then begin to try and figure out how best to apply law policy, regulation as it affects people where they live. (Mason, August 15, 2013)

By starting with the "facts" and "provable" data driven science, EPA regulators privilege traditional forms of knowledge and knowledge production over other forms of knowledge. This occurs even though they recognize both the limits and fluidity of these definitions. I am not arguing that scientific facts and data driven policy decisions should be abandoned, on the contrary, they represent a starting point for understanding environmental processes. Instead, building on the work of scholars, such as Spears (2004), Corburn (2005), and Collins (2009), I advocate for the integration of the two forms of knowledge that Collins (2009) refers to as every day, commonplace knowledge, and the specialized, expert knowledge. This is because "science is understood as dependent the natural world, as well as on historical events, social practices, material resources, and institutions that contribute to the construction, dissemination, and use of scientific knowledge" (Corburn 2005, 40). Since "scientific knowledge is always 'co-produced;' science and politics are interdependent, each drawing from the other in a dynamic iterative process" (Corburn 2005, 4). Examining the political nature of expert knowledge highlights how power legitimates the specialized, expert knowledge and delegitimizes counter narratives as folk wisdom, raw experiences and common sense (Collins 1998). For women of color living in environmental justice communities, tensions between "experts" and community members are often exacerbated as intersecting forms of oppression work to devalue their experiences and discount rather than incorporate their experiences into dominant narratives of place (McKittrick 2006; Collins 2009; hooks 2008).

This is not to say that regulators do not understand and recognize the importance of community members' experiences, as Bailey, who works for the city of Gainesville explains:

> You're living in the community, you have a more heightened sense of the impacts, you know, whereas somebody that's not living in the neighborhood is not living it, you know, every day. (interview with author, March 27, 2013)

Regardless of their acknowledgement of the value of lived experiences, regulators are often limited in how they can respond:

> I mean, I never expect people to say, oh, okay, now I'm convinced that those chemicals being added to my environment are a good thing, but at least we can try to educate and enlighten folks as to why it is that when we look at a particular situation, back to the science, what we're looking at, what types of standards we have, and to be, you know, honest, transparent, and I believe, compassionate about the limits of our knowledge, as well as the limits of our authorities to do everything we can. (Mason, August 15, 2013)

At the same time, the regulations can hide behind scientific, expert knowledge. Intentionally or unintentionally, they use the sterile guise of "science" to maintain the status quo, as George Wangermann explains:

> We went as far as to ask the state to study that issue [(the impacts of industry in Newtown)] and they did come back and said that some of the diseases and sicknesses that people were suffering from in that area were due to lifestyle issues, you know. People smoking for example or drinking, whatever it might have been. So I believe that too is part of the environment. Probably the part of the environment that most directly affects individuals is what they do to themselves (interview with author, March 20, 2013)

When the reliance on science is coupled with white privilege and racializations, concepts, such as "lifestyle choices" which act to direct attention away from poor air and water issues – blaming of the poor and minority communities – and deflect attention from industrial society, take on broader social meanings (Allen 2003).

Environmental regulators are therefore forced to negotiate between their recognition of the role of knowledge as a process of making sense of the world and the limits imposed on them through regulatory processes (see Chapter 5):

> Sometimes, perception and reality are two different things. And so, the community might have a perception that is true. And then they have a perception that's not really the reality or the fact behind the matter; because there are a lot of missing pieces. And so we have to take it as it is what we – and then we have to gather all the facts. About what has been done, what hasn't been done, is this true, is this not true? (Brice, interview with author, June 6, 2012)

While environmental regulatory processes are often presented as apolitical and "scientific," how these processes are negotiated influences the direction of scientific research and the development and implementation of environmental regulation.

"Talking Techy Talk:" Science, Politics, and Environmental Regulations

Just as is the case with all forms of knowledge production, the environmental science that is the basis for environmental regulation is rooted in political processes. Therefore, science cannot be separated from the hegemonic structures of the racial state. Who has access to knowledge, who creates knowledge, and whose knowledge is deemed viable, all of which are impacted by identity politics, influence the outcome of environmental disputes (Corburn 2005; Collins 2009; Kosek 2006; Pulido 1996c; Spears 2004).

For regulators at EPA, the science of the day is the basis of their job and a limiting factor in what they can and cannot accomplish. This does not mean that EPA regulators have a neutral, value-free engagement with science. Instead, they recognize the complexities of the interactions between science and the community and how the changing nature of science impacts the regulations they are charged with enforcing. With an increased focus on community engagement, they recognize that "scientific approaches themselves are place-based and culture bound and function in a political world" (Spears 2004, 178). While this has yet to be codified

through policy development, it does impact how EPA interacts with the community. As Mason

explains:

> as scientists and engineers, and our training is to look, you know, for the facts, the
> constants, and that sometimes I think probably coming through the 70s and into
> the 80s, made us less than -- it came across as well, we know what the answer is,
> so we're here to explain it to you, as opposed to, we're in your community to find
> out what your concerns are. (Interview with author, August 15, 2013)

S/he goes on to say:

> And so we do spend a lot of time talking about where those limits come from.
> What is the limit of science? And how can we better, at least explain, not
> necessarily we can't do anything, but to explain the situation and what it -- you
> know, where in -- how we look at it, how the law looks at it, so that instead of
> being just okay to leaving people with the idea that they're being told no, we won't
> help you, but to look at it from the standpoint of here's the situation as we
> understand it, and why it does or does not match with the authorities that we have.
> (Interview with author, August 15, 2013)

This emphasis on EPA as explainer simultaneously reinforces and breaks down the structures of

the racial state. It reinforces it by maintaining the state, and EPA as its proxy, as the dominant

and ultimate creator and interpreter of environmental knowledge. It breaks it down by

recognizing the role of the community in the process of knowledge production, even if it does

not privilege these forms of knowledge. Regulators at EPA, especially those of color, recognize

these tensions:

> frankly speaking white scientists going to environmental justice communities,
> because that's where the industries and the contamination is, talking techy talk,
> well there's already a wall between them, because they don't want to be there and
> the community, so okay you're here because either you want to take me to jail or
> get me in trouble or you don't speak to me – I'm on the opposite side of the
> railroad tracks. So you have to have people that look like the people in order to
> build that level of trust. (Jaden, June 25, 2012)

While s/he does acknowledge that EPA has changed over the past twenty years and has put more

emphasis on recruiting minorities, just by having people of color work at EPA will not change

the culture of the organization or how regulatory and policy approaches are developed and

implemented . The people of color who I spoke with at EPA maintain that their narratives and lived experiences impact how they engage with communities and their approach to science, as was discussed in Chapter 5, and their lived experiences impacts how they approach environmental governance. As Brice explained, you have to listen to what communities members are saying because the scientific solution might lie within their reality:

> You could be a community person . . . say '[Brice] . . . I have a drinking water well. And I think that, that organization over here, because I'm a woman and I'm an activist. I think in the middle of the night, they came over and . . . Personally contaminated my well, because when I woke up yesterday, my stomach was hurting . . . we cannot look at them as though this is ridiculous . . . **We have to look at it as, okay; this is what this person is saying. This is their reality; let's see what we can find out about the issue, because it might be true. We can't assume that it's ridiculous; unless it is out of the confines of ridiculous** . . . And then we talk through our programs within the agency, about, is it possible for a well to be contaminated with formaldehyde . . . Are there natural things that happen in their environment? Let's use an example, arsenic. **The community person may say, they came over here and contaminated my well with arsenic. Then maybe the truth of the matter is that, there's naturally-occurring arsenic**. . . . But the community person doesn't know that. So they–but because they live near this industry who might be–somehow their output is arsenic, they assume it happened. So we have to take their complaint as reality and then we have to get the truth around it. (interview with author, June 6, 2012)

By listening to the stories and narratives of communities, representatives of EPA strive:

> To be able to understand and be compassionate toward people, you know, with the issues where they live, we have to accept their definitions as being real for them (Mason, August 15, 2013).

This is not to say that they do this at the expense of science. Through community outreach and the development of collaborative relationship in fact they try to work within the confines of existing scientific knowledge to address problems that arise. Even though everyone I spoke with, with the expectation of one lawyer, was a trained scientist, none of them saw themselves as solely scientists, they were civil servants, they were governmental representatives, they were tax-payer funded executors of federally mandated programs. These multiple roles led them away

from a strictly 'scientifically viable' attitude, and towards an 'it cannot be proven by our science at the moment' attitude.

For representatives of EPA, while they are limited by the science of the day, they do recognize that this science is constantly changing:

> I always remind myself that when I wake up tomorrow, someone will have discovered something tonight that may answer a question that will find that something is more of a -- more or less an issue in the environment than is known right now, and be able to talk with people where they live in just those terms. (Mason, interview with author, August 15, 2013)

This recognition does not delegitimize their scientific knowledge, nor does it make them question a scientific based regulatory approach, but it does, make them more flexible in their relationship to communities' knowledge claims. Along with this, they also recognize the challenges for community members, who live the impact of their decisions daily. To address these concerns they expand their role from regulator to interpreter and explainer of knowledge in an attempt to get communities to accept the regulatory decision as science-based, risk-based decisions.

This does not mean that all communities do, or should, accept the authority of EPA. Many communities, especially, environmental justice communities, have a historical legacy of mistrust, misinformation, and inaction that has led to material consequences in their communities. For many environmental justice activists, a risk-based approach is insufficient if the importance of their and their families' health and welfare is being weighed against corporate profits and government taxes. They are concerned with the ways regulatory decisions impact their lives. They are concerned with the ways the scientific data that is and is not collected in their communities, impacts how policies are developed and enforced. They often feel their lived

experiences limit their involvement in processes of knowledge production, which in turn, limits

their abilities to participate in regulatory processes and delegitimizes their experiences.

One result that arises from the complicated relationships between EPA and

environmental justice activists is the development of mistrust on the communities' part as to the

role and intentions of EPA. As Ms. Bush explains:

> well I tell you a lot of it is distrust, you know, we've been working with the EPA and the EPD, that's the one that we usually call when we have the grain dust or something – I mean, you just loose trust in them because they come in and try to cover up the wrong doing and they leave and you're still there suffering with the same thing. 'Cause it's like, they get away with it, pollen over here, I know pollen's bad but if you go out there it's different than pollen and grain dust, you can tell the difference. The last time when they charged them that little money, some people carried their cars over there and showed that it was grain dust. And one of the guys came over from Athens from EPD and he tried to say it wasn't and then he scraped some off the car and then he said it was, you know. They try to make you look like you're crazy and you don't know you doing [laughter]. When you have to live here for so many years, you know the difference. (Interview with author, April 7, 2012)

She continued, specifically referring to the collaborative problem solving training (discussed

above) that:

> I really don't think they're going to do anything. I think they're just trying to cover themselves to say they came in here and tried to help, but I don't believe that anything going to come out of it because we've meet with EPD and all those people down through the years and they hear your story but they don't do anything about it. (April 7, 2012).

Representatives of EPA recognize these tensions and for them, especially those directly engaged

with community engagement, they see their role as building trust, and part of this is managing

expectations and limits of science, as Jaden explains it is the difference between:

> I'm just here to do a job versus someone who is more personable who wants to get to know you look you in the eyes, smile and say you know we need to really get this done, if you build a sense of trust with me confidence, mutual respect, I think you're going to accomplish a lot more (interview with author, June 25, 2012)

Devon builds on this, for him/her it is about how to:

> Strike the balance, to know what is in your control and what's beyond your control. Because you have the empathy which I think is a very important part in meeting people where they are, and kind of understanding their situation . . . they may not necessarily be concerned about the Superfund site when they don't have food to feed their kids or clothes to put on their back, or the money to pay their rent. So what I find a lot is that some people are looking, you know are we going to get something out of this, is there some money here how much can we get . . . we're a striking a balance where I feel your empathy, this is what I'm here for let me see if I can teach you . . . or bring somebody else to the table to help you, and if you're not put that agency in a position where we're building expectations that we can't meet, but at the same time still being able to be empathetic and understand their situations, and still get our job done and as [Jaden] said to build that trust. And so it's a lot of different factors for us [to] maintain that balance where you don't build expectations but still build the relationship and build the trust. (Interview with author, June 25, 2012)

This balance between intent and impact, the science of EPA and the science of communities influences not only how EPA and communities interact but also the definition of the problem and the solutions sought.

Conclusion

The ways that problems are defined impact what solutions are sought and eventually proposed. People living in environmental justice communities are often excluded from processes that define problems and develop solutions, whether explicitly, such as when they are not invited to the table or implicitly, such as when meeting are held during work hours or in places that are difficult to access. Through multiple and changing definitions of scale and the reliance on scientific data over, instead of in conjunction with, lived experiences excludes their participation and experience in problem defining and problem solving. The scale of analysis matters because not only can problems be made to appear and disappear (Kurtz 2002, 2003), but also scale can work to minimize the different experiences of those who receive the benefits and impacts of negative environmental conditions. When taken together, the changing nature of scale and

science further challenges environmental justice activists to meet the threshold for the burden of proof necessary to prove environmental injustices.

The use of scale and science also cannot be considered outside of the fatal couplings of difference and power. The authority to determine what is and is not viable knowledge to prove injustices is based on dominant discourses of knowledge. The burden of proof is placed on people living in environmental justice communities, but they are not given the opportunity to participate in the processes that dictate what is and is not sufficient evidence. Furthermore, the exclusion of these groups is made invisible through dominant discourse of place embedded with white privilege that appear as if they are including everyone, even though in reality they are excluding large portions of the population.

CHAPTER 7

SOCIO-POLITICAL INFLUENCES

It's like you're fighting a giant and the city isn't even on your side . . . It's just part of what we have to live with.

Jonathan Butts, NFC member, September 9, 2011

They put industry, from what I understand, from my experience, my historical experiences, those people who have the least financial economic means and the least political means -- water flows through the lowest resistance.

Casey, EPA Region 4, June 6, 2012

The Political Economy of Injustice

Two white vans pulled up in front of 157 Norwood Street, a white one-story bungalow on the southeastern edge of Newtown. The house, which the women of the NFC refer to as Ms. Christine Young's house, even though Ms. Young passed away in 2012 and the house is now occupied by her daughter, is at the end of a dead end street. The well-kept lawn and screened-in porch obscures the reality of life for those living in the house. As the students interning with the Forest Service piled out of the vans, the challenges of living in this house became immediately obvious - just beyond the well-kept lawn, separated by a chain-linked fence with a thin black privacy shield sits Blaze Recycling, and on this particular day, they are putting on a show. As we raised our voices over the sound of metal being picked up by a giant metal claw and crushed to the ground we explained how in this very same spot, an environmental engineering firm measured noise levels that ranged from 55 to 93 dBA, 32 times louder than the typical national ambient background noise level for residential areas (40dBA). At times, the noise level

exceeded 85 dBA, which is the noise level at which the Occupational Safety and Health

Administration (OSHA) requires hearing protection (Roskie et al. 2008, 14). As we watched the

metal claw pick up scrap and repeatedly smash it against the ground to break it into smaller

pieces to be put in a truck to transport to another facility, the participants started blurting out

questions and reactions, ranging from indignation to shock to pragmatic:

> Participant #1: It's unbelievable that this still happens
>
> Participant #2: But I would think that as a company they would be sensitive to this
>
> Participant #3: At least build a noise wall

On everyone's mind, and the question that has been on the minds of the residents of Newtown

and the members of the NFC for over forty years: What can be done to change the situation?

Since the burden of proof lies on the neighborhood to prove that Blaze is either doing

something wrong or a sufficient nuisance, the members of the NFC have tried a wide array legal,

regulatory, political, and public action approaches to move the junkyard from their

neighborhood. This has proved challenged because is too small to be regulated by EPA or

Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and there are no ordinances in Gainesville's

code that regulate scrapyards, nor that address community concerns as they relate to noise and

dust. The absence of regulatory avenue for change has made the political struggle to move the

junkyard and address the neighborhood concerns harder than if they could point to a specific

code violation or illegal action on the part of Blaze. As it stands now, Blaze is doing nothing

illegal, so from Blaze's perspective, they do not need to change their actions, and from the city's

perspective, there is very little they can do to remedy the problem. Furthermore, Blaze sees

themselves as an asset to the community.

For the members of the NFC, they feel that despite over thirty years of activism, the members of the NFC are still fighting the same fights,

> Things never change, it seems, no matter how hard you try, you work, you say the same kinds of things, you have people coming in and studies are done, you get facts that say specifically what the problems are but then it does nowhere. (Janie Shelton, interview with author, September 8, 2012)

The reasons identified for the lack of change vary, but they always come back to two reasons; the lack of involvement in economic and political process, both of which for them are intricately tangled with the fatal coupling of difference and power. The recognition by the women of the NFC of the embedded nature of the processes, and the fears that people have when trying to make change, acknowledge that while they are working to move Blaze from their neighborhood, they are also working against the racial state and the conditions that permit Blaze to be in their neighborhood in the first place.

Environmental problems happen on multiple scales, and as was discussed in Chapter 6, these power laden and flexible scales can be used to make problems disappear, redefine the scope of the problem, and to create a disconnect between who benefits and who bears the burden of environmental injustices (Kurtz 2002, 2003; Allen 2003; Leitner et al. 2008, Pulido 2000; McKittrick 2006; Pulido et al. 1996). When multiple levels of government have the authority to regulate specific environmental problems, stakeholder's interpretation of which level of government, be it local, regional, state, or federal, has the regulatory power to make decisions can have political implications, especially in instances where stakeholders work across scales to achieve a political advantage (Kohl 2013). This is further exacerbated by the different ways environmental problems are interpreted, which in turn impacts their enforcement. Even though environmental regulations are presented as neutral science-based objective decisions, they are subjective, open to interpretation, and reflect the values of those who have the power to create

and influence policy processes (Chapters 4 and 5). In this way, it is not only the laws themselves, but how they are interpreted, how they are enforced, and the circumstances in which these processes occur that influence how environmental problems are defined and regulated.

"Making my Dollars . . . is the Bottom Line:" The Fatal Coupling of Economics and Politics

Environmental justice communities persist because the people who live in these places are systematically denied access to power. This is done through legal, social, and economic processes. One way local officials mask the role of identity in these processes is by situating discussion of inequality in purely economic terms. The city of Gainesville relies on economic explanations to account for existing land use patterns:

> I think infrastructure plays a lot into it, railroads are, where rail lines are, where water lines are so, I mean you think of the industry, so how quickly can they get trucks in, how quick they can nail them down, how quick they can get them out. So, they obviously want to be by, you know like 985 or how quickly can we load up the rail cars and get our products moving and getting our workers closer to us. So, I think honestly, infrastructure and then for Gainesville, you think of some of the areas that have developed and had been there for so long and overtime, but I think as the city continues to grow, I think people grow out, you tend to until at some point realized that I need to start growing back in. (Taylor, interview with author, March 27, 2013)

This is not to say that these explanations are not justified or to argue that economic processes are irrelevant. On the contrary, economic patterns and processes are vital to understanding how and why environmental justice communities are made and perpetuated. Not only does economic power translate into political power, money also provides influence and access to those in power, it influences how people define and engage with certain environmental problems, as Casey explains:

> The question that comes to my mind is do they see [environmental impacts] or do they want to ignore it and turn their backs to it. And I think a lot of the dollar bills. You know, making my dollars is the most -- is the bottom line. And I think that -- And it's sad, and I think this is -- We're coming to an era -- a sad era -- era in this country where people are bribed, politicians are bribed with money, you

know, and you know, you look at all of the money -- super PAC money that's coming into the elections, you know, monies that are not even coming from this country, so you can buy people. You can buy votes. You can buy politicians. And the lobbyists, you know, who -- industry who get into bed with politicians. Politicians do the same, get in bed with industry for the dollar bill, and I think that that's a human frailty that we have when it comes down to looking at the least of those, and how you're hurting the least of those. You know, where people don't seem to give a damn about the least of us among' you. And it's all about money, so until that greed factor changes, I think that this situation is going to always be the same. You can't get people to think like you. (Interview with author June 6, 2012)

This is combined with systematic exclusion of communities of color and low-income communities from political processes:

Because you are locked out of some environments based on your culture. I mean it's very obvious, either they'll have something, they'll have someone in place who will prevent you from moving into the environment or they'll try to have that out of your range. . . . So it's who controls that access to a community, which kinda structures that environment, and that means, they'll say, oh we don't have to approve for this to be a business area but we'll make it a business area in this particular, there's some land here and we'll make that a business area and they won't say anything . . . Everything is controlled by, to me, every environment is impacted the government that runs it. (Andre Cheek, August 25, 2012)

Without acknowledging the role of factors beyond those based strictly on economic processes, the compounding socio-political processes that create environmental justice communities become invisible through objective discourse of economic processes. As is discussed in Chapter 8, there is power in this invisibility, if problems are not acknowledge or made to disappear then they cease to exist for those in power, and if they do not exist solutions to the problems do not need to be found. For those living the impacts of the historical legacies and contemporary manifestations of inequality, the problems never become invisible because they live them every day. While they continue to search for solutions, their lack of political, social, and economic capital makes it difficult for them to make change.

This does not mean that community members are not complacent, and at times contributors, to the sanitized discourse of economic development. This is particularly prevalent when the allure of economic development and how the potential of jobs can distract people from the harmful impacts of pollution. As Ms. Bush explains, when industrial development began around Newtown:

> Well at that time we wasn't aware of all the pollution. Uh-uh. They were excited about the jobs, but little did they know they didn't hire that many of us. They hired two peoples that I know – B Welchee and Mr. Sims. (Interview with author, April 7, 2012)

Even though job creation and economic development are two of the arguments used to encourage acceptance of industrial development, just as was the case in Newtown, industries often do not create many jobs for community members (Allen 2003; Bullard 2000; Checker 2005). In this way, "citizens subsidize corporate welfare with their health and the environment" (Bullard 2000, 132). They are caught between the allure of jobs and the health of their communities. For members of the communities who live adjacent to these industries, they live the impact of negative health and well-being consequences rather than the intent of benefits of job creation and economic development.

"We Strive to do as Much as we Can for the People Over there:" Money, Power, and Politics

Like any town in the United States, the City of Gainesville works to balance the often conflicting needs of their citizens, as Skylar, a city employee, explained how city officials responded to community opposition to a commercial development:

> So that's the hardest part, if you would imagine what our job is. Balancing, this is a regional commercial mode. This property needs to be commercial. We know that. That makes good urban planning sense. We want the jobs, we want the tax revenue, our community has been begging for high quality commercials. So we've got that need. But we've got an established residential neighborhood behind it. They have, they need to be protected. They have needs too. Balancing that is the tricky part of our job. (Interview with author, March 20, 2013)

Also, just like any town in the U.S., these interests do not compete on a level playing field -

some voices are louder than others, some are more persuasive, and some get shut out of the

conversation all together. The balancing act does not just reflect individuals' needs and desires,

there are also political, cultural, and economic considerations.

Environmental justice practitioners see and work against these processes on a daily

basis, as Casey, who works for EPA Region 4, explains:

> There's a pattern, and that's not only a pattern in Newtown, but it's a pattern all
> over the United States. Industry is located in low income and minority
> communities. They don't put them in affluent communities. They don't put
> industry in Buckhead[23]. They don't put industry in places in New York City on
> Times Square. They don't do that.   (Interview with author, June 6, 2012)

For environmental justice practitioners, this pattern is not simply explained by development

patterns, but instead represents the fatal coupling of difference and power:

> I think people who are in power have certain prejudices . . . whether they know it
> or not. And I think it, it dictates how they see the world and how they go about
> doing their jobs and so it's, it's difficult for some people to step in somebody
> else's shoes and to, and to see things from somebody else's perspectives . . . And
> you know there, there are just certain beliefs that people have that have been
> around for hundreds of years that have not gone away but just continue to get
> passed down and those people are in positions of power and making, in decision
> making so I think that's why we continue to see racism in our society. (Jordan,
> March 22, 2013)

Power, race, and decision-making impacts how environmental justice communities are lived,

regulated, contested, and perpetuated in a grounded, place-based manner (Wilson 2002; Gilmore

2002).

Much has been said about the role of political economy and environmental justice

(Desfor and Keil 2004; Gottleib 2001; Harvey 1997; Heynen et al. 2006). A class analysis has

occasionally been used to dismiss concerns of racial discrimination, but has also been integrated

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[23] Buckhead is an upscale business, commercial, and residential neighborhood in North Atlanta.

into discussions on race to examine the forces which structure and perpetuate injustices (Brahinsky 2014; Pulido 1996c, Kosek 2005). Building on this existing scholarship, I examine the tensions that arise due to differing perceptions of who has political decision-making power in contrast to who actually has power and how the differences between the intention and impact, affects the economic development decision making processes on land use policy.

The challenges related to Blaze, like other small operations in cities across the country, are dependent on what city and industry officials think can be done legally and what should be done morally. Since currently, Blaze is not breaking any specific laws, or at least not breaking them flagrantly enough to be caught, for any change to occur, there must be the political will to create this change. While city officials have explored alternatives to address community concerns regarding Blaze, to date, no tangible change has occurred. City officials continue (successfully or unsuccessfully) to "'strike a balance' between industrial interests and residential needs" (Fielding 12/9/2009).

When discussing Blaze, city officials often rely on the trope there is nothing they can do and that their hands are tied, as Councilman George Wangermann explains:

> I think that [the NFC is] concerned about the environment in which they live and rightfully so. I'm always a little confused at what we as a city government can do to help them you know, because we don't have unlimited funds and if you spend inordinate amount of money on one side of the city then someone else may complain. It'll draw some kind of a negative reaction. So you have to be very careful and judicial about making those decisions in a community like this. But I think we strive to do as much as we can for the people over there. (Interview with author March 20, 2013)

His comments highlight the economic and political tensions that limit change. Decisions are based on economic limitations and political ramifications necessary to negotiate the needs of multiple constituent groups. Even within the trope of we are all one Gainesville, in his

indication of "the people over there" Councilman Wangermann, like all city officials, makes the

different "we"s of Gainesville evident (Chapter 6).

For activists, their lack of economic and political power is what limits their influence in

the decision-making process, as Andre Cheeks, who was at the time the Assistant Director of the

NFC, explains:

> Until some things that are higher up will change you can do certain things in your own yard but that doesn't make a major impact that could move Blaze, move Purina, move Cargill out of this community. It's not until people are afraid and are motivated by the money that it's going to change. When they start seeing the positive impact that there's less illnesses, less cancer, people are more productive, that could, when you start changing small things, small things grow to bigger things so, you know, just like when they're doing the changing the downtown Gainesville, and they were supposed to bring walking trails over into Newtown and they stopped at a certain area and it was due to the fact that a comment was made, there was runoff water that was contaminating the soil over here and they didn't want to the trails to be a part of that but you tell us that there's nothing wrong in the community. (Interview with author, August 25, 2012)

In their estimation, if the city had the political will to move the junkyard than they would, but

since the city has not moved the junkyard than it is because the city does not see it as a priority.

City officials counter the claim of the lack of political will by emphasizing their

limitations:

> That has seemed to be one issue that we just can't seem to get our hands around, but we have worked tirelessly with Blaze and how can we - are there ways you can modify your operations, alter your operations to have less impact. We've even reached out to the point of if you we're to relocate to another area that had less impact on some of the residents, residential uses, would you be interested in that, but I mean honestly there's only so far that government can go and only so much the government can do. (Taylor, interview with author, March 27, 2013)

From the city officials' point of view, they have done what they can do within the existing legal

framework, so there is nothing else to do. Since the burden of proof is on the community to

prove there is a problem, not for Blaze or the City of Gainesville to prove there is not a problem,

for governmental officials, this explanation is sufficient. From the perspective of the

community, more can always be done, if there is the political will to do so, as Justine Thompson,

who was at the time executive director of GreenLaw, an environmental law firm based in

Atlanta, told a reporter from the Gainesville Times:

> Sometimes, I don't think people take as seriously as they should the problems that are going on in [Newtown] . . . A lot of the problems could be fixed with sufficient political will ... if the city of Gainesville committed to remedying a lot of the problems there and taking it seriously, a lot of problems could be fixed. (Justine Thompson, as quoted in Fielding December 9, 2009)

In response to these allegations:

> Councilman George Wangemann calls the situation in Newtown a 'high priority,' but said the council will have to approach it carefully. While the city seeks to make residents happy, officials cannot forget that Newtown's neighbors are some of Gainesville's largest taxpayers and employers. 'We have to be careful, too, that since these businesses have been there for years and years and they do provide jobs for many in the community, that we don't strangle them financially by passing all these regulation and ordinances that would simply increase the cost of doing business and possibly even putting some out of business,' Wangemann said. 'You have to find a way to be fair to both sides and somehow retain your sensitivity to both interests in the community, the industrial as well as the residential community.' For now, the 22-year councilman said he is more apt not to act unless scientific studies show pollution is harmful in Newtown. If and when he does act, Wangemann said he wants the result to satisfy both industrial and residential interests. (Fielding December 9, 2009)

In this statement, in his attempts to contradict Justine Thompson Councilman Wangemann

corroborated her statements. He indicated that the council had to weigh the needs of industry

(their biggest tax base) and community members, but also indicated and harped back to questions

of burden of proof and the lack of scientific evidence that proves the pollution is harmful to the

community (see Chapter 6).

According to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the city does want to move Blaze, but the

urgency felt by the community is not echoed by the city. In the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Blaze

is brought up four times, as community concerns and desires, on a community vision map as an

expansion of DeSota Park, as an implementation measure for the community facilities & services implementation measure, and as an opportunity for community facilities (2030 Comprehensive Plan 2012 pages 15, 29, 34, and 83). The plan states that the City wishes to "Construct a greenway extension through Newtown to connect to the Midtown Greenway, possibly in conjunction with a new storm water basin and park on the Blaze Recycling site" (2030 Comprehensive Plan 2012, 34). While these goals are stated, there is no mention of Blaze or the planned reconstruction of the area in the implementation plan (2030 Comprehensive Plan 2012). Including moving Blaze in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, even without a specific implementation plan, is significant for the members of the NFC because it is the first indication that the city is listening to what they are saying. But they are unclear as to whether including the relocation of Blaze in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan is to appease them or if it is an indication that they are willing to use their political capital to move the junkyard.

When city officials talk about the relocation of Blaze, most are quick to point out that the city officials do not think the co-location of a junkyard and an African-American community is an environmental justice issue, instead it is an example of historical incompatible land use (Chapter 5) or it is an issue of neighborhood concern, as Terry explains:

> I don't know if it's an environmental justice issue but I do know it's an issue for the neighbors in that area and whether it's environment or not it's an issue for them that we need to attempt to address and we try to kind of pull all the things out of bag of tricks and don't know what the next step would be. (interview with author, April 1, 2013)

By not directly recognizing the historical and contemporary patterns of racialization of Gainesville city officials veil their discussions of injustice in objective language of economics, risk assessments, and cost-benefit analysis on multiple scales (see Chapters 4 and 5). By denying the environmental justice claims of the NFC the city continues to perpetuate the myth of

a unified race-less city were all citizens are seen and treated equally. Until city officials recognize the role of race *and* class in these processes and find ways to productively engage with present day manifestations of structural racism and classism and the legacies of historical injustices, they will continue to perpetuate these injustices, intentionally or unintentionally.

Cultural Conceptions

Just as political economy is omnipresent in the compounding socio-political processes, so are cultural conceptions of the communities, activists and regulators. Cultural capital influences how decisions are made, who gets to participate in the process, and what values and opinions are heard. Often, environmental justice communities are not just discriminated against environmentally, they also lack social resources, suffering from what Checker (2005) calls social resources contamination – the lack of access to decent jobs, housing, schools, and police protection. This leads to multiple burdens of environmental justice communities. Environmental justice activists are therefore contending not just against a specific (or multiple) environmental threats, but also the multiple forms of oppression that allows that specific threat to be in their communities in the first place.

One part of this process is how the community determines what problems are most important in their neighborhood, what problems need to be addressed first, and who gets to decide the answers to these questions. These questions impact the social, political, and economic approaches of activists and dictates how problems are defined and what solutions are sought. This is complicated when different scales of analysis are employed and through the expectation of a unified African-American voice (see Chapter 6). Disagreements in how these questions are answered, in conjunction with fear and mistrust can lead to situations where people in communities of color and low-income communities are not just fighting for their voices to be

heard by political, economic, and social leaders, but they are also fighting against one another. How the actions and words of individuals are interpreted by others and made to represent entire organizations, cultural groups, or places influences the ability of people to work together and to establish relationships based on mutual trust.

"The Less Attractive Parts of Town:" How People see Communities Matters

When the women of the NFC talk about Newtown, they talk about it gently, with pride. It is their beloved community. It is their home even if they have not lived in the neighborhood for years. They also do not shy away from the realities of the physical environment in which they live. It is polluted, unkempt and at times unsafe. For them, the tension between their beloved people and the dominating sights, sounds, and smells of industry is what motivates them to continue to fight to improve their community. It might not matter to anyone else but it matters to them.

This is not how everyone sees their community, others use adjectives like rundown, slum, industrial, and polluted. When city officials talk about the Southside, they choose their words carefully, just like the process of sanitizing inequalities under the guise of economic processes, descriptions of the neighborhood by local officials take on clinical language:

> There are different uses on the north side and the south side, I mean of course, you got your residential uses kind of throughout, but thinking of your south side is a little more geared towards industry and other types of businesses and your north side is primarily, I think residential focus or similar of neighborhood commercial areas. (Taylor, interview with author, March 27, 2013)

Others in the city are more explicit about the differences between the North and Southside of Gainesville:

> north of Jesse Jewell's, I see higher concentration of residential properties with traditional, I guess not traditional, but typical suburban shopping, no hospital, whereas I see south of Jesse Jewell being more of your well, I guess from an outsider's perspective, you see the less attractive parts of town. You see the less

> attractive housing options because I see south of Jesse Jewel's, I see a higher
> concentration of what appears to be run down neighborhoods. I see industry,
> hardcore, heavy industry near the railroad. (Parker, interview with author, March
> 27, 2013)

The explanation for these differences is cast in a historical light, it is this way because it has

always been this way (see Chapter 5), when asked why differences existed in the development of

the north and Southside, infrastructure and development patterns were highlighted:

> For the simple fact that it's just the development patterns for 60, 70 years that
> have occurred because of -- and I think it all really has hinged around the location
> of the railroad. I think the railroad has had a huge impact on what gets developed
> for more industrial purposes . . . And then from that railroad, the highway
> network, that's where industry goes, so it's definitely going to be more of an issue
> on the south, southeast side, as opposed to the north, northeast, west side. Partly
> because -- mostly because of the railroad. Again, you're getting into the fringe
> areas where you have the lake, and you have larger lots typically, more rolling
> terrain, maybe more challenging, so the lots are generally bigger, whereas years
> ago, you know railroads there, communities were laid out, little postage stamp
> lots, and industry there, and once industry is established, that's where they want to
> be. (Bailey, interview with author, March 27, 2013)

What these discussions of development patterns based on infrastructure miss is the historical

patterns of racial segregation that forced people of color to live in segregated neighborhoods next

to industry (see chapter 5). Instead of acknowledging the contemporary manifestations of these

processes, city officials point to cultural and social forces that perpetuate development patterns:

> with the development problems as they are or still in a lot of ways, I think we're a
> different society so, there was a lot of suppression and if there was a way to get
> ahead and get further away, further separated, then people did that and I think
> what happens, African-American, White, Black, Hispanic, Purple, Green, it
> doesn't matter I think. We are creatures of habit. People are creatures of habit
> and if you grow up in one part of town, or on one side of the tracks, having
> learned to describe it, chances are, you know, through your experiences and
> influences from your family and friends, may continue to want to be in that part or
> living in that part if you like you. (Parker, interview with author, March 27,
> 2013)

While Parker acknowledges the historical influences on place, by indicating that these places

persist based on habit, s/he ignores the current manifestations of discrimination that maintain the

inequitable distribution of resources within a city as well as the processes which encourage people to stay in the communities with which they are familiar.

This is not to say that activists do not rely on historical narratives to explain their situation. They use these same narratives to highlight that they never choose to live next to industries, instead, it was only after their community was established that slowly industries began to encroach. For the activists, the main difference is that history is not something in the past that can be bracketed off and ignored, instead, they are living the consequences of history, and history has to be acknowledged and dealt with to be remedied. As Ms. Johnson explains:

> Newtown was involved in the environmental justice movement earlier and didn't know it, didn't know it was an environmental justice movement or that we were doing environmental justice work. You know because you can't walk out the door of your home and being sprayed with grain dust whether you called it an environmental problem or not, you know, the recognition of the exposure in its very basic terms, you know, so whether we identified that period as the mid- or late 70s, the period prior to that when we weren't necessarily counting the number of people who had already died, but became conscious of it because we really kind of realized that people were dying. There were too many people dying and was that because of the environment. I think that, and I think we have to begin to rewrite the script on it because the early exposures before we even knew to call it environmental justice may just simply need to be considered as the time we didn't know, you know, but still a really very important time, the time we didn't know to call it environmental justice – what would you call that, how would you frame it, you know, except the time that we didn't know. But we knew that all these industries were in our neighborhood. (Interview with author, September 8, 2012)

Governmental officials who claim that decisions are in the past maintain the status quo by not directly engaging with historical injustices and therefore, intentionally or unintentionally, perpetuate injustices. By trying to connect the past and the present, activists are bringing attention to the way decisions that ignore the past perpetuate the status quo. In their telling, how they are heard and how their arguments are interpreted, very much depends on how they as individuals are perceived.

"It was a Great Place to Grow Up:" The Challenges of Place

There is never a single way to describe a place, the physical geography or the people. On the contrary, generalizations made about a place and the creation of a homogenous population mask the competing interests within a community. The same can be said about any organization, the voices and stories of the club leadership is what is heard and interpreted. In this way, the leadership comes to represent the entire organization, even if there are different opinions, conflict, or dissent within the organization. This does not negate the importance of the stories told, nor does it mean that these stories do not have analytical importance.

The multiple and competing interests of the dominant groups on Gainesville's Southside creates unique micro-scalar places, each with its own characteristics that "are performed by people living their everyday lives" (Cresswell 2004, 34). This diversity of opinions and priorities are glossed over by the city through their stock stories of Gainesville as "one city" and their simultaneous and contradictory view of a unified African-American community (see Chapter 6). While connection to place is necessary for the continuation of organizations such as the NFC, it does not come without challenges. These stories can alienate people who do not necessarily share the same connection to place even if they share similar struggles.

The dispersion of the African-American community throughout Gainesville's Southside and into Hall County presents challenges to place and connection to place in unexpected ways. Historically, when segregation was legal, and even as desegregation began, Gainesville's African-American community was concentrated in the Newtown/Fair Street area. This geographic proximity provided opportunities to come together and discuss things that were going on in their community (field notes, September 28, 2013). Their segregated neighborhood served as the informal meeting places where information was exchanged, problems were discussed, and

solutions were brained stormed. It was a safe space for everyday talk to occur (Harris-Lacewell 2004; Isoke 2012; May 2001). This built a sense of trust between members of the African-American community. As Ms. Johnson described:

> Newtown has always been an active community, an active social community, and active community where people cared about each other, care about each other and looked out for each other. And it was a great place to grow up (interview with author, September 8, 2012).

The concentration of the African-American population and their proximity to one another made the streets and local activism a place for the development of Black political thought.

After desegregation, the African-American community in Gainesville became more geographically dispersed. The African-American community still primarily lives on Gainesville's Southside and in southern Hall County, but they were no longer concentrated geographically. The dispersion led to tension between those who were able to "get out" and those who by choice or by design stayed in the neighborhood. Furthermore, since people were geographically spread-out, the neighborhood no longer acted as an informal safe space where people could come together to discuss their everyday problems and concerns.

Churches, which are one of places were black political thought is developed through everyday talk (Harris-Lacewell 2004) represent an important, safe space for members of the African-American community in Gainesville. However at a meeting of leaders in Gainesville's African-American community, participants identified thirteen churches with which they were affiliated. While they agreed that in a moment of crisis they most often met in a church and much of their involvement in the community stemmed out of their church, what is discussed and prioritized in one church often differs from what is discussed in another church. The lack of a communal everyday place where ideas can be shared, relationships can be strengthened, and trust can be built was identified as one challenge to a sustained collaboration by multiple groups

working for the betterment of the African-American community in Gainesville/Hall County

(field notes September 28, 2013). One way that the members of the NFC are trying to bridge this

disconnect is through the development of partnerships.

I cannot Believe Nothing has Changed: Partnerships and the NFC's story

In November 2008, the Gainesville City Council heard a presentation on Newtown's

history, health and environmental conditions due to adjacent polluting industries. During the

presentation, they were also presented with proposed ordinances to remedy the worst of the

problems facing the community. This is a story that the women of the NFC have told time and

time again, to anyone who would listen. They thought that this time though, things would be

different, they thought their claims would be legitimized by the City Council because it was not

only them, representatives of a working-class African-American community, telling the story but

also white lawyers from a nearby university and from a non-profit environmental law firm and

white technical experts from an environmental consulting firm.

Throughout their history, the NFC has partnered with many organizations. They have

partnered with activists to tackle social and environmental issues. They have partnered with

researchers from governmental organizations and universities. They have partnered with

lawyers, primarily who have done pro-bono work to try to remedy injustices through legal

pathways. They have even partnered with surrounding industries, helping the industries pass out

Christmas presents to local families, hosting neighborhood work days, and accepting donations

for specific projects. For the members of the NFC, these partnerships are carefully considered,

they weigh the benefits of these partnerships with the negative consequences that may occur.

The partnerships they forged with the UGA team (see Chapter 2) began when an

environmental lawyer who had been working with the NFC reached out to the head of the UGA

Land Use Clinic who she had worked with previously on other projects. The supervising lawyer of the land use clinic recruited two environmental consultants, one of whom she'd met at an environmental leadership conference. The university lawyer used her position and contacts with the University of Georgia to recruit other researchers and students, including myself, to address aspects of the complex and variant problems facing the Newtown community that she did not have the expertise to address herself.

I highlight the partnership formation because it was based on personal and professional relationships that are accessible only to certain people. As one of the environmental engineers explained to me, it was because of his personal connection to the head of the Land Use Clinic that he got involved. When she asked him, it was a friend asking him, not a stranger, and he felt compelled to be a part of the project. He went on to explain, that's how these things always happens. Since for him, this is the way that it always happens, what does that mean for activists, who might not have these personal connections or access to the conferences and events to make these connections? This is not to say the women of the NFC are not incredibly skilled at recruiting talented people that provide them with the resources they need, their track record of collaborative relationships indicates otherwise. However, unlike other professionals they cannot rely on traditional arenas for networking and therefore rely on the strength of their story to recruit partners.

As I indicated earlier, the UGA team presented Newtown's story to the Gainesville City Council, and when I say the UGA team presented, it was the white lawyers and the white technical experts that presented the story that the African-American activists had told so many times. The lawyers and the technical experts felt they did an excellent job and presented a compelling case to the City Council. The environmental consultants were particularly shocked

when after three years, nothing had changes (it was the first environmental justice case they worked on).[24] They did not understand how it is possible that after their compelling presentation nothing in Newtown has changed. The women of the NFC, on the other hand, while they were disappointed, were not surprised that their story told in another way, once again fell on deaf ears.

In a meeting with the EPA Region Regional Administrator in May 2011, the Newtown story was again told by the white "experts" from the environmental consulting firm. The lawyers and environmental consultants "representing" Newtown dominated the discussion. When given a chance to speak, after specifically being acknowledged by the Regional Administrator, not during the formal presentation, the NFC members argued that addressing the immediate problem of moving the junkyard would solve some of their problems – and they really want these problems to be solved – but all of the problems facing their community would not be remedied until environmental racism and racism are addressed (field notes, May 25, 2011).

After the meeting, the university lawyer felt that this comment, which explicitly acknowledged the role of race, was an attempt by the client, which is how she always refers to the women of the NFC when discussing legal and professional issues, to change the objectives of their work in the midst of the project (field notes, May 25, 2011). To me, this comment did not represent a change in strategy; instead, it was an articulation of the lived experiences of the women of the NFC. Racial inequality is part of their everyday lives. All the members of the club I spoke with said that their race impacts their lives. As one club member said:

> Every day it does . . . because of the way people perceive us, it's as simple as that, the way we're perceived" (Janie Shelton, interview with author, September 8, 2012).

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[24] It has been longer than three years since their original presentation to the City Council which was in October 2008, but many of the original members of the UGA team, including the environmental consultant have not worked specifically on the project since 2011. To date, there have not been no tangible results from the presentation.

Their goal to improve the quality of their neighborhood has never changed, but they recognize that to do so they must address racial inequalities that create and perpetuate inequalities.

In examining this story, I am not denying the importance of the training and expertise of the lawyers and engineers working with the NFC. In contrast, their importance is invaluable not only because of their specific skill set and experiences and the different perspective and solutions to the complex problems they propose, but also in the ways their participation lends legitimacy to the claims and actions of the NFC. They can act as translators between science and lived experiences (Corburn 2005). What I do question is what it is about the situation that gains the White lawyers' and engineers' access to have the story heard when the women themselves have been unsuccessful in having their story heard? Second, why nothing has changed when the compelling story of the Newtown community has been told over and over again? Finally, and maybe most importantly, I am asking what needs to be changed to remedy these environmental injustices.

"They Want to Label us Troublemakers:" Storytelling, Story Listening, Story Hearing

Working with partners necessitates that activists address questions of ownership of their stories. It forces decisions of made as to can and who should be able to tell a particular story. For some activists their story can only be told by them – it is their story and their story alone. For others, they do not care who tells their story as long as it is getting told. The women of the NFC take a more nuanced approach. It is their stories, it is their reality, and it is their lives, while they guard, protect, and retell their story, they also recognize that different people will hear their story in different ways when it is told by different people. Additionally, as they are getting older, telling their story gets physically and mentally tiring. Ms. Bush avoids public speaking

whenever possible, she recounts how her sister Mozetta Whelchel, who lost two of her children

to Lupus and her husband to cancer was tired of telling her story:

> My sister, [Mozetta Whelchel] she was a fighter. And I guess, after her kids came down with Lupus and she lost two of them, she always would, one things she would say and she would do what she said she gonna do and she was very active in the club. And she had spoke out in so many meetings and workshop and I could remember her saying she was tired of telling story because everybody wanted her to talk about her kids and where she lived and all that. And she said she was tired to telling her story cause they didn't realize how her talking about it how it was still at that time, you know, she was still grieving. (Personal interview, 27 April, 2012)

People often forget, while these are stories, they are also painful memories of suffering and

dying. The women of the NFC also worry about who will tell their stories when they are no

longer there to tell them – this is one motivation for them to continue to tell their stories, so the

next generation will know their struggles and will be able to build on their work.

The NFC's nuanced approach to storytelling reflects their experiences as African-

American women, who live their lives through their radicalized, gendered, and classed

experiences. Their experiences have taught them that people can and will dismiss their telling of

events. They therefore look for other ways to tell their stories, ways that will make it more

difficult for people from delegitimizing their stories.

The women of the NFC know first-hand that their stories are not always heard in the

same way when they tell them or when they are told by others. Their positionality as poor

African-American women in a town dominated by a tight knit "good ole' boys network" has led

to countless experiences when their stories have not been heard and instead by telling their

stories they have been branded as troublemakers. In contrast, they have had different

experiences when they have partnered with white people. Ms. Bush recounts a story, when they

were working with a white organizer Sarah:

> [Sarah] who was the white lady who worked in the organization in Atlanta . . . So she came here and she worked with us . . . [Sarah] was a mess. But I can remember her coming up . . . we used to go to meetings uptown . . . , the company that make automobile tires over there, they didn't, EPA didn't announce they were coming, we filed a complaint that, we was able to go to the meeting. [Sarah] got up, you know, she was tall, you know, she was just going on. They thought [Sarah] was a lawyer [laughter] . . . they didn't know what was going on, they didn't know we was protesting against it, they thought it was just going to be, the city just thought it was going to just be a few of us, you know, but a lot of white people turned out, and it really made a difference. You know, a lot of peoples back then, would, were into the environment, and they supported some of the work we had, we was doing. (interview with author April 27, 2012)

The assumption that Sarah was a lawyer but the women of the NFC Club were just troublemakers reflects racial assumptions and preconceived notions about the role people play in society. For Ms. Bush, being labeled as a troublemaker is particularly difficult, because as she said:

> Somehow they want to label us troublemakers and they don't see them [white collaborators] being that way. But we're not trouble makers we just trying to fight for what's right because they won't give us what's right" (interview with author, April 27, 2012).

To this women, who have worked so hard for their community being branded as troublemakers is particularly difficulty, especially when their white partners are not labeled in the same ways.

The women of the NFC believe that by partnering with white organizations, they can change the way they interact with the city. When asked why she thought it would change things, Ms. Bush said:

> Because it's something that they don't usually see you doing and I guess they fear that white organizations have more support and more knowing more about what's going on and that kind of stuff" (interview with the author, April 27, 2012).

Again, assuming that white organizations have more support and that they know what they are talking about plays into assumption that as a African-American organization, the NFC (a) does not have any support outside the African-American community (which is powerless) and (b) that

as African-American women, they do not know what they are talking about, even though they are living the realities of environmental injustices every day. Due to these perceptions of Blackness and African-American women in particular, their stories are ignored. Since their stories are ignored, their experiences remain invisible and the injustices facing their communities persist.

The parallel answers of the Black women as troublemakers and white organizations as powerful, speaks strongly to cultural conceptions of race and gender (Collins, 1998; 2009; Guy-Sheftall, 1995; hooks, 1989; 2000; McKittrick, 2006; Naples, 1998b; Polletta, 2006; Robnett, 1997). Furthermore, the assertion that any "white" organization (the vagueness of the question was intentional) would be more respected and wield more power within the political structures of the city highlights the importance of race in political processes. Regardless if it is indeed the case that the white organizations yield more political clout, the impression that they do influences how the NFC present themselves and with whom they choose to work.

It is armed with these experiences that the women of the NFC have explicitly chosen to work with white organizations throughout their history. They recognize how their opinions and perspectives are devalued, and so they try to use their understanding of the coupling of difference and power to their advantage to maximize their effectiveness. They are willing to do this in hopes of making positive change in their community. Ms. Faye recounts a story of when the NFC was fighting against a proposed expansion of Martin Luther King Boulevard from a two-lane to a four-lane street:

> We used to have a group here when they was trying to make MLK a four lane, it was a group of white ladies on the north side of town so we all was able to come together and work together and we was able to stop them from doing that. But see if we had been fighting it by ourselves it would have never happened. 'Cause the young lady that left and went to Athens, she told me that Caryle Cox, who was the city manager, he told her that he didn't see why she was out there raising sin

>because it wasn't going to come through their neighborhood no way. But it was some women who really stood up and really fought with us and we were able to stop 'em. (interview with author April 27, 2012)

The recognition that they would not have been able to achieve their political goal without working with a group of white women attests to Ms. Faye's conception of her power as a African-American woman verses the power of white women within the racial state.

Recognizing the lived experience of the racial state, and using those experiences to work the system represents a way members of the NFC combat environmental injustices within their community. Through their lived experience they recognize that their stories are devalued, rather than give up their stories, they use partnerships with white organizations as a means to have their stories heard in a different light. They never let go of their stories, because they are their stories, but they use the fatal couplings of difference and power to get their stories heard in different places and different ways.

Conclusion

The lived experiences of environmental injustices cannot be separated from the political, economic, and cultural process that led to the development and maintenance of these places. While lower class, African-American women experience the triple jeopardy of race, class, and gender, the burden of proof lies on them to prove these injustices, not on those in power to prove that these injustices do not exist. For the women of the NFC, they must work against the economic interests, expressed as industrial taxes, and cultural conceptions of their neighborhood and themselves as individuals, to make change in their neighborhood.

Economic and cultural processes compound the experiences of people living in environmental justice communities. City officials rely on sanitized economic disclaimers and historical realities to dictate what they can and cannot do in a community rather than

acknowledging the lack of political will. Additionally, the cultural conceptions that people develop about a place can influence how they interact with the people and the place. For people living in environmental justice communities, their lack of political, economic, and social efficacy inhibits their ability to create change in their communities.

The women of the NFC recognize that their political, social, and economic position in society hinders their ability to make change in their community. They rely on partnerships and collaborations with other organizations to get their story heard in different arenas, by different people, and in different ways. Their realities of place makes the multiple, compounding factors facing the community prolonged and systematic, which makes these partnerships difficult to maintain, as those people not living the realities of these places on a day to day basis lose interest or get drawn to other projects or obligations. The women of the NFC use their stories to try to gain and maintain interest in their lived experiences of injustices. As I discuss in the next chapter, the ways they use their stories are often deliberate organizing strategies that not only work to address and remedy the specific environmental concerns of the community, but through their telling they work against the racial state to make positive change in their communities.

CHAPTER 8

MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE: STORYTELLING AS AN ORGANIZING STRATEGY

When Ms. Johnson talks about her community, the pride she feels about Newtown

permeates the room and commands attention. Her stories also portray the hardships of living

next to multiple industries. She tells stories about playing outside when she was younger,

coming home covered in a fine yellow powder from the Ralston Purina Plant that towers over the

only playground on Gainesville's Southside. She tells of the smells that made being outside

unbearable. She tells of the noises that keep people up at night or disturb their sleep early in the

morning. And she tells what it is like to live somewhere where industries dominate the

landscape:

> I remember when, my family and I lived in a three bedroom house. My two
> brothers and I and my mother. My mother worked at the poultry plant and during
> that time . . .Ralston Purina was right across from where we lived and then we
> could walk around the corner to the row house just right around the corner and
> there was an open ditch that smelled of sewage all the time so there was no fresh
> air to breath in because the grain dust came from Ralston Purina constantly and
> then to walk around the corner, to not ever walk around the corner to just walk out
> the door and smell that smell was one of the things I remember well. (Rose
> Johnson, September 8, 2012)

She also tells of the sadness, of the suffering, of the death and sickness:

> in our generation when we went through the very hard days of people dying . . . it
> was a real hard time and it took a long time to psychologically recover from all of
> the funerals and all of the deaths and all of the suffering, and I ask myself all the
> time in our generation you know whether or not any of those effects of constantly
> being exposed to the grain dust from Purina or from the other industry toxins will
> end up manifesting itself in a latent kinds of way because you know we have been
> exposed (Rose Johnson, interview with author, September 8, 2012)

These are not the only stories she and other women of the NFC tell.

Ms. Johnson tells of her vision for Newtown's future, about turning into the Newtown neighborhood and seeing a sign surrounded by flowers saying 'Welcome to Newtown.' Andre Cheeks imagines biking trails instead of factories. Faye Bush envisions well-kept houses with quiet yards where people garden. They imagine a place people want to come; a place people want to raise their families, a peaceful, quiet place. And they believe it will come. They "hope against hope for a new community" as Rose Johnson (personal interview, 8 September 2012) explains:

> I am talking about the environs in the community because our community itself is beloved - the people . . . the relationships . . . I just wonder what it would be like to not have to look up and see a Ralston Purina or an image of the junkyard or hear the train coming down the track right behind the homes of the neighbors.

In this chapter I examine the politics of storytelling, broadly defined, as a strategy the women of the NFC use to bring attention to their lived experiences of injustices in the racial state (Goldberg 2002; Omi and Winant 2014).

The stories they tell act as *place-frames*, providing a narrative around which they create a common discourse and encourage unified action in their organizing (Martin 2003). In this way, the women of the NFC use stories to create a counternarrative, working against the dominant stories of the City of Gainesville (Bell, 2010; Delgado 1989; Fulton, 2006; Hua 2013; Ross 2008; Tagore 2009; Solorzano and Yosso 2002; Wanzo 2009). It also provides them with a venue to share with others what it is like to live in environmental justice communities. They do this by sharing their story, redefining their place through stories, and working to recreate the dominant narrative of Gainesville. The dominant narrative of Gainesville makes them feel hypervisible in times of crisis and invisible during their everyday lives. The tension between this

hypervisibility and invisibility masks their everyday experiences, the stories of their day-to-day lives are therefore ignored, forgotten, and dismissed (Ducre, 2006; McKittrick, 2006). This hypervisibility/invisibility is facilitated and perpetuated by the intersecting forces of oppression that silences their voices, ignores their geographies, and in the process limits their power to make change in their communities. Just as in other communities of color, the women of the NFC do not accept their fate as a silenced, place-less population, they work tirelessly to change their situation and (re)claim their place on the landscape. In this way, environmental justice activists use *place-frames* not only to make sense of their physical location and ascribe meaning to these places, but also to define and redefine their role and place in political processes.

"This Community was Just like a Family:" Storytelling as Place-Making

For the women of the NFC, the narrative of the Newtown community is a domain theme in their stories. Through their narratives they contest dominant stock stories of Newtown as a forgotten place – a place of industry and decay. By animating their place and the people who make the place, they bring attention to their lived experiences of specific environmental injustices and their lived experiences of persistent injustices. They also work to create a "safe space," or a homeplace, to come together and share their stories and experiences and strategize their place within the processes that produce and perpetuate environmental injustices (hooks 1990; Isoke 2011, 2013).

Although many of members of the NFC no longer live in Newtown, their connections to the community, their memories of Newtown, and their dreams for Newtown are the driving force for their continued involvement with the club. History plays an integral role in their conception of place. It is what keeps them involved in the organization, and in turn, it is what gives the organization its meaning. It defines their place, literally and figuratively, within the community.

When Newtown was built in 1937, after a 1936 tornado ravaged the original African-American community, it was officially segregated. It was their place; the one place from which they were not excluded. It was the one place where everyone looked out for them and they looked out for others. As Ms. Bush explained "this community was just like a family" (interview with author, April 27, 2012). Newtown is also recounted as "an active social community . . . where people cared about each other . . . and looked out for each other." (Rose Johnson, personal interview, 8 September 2012). By invoking notions of family and caring, the women of the NFC extend their conception of place to include not just the physical space of Newtown but to incorporate those who maintain a connection even when they no longer occupy the place on a daily basis. They make sense of not just the physical environment, but their micro-scalar social environment, where instead of being pushed to the margins and ignored, their narratives become the dominant narratives to define and make sense of place.

The stories of a tight knit community are often contrasted with the challenges faced by the African-American community living in a segregated town. The streets were not paved. The houses did not have porches. There was often no indoor plumbing, and sewage ran in open ditches. Starting in the 1950s, industries sprouted up around the neighborhood, as Rose Johnson recounts, (interview with author, September 8, 2012):

> when I was growing up in the community, the smell of the soybeans or the dust or all of those things . . . I don't remember exactly what it was in terms of which particular kind of dust it was and the smell maybe it was soybeans but I remember it and I remember how bad it smelled and I remembered the dust and I remember that it wasn't environmentally safe and I know that it contaminated our neighborhoods as far as we are here in Newtown and the communities that sit right up under it, and so when I think about the damage that has been done and all that time in terms of the toxic exposure.

These negative environmental conditions were compounded by experiences of hatred and racial violence in Gainesville. As Rose Johnson recounts:

> So combining the poor housing conditions with the intersection with school desegregation and no recreational activities, no government sponsored recreational activities and the toxic from the industries and the Klan riding through the neighborhood and police beating up people, the level of police violence at that time was pretty extreme.

The contrast between a tight knit community within Newtown, encroaching industries, and racial tensions within Gainesville all compound the importance of Newtown as a safe space, Newtown as a place where people looked out for one another, Newtown as family.

The beginnings of the NFC also reflect this connection to place. They started off as a social club to provide material and emotional support to those in their communities who lost loved ones or who were sick or dying. They would "go into the houses when people got sick and bathe them and go to the grocery store and do all those kinds of things." (Faye Bush, interview with author, April 7, 2012). After schools integrated, but their children were denied the ability to participate in afterschool plays and sports teams, the women formed youth groups to give their children the opportunities they were being denied by ingrained racism (Spears 1998). Faye Bush (interview with author, April 7, 2012) recounts the first time the club took on a project that went beyond caring for the sick and dying:

> That started when we tried to get a playground down here where the park is now . . . we had talked to the city manager about letting us use that [building in the junkyard] as a building for our kids for recreation because we told him that if we had them inside what we could work with then it would help them but if they out here in the street it's hard to get to them but instead of them making that a community building for the children, they put the park down here . . . 'Cause here they just have the one park on the Southside of Gainesville, all the kids come from Harrison Square and everywhere and play in that park, it's the only one they have over here [on the Southside].

The NFC also played a role in nurturing and supporting the younger generations, as Rose Johnson (interview with author, September 8, 2012) recalls:

> So when I was a child growing up, we moved to the neighborhood when I was about 12 I think, and from the time that I got here, Ms. Ruby and Ms. Bush they

just pulled me out because Ms. Ruby's house was the place where all the kids came to socialize to get together. We had a girls organization called the Bassette's club that came out of the work of Newtown and so for Newtown to be responsible for even all of the recreational activities after the closing of the school, it just fulfilled that function and so it was at that young age I mean I was going to public hearings and community meetings sitting in on whatever the issues were that the club was addressing and found it to be my place and didn't want to do anything else but that but in the midst of women with such great courage like Ms. Ruby and Ms. Bush, you know you just develop a certain additional amount of fortitude to fight the good fight and so you know.

The grounding of the club in place contributes to the longevity of the club - the people that are involved feel a connection to Newtown as place, regardless if they still live in the neighborhood. For many, Newtown represents "their community," whether they are referring to the community where they came of age and raised their children or on a broader sense, the representation of the African-American community in Gainesville.

The familiarity and sense of family remains strong when the members of the NFC talk about Newtown. These connections to family and community reflect Naples (1998, 109) conceptions of "activist mothering" or "doing what needs to be done." Naples argues that many women community organizers view their work as something different from politics, and instead as an extension of their roles as mothers. This idea of mothering expands both the actions of the community organizers, how they understand their work, and questions divisions between the public and the private sphere. This can be seen in Ms. Bush's assertion that she is not an activist, rather she is:

a person trying to help somebody . . . I think I see myself as God give me a gift and do what I need to do 'cause Ellen I tell you in '95 when I had open heart surgery, and they lost me and they had to go back in me, and I always say if I talk about it, He wasn't finished with me doing the work here on Earth that I was supposed to do and I feel that my work now, I look back over, and He gave me another chance. And I think I need to do and if I don't do it than He probably take that chance away from me (interview with author, April 27, 2012).

The emphasis on place further extends Naples arguments and highlights the importance of place as memory, as processes which are maintained and contested, and places that make and are made by activists (Creswell 2004). Bringing attention to place and the role activists place on place is critical for understanding their conceptions of their own place and how they contest injustices. Furthermore, as McKittrick (2006, xiii) contends "space and place give black lives meaning in a world that has, for the most part, incorrectly deemed black populations and their attendant geographies as 'ungeographic' and/or philosophically undeveloped . . . black lives are necessarily geographic, but also struggle with discourses that erase and despatialize their sense of place." The ways the members of the NFC use place and landscape as an organizing strategy draws attention to their lived experience of the racial state to combat the fatal couplings of difference and power that shape their lives.

Establishing their legitimacy as situated and valuable is a crucial component of the activism of the NFC. This stems from and reinforces the deep connection they have to Newtown, especially in terms of place as family and place as a safe haven from racial injustices. This connection establishes a sense of purpose for their activism and legitimizes their role in the landscape, especially when they felt written out of dominant constructions of their landscape. They use stories to bring people together, to create an investment in the community, and as a contrast to the stories they tell about the environmental injustices they face.

Storytelling does more than connect the women of the NFC to place, it simultaneously co-produces place. Through narrative, especially the story of their history they construct *place-frames* to establish their presence in a historical narrative. Stories are a form of democratic knowledge production that cannot be taken away from these women, although it can and is often delegitimized as exaggerations, telling half the tale, hysterical accounts, and as trouble makers

talking (Corburn 2005; Collins 1998; 2009; Haraway 1989; Polletta 2006). For African-American women, the act of place-making through storytelling is one way they counter their marginalized position in knowledge production. Since they are often seen as "outside the production of space," connecting their stories to place through the creation of place-frames in and of itself becomes an act of resistance (McKittrick, 2006, 54). Through their telling and re-telling of their history and their lived experiences of injustice they are asserting that their experiences matter and that their interpretation of historical processes that formed their community need to be considered to understand the perpetuation and persistence of the injustices in their community.

The creation of place-frames also encourages African-Americans connected to Gainesville to identify with the struggles of the community, even if they were never or are no longer connected physically to the neighborhood. The telling of the history of Newtown construes the neighborhood as the historic re-birth of the African-American community after the 1936 tornado. The construction of the place-frames of Newtown as the epicenter of Black Gainesville and the NFC as the embodiment of the African-American community creates an opportunity for African-American's in Gainesville to work for "their people." Janie Shelton (personal interview, September 8 2012), a NFC board member who grew up a few blocks from Newtown, says she joined the NFC because:

> I've always belonged to any number of, you know, organizations but none of them provided I don't think to my community as this one I wanted to be part of an organization that meant something to my immediate community

She went on to indicate that the immediate community she was referring to was Gainesville's African-American community.

The construction of Newtown as place and as a representation of the African-American community romanticizes a false unity within the African-American community. There are divisions within the African-American community of Gainesville based on class, micro-geographies, and competition over resources. This was evident during a collaborative problem-solving workshop that brought together members of the African-American community. The representatives and leaders of organizations that serve the African-American community in Gainesville each had their own specific issues they were most concerned with and because they often compete for the same resources, they could not agree on a single issue around which they could come together. The problem became defining the problem facing the African-American community (see Chapter 7). The African-American community is well aware of these divisions, but that does not stop the women of the NFC using their historical-geographic narrative as Newtown as the center of African-American life. During times of acute crisis within the African-American community, it is often the NFC was at the center of successfully rallying together the divergent representatives of the African-American community.

The strong connection to place that the women of NFC drives their activism. It keeps them connected to the struggles of the community, even if they have moved out of the community. As one club member explained, she was always be a part of the community:

> because of my upbringing, I grew up here, it's a part of me, there are things that are embedded in you that you just can't get away from and I don't want to" (interview with the author, September 8, 2012).

The connection to place also affords an opportunity for African-American's in Gainesville to work for "their people." The historical connections between the NFC and the African-American community remains strong in the eyes of many, making the Club the embodiment of the African-American community.

Storytelling as an Act of Resistance

The women of the NFC use different forms of storytelling to write themselves into the landscape. Among other things they have: written books about their struggles, partnered with regional and national organizations, participated in, organized, and spoken at conferences, testified at local city council and county commissioner meetings, held an annual Martin Luther King Day march and celebration, written opinion pieces in the local newspaper, educated the youth through their annual girls leadership summer program, and held anniversary and Black History Month celebrations. Each forum necessitates a different approach and has its own set of challenges associated with the process of storytelling, how the stories are received, and the actions the stories do or do not inspire. Through storytelling they present their lived experiences in a way that people can chose to not hear or understand their stories, but they cannot deny the existence of these experiences. Storytelling also provides a way to connect the past, present, and future, sometimes in non-linear ways. This contests dominant narratives of linear progress and economic growth that are often used to justify and naturalize the existence of polluting facilities in certain areas (Houston 2013).

One way the members of the NFC do this is to integrate visual tours of the neighborhood with stories through "toxic tours" (see Gilbert 2007; Houston 2013; Pezzullo 2007; Di Chiro 2003). Toxic tours are "noncommercial expeditions into areas that are polluted by toxins" (Pezzullo 2007, 5). During the tours, community members weave stories of their lived experiences to explain "the historical reasons why industrial pollution seems to be concentrated in a certain area of Gainesville" (Gilbert 2007). The strength of their stories is that people "understand and empathize with the narrator without assimilating her experiences to their own . . . [they] also make it possible for audiences to comprehend people's experiences both as unique

and as similar to more familiar experiences" (Polletta 2006, 89). They emphasize the effect of living with pollution and environmental degradation rather than the causal relationships of why these spaces exist (Houston 2013).

Toxic tours are intended to educate tour participants and inspire them into action to transform the area where the tour is taking place. Since 1993, the members of the NFC have taken church groups, other activists, university students, politicians, policy makers, and journalists – anyone who would listen – on toxic tours. They have also made a short movie that is loosely based on a toxic tour.[25] Pezzullo (2007, 6) contends that "toxic tours are motivated by community members' collective desire to survive and to resist toxic pollution through active participation in public life." I build on this argument to contend that they are also a way for community members to use the material realities of the landscape to challenge dominant discourses that renders them invisible. In the case of the NFC, the club members use the material realities of their lives to make their experiences, lives, and homes visible on the landscape to challenge the Gainesville's stock story.

The NFC's toxic tours have taken different forms. They have walked people through the neighborhood hanging "black ribbons at the homes where residents are sick with cancer or lupus or where a family member has died" (Spears 1997, 2). Most often, during the tours, they drive people around their neighborhood, past the fourteen toxic polluters within a one-mile radius of their homes so people can see, smell, feel, and taste the pollution they live alongside every day. They also cross over Jesse Jewel, Gainesville's *de facto* racial and class dividing line. The contrast is unsettling for most participants. The rancid smells, the harsh industrial landscapes, the constant drone of machines, trains, and work of the Southside is all the more unbearable when compared to the serene, green, quiet, tree-filled of the Northside. As Jonathan Butts, a

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[25] The video can be accessed from http://vimeo.com/19002163

member of the NFC commented as he led a toxic tour, "Even the trees here look happier here."
Upon returning to the Southside from the Northside, one toxic tour participant summed up her
emotions as she took a deep breath in and instead of covering her nose to block out the industrial
smells as she did at the beginning of the tour, said, "it smells like struggle." The emotions that
toxic tours invoke in participants are intentional – they are designed to make them angry, to spur
them into action, to help the NFC do what it has been trying to do for over sixty years – make
their community a better place.

Regardless of how the toxic tour is conducted the tours always incorporate the stories of
Newtown and the lived experiences of those conducting the tour. Rose Johnson tells of playing
outside as a little girl coming home covered in yellow grain dust from the Purina Mill. Jonathan
Butts talks about digging in the street before they were paved - digging for "treasures," old
bottles, bottle caps, and other trinkets, only to realize later, as an adult, they were digging up
remnants of the landfill the neighborhood was built upon. Faye Bush tells of a close knit
community where everyone knew everyone else and they all looked after each other and each
other's children. For the NFC, toxic tours are more than just a political statement. They bring
attention to the materiality of their lives. It is a way to rewrite the landscape from the
community's perspective rather than from the perspective of those in power. They also bring
attention to the "spatial dimensions of everyday life that exceed the specificity of any one
struggle" (Pezzullo 2007, 174). In this way, toxic tours represent a way to renegotiate power
dynamics and to bring attention to the inequalities perpetuated by the racial state. The
redefinition of the landscape and the process of making the invisible visible furthers the
exploitation of communities of color. If they are invisible on the landscape, so are their

struggles. If you can't see their community, you can't see that every day they live next to a junkyard and in the shadows of polluting industries.

Through toxic tours the members of the NFC also assert themselves physically in place and transform how others see and understand the landscape, their place, and the material impacts of living in environmental justice communities. This works to counter their feelings of invisibility and erasure that arises from the stock stories of Gainesville. Through toxic tours community members re-imagine their community and share their lived experiences (all be it for a short period of time and often from the comfort of an air-conditioned vehicle) with participants. They also draw attention to the materiality of their lives - participants see, hear, taste, and smell what it is like to live on the Southside of Gainesville, and by crossing Jesse Jewell during the toxic tours, they contrast this with the lived experience of the Northside of Gainesville.

Toxic tours in and of themselves are not a solution to the problems facing Newtown and the Southside more broadly. At the end of the tour, participants go home and people living in Newtown still live next to industries. The toxic tours have not moved the junkyard that sits adjacent to their neighborhood or created the neighborhood residents dream about. As Pezzullo (2007) points out one of the limits of toxic tours is they do not clean up communities, their success is based on the action they inspire. Additionally, the people who choose to participate in the toxic tours are a self-selecting group; they are often those people who are already concerned about the environment, inequality, and injustices. Furthermore, just because someone goes on the toxic tour, it doesn't mean they interpret it the same way the members of the NFC intended. One toxic tour participant mocked the tour, saying they intentionally take you from the industry to the country club, just to make their point. As with all stories, the toxic tours are left up to the listener to interpret and it is their choice what they do with the information they gain.

In spite of these challenges, toxic tours can be an effective organizing strategy. During toxic tours members of the NFC present their landscape through the lens of the racial state. They make visible the geographies of Blackness and by crossing over Jesse Jewel they also make real and visible the geographies of whiteness. In doing so, they challenge the white racialized landscape Gainesville presents as normal and as their whole landscape. They question the racial formations of Gainesville as a white place and draw attention to their homes and the industries that dominate their landscape and the absence of industry on the Northside.

Using toxic tours is one way the women of the NFC have been successful in making themselves visible on the landscape. They use the reality of their material world to tell their story in a way that it is easy for people to understand on an emotional and physical level. It is difficult to quantify what, if any benefits, they have gained from toxic tours. One way toxic tours have been successful is in developing partnerships with other organizations. It was through a toxic tour that the members of the University of Georgia became committed to the work of the NFC. It was through a toxic tour that my work with the NFC was solidified, and it was through a toxic tour that the EPA Region 4 Regional Administrator asserted that EPA would help the NFC fight the injustices their community is facing.

The materiality of toxic tours animates the experiences of living on Gainesville's Southside. Toxic tours also reflect "the processes through which evidence about environmental impacts is gathered and how this alternative knowledge is actively sustained" (Houston 2013, 432). The materiality of the place makes the experiences undeniable, which works to counteract the narratives of invisibility that make place disappear.

Storytelling through the Racial State to End the Racial State?

During toxic tours, during causal conversations, through everyday talk, in grant writing, in public appearances, and in many other forms of interaction, whenever the women of the NFC are trying to make change in their community, they use storytelling to bring attention to specific environmental injustices facing their community. They interweave specific incidences and specific grievances they have with the conditions in their community into conversations with anyone who will listen. Sometimes stories are told intentionally, to bring people into their experiences, to bring attention to these lived experiences, and to inspire others to make change, whether it be to support the organization monetarily or in-kind or to make structural changes to remedy the root causes of the injustices. At other times, the stories are told in casual settings, between members of the community or with visitors to the neighborhood to share experiences and to make connections. The goals of these narratives are the same, to inspire people to become part of their movement and to work to make change in the community. Regardless of who or where the stories are being told, the stories also work to disrupt the notion that the experiences of the people living in Newtown are normal, that this is just the way that it is. Some form of 'no one should have to live like this' is repeated like a mantra, as if saying it enough will make it a reality.

The stories they tell often focus on specific injustices in their communities be it bearing the noise associated with the junkyard, the sound of the train rolling past their homes, the smell of Cargill and Purina, the grain dust from Purina, and all the environmental hazards they cannot see. Often the stories are told historically, as when Ms. Rose tells of playing as a young child in Newtown coming in covered in a fine yellow dust or Jonathan tells of digging for 'buried

treasures' on the unpaved streets when he was younger or when Ms. Faye describes the overpowering smell fermenting corn that would overpower the neighborhood.

The stories always make their way into the present, things have improved but there are still challenges, there are still smells and sounds that disrupt the quality of life. There are ever present invisible threats that no one understands, or even knows that they will be, but they feat them nonetheless. As Ms. Rose conveyed:

> I guess I believe that they [Cargill] might not be as toxic as they used to be, but to the degree that people are still being harmed by exposures it seems like it's a great big threat that is not as visible as it used to be. Visible by way of the smell, visible by the way of noticeable release, it's like the invisible looming threat, you can't point your finger and say, except by the you know, the record of the releases, it just seems like a great big monster at the door and you can't say specifically that this monster is coming to get you this way but the monster is coming to get you (personal interview, 8 September 2012)

The coupling of known with unknown environmental threats is ubiquitous, as is the compounding impacts of multiple industries. In addition to the specifics of living environmental injustices, themes related to these injustices emerge in the stories: fear, mistrust, frustration, exclusion and always, just as importantly – hope or a more positive vision for the future. It is through these themes in conjunction with specific racial talk that activists' storytelling expands beyond specific injustices and works to bring attention to and combat the racial state.

Throughout all their stories, there is talk of and against the racial state, both through explicit racial talk, as when Faye Bush (interview with author, April 7 2012) argued:

> 'Cause you can see some of the things that you go through, it's so hard to get done, because if you was another race it won't be so hard

and through engagements with lived experiences of environmental injustice such as when she explained:

> I think the hardest thing that, how I can address it I guess, it's amazing how you have a street that separates the Southside from the Northside and you have all

your environment and your companies on one side. And it's always been the in the communities where we live, I think a lot of it because we have less power to fight back, no money, and they can come in and do whatever they want to" (interview with author, April 27 2012).

Even though for the sake of this chapter, I separate storytelling to highlight specific injustices and storytelling against the racial state, in reality they are one and the same. The stories of specific incidences of injustice are just one of the everyday forms of resistance that storytelling uses to bring attention to their experiences as embodied others living in the racial state.

These stories are always interpreted within the socio-political context of where the story is told and who is telling the story. Women activists are faced with gendered hierarchies in how they choose to organize, and in the ways that they were perceived by governmental officials. Environmental justice activism breaks down barriers between public and private spheres because the chemicals contaminating their homes break down these barriers. In this way:

> When predominantly women activists take their concerns about family and community health into broader public arenas, they can find that their work is constrained and enabled by the complexly gendered social terrain in which public and private spheres of activity/activism are constructed. While women and their activism can be marginalized with sexist political rhetoric, women activists can also make strategic use of the ambiguous lines between public and private spheres, particularly as they relate to the grievance of environmental injustice. (Kurtz, 2007, page 412)

Women of color's legitimacy is further questioned because of their embodiment of not only their gender but also their race and in many instances their class. For women of color, their race, gender, and often their class compromises their status as claim maker (Simpson 2002). The women of the NFC recognize this and have used collaborative relationships with other organizations to challenge this conception of themselves (see Chapter 7). During a meeting with representatives of EPA Region 4, as Ms. Bush was recounting the beginnings of the environmental activism of the NFC, she claimed, "We were just dumb little ladies who didn't

know anything but we knew there was a problem" (field notes September 9, 2011). While she

was being facetious, it also reflects her lived experiences as an African-American women.

The themes of fear, mistrust, frustration, and exclusion are woven into the stories told

about living as an embodied other in the racial state. There is fear of authorities, there is fear of

others, and there is fear of the environment.   These fears reflect and are embedded in their lived

experiences with a history of racial violence and exclusion. As Ms. Johnson recalled:

> but because there was so much hatred and so much you know racial violence and
> so much after school desegregation and we left Butler [High School][26], the
> atmosphere at Gainesville High was very intense and so between leaving school
> and coming back into a contaminated community you know, the Klansman riding
> through the neighborhood, and the police who would come and really just beat
> you know especially the black men it was no real mercy, just a lot going on, and I
> used to pay attention to it, I used to follow South African apartheid when I was a
> teenagers and even though you know Steven B Cohen, Nelson Mandala, all of
> them were experiencing their struggles it really felt like the same thing for a
> teenager looking through it through the lens of a teenagers, hate is just not matter
> what part of the globe you're on hate is just hate (personal interview, 8 September
> 2012).

Fear and mistrust reflect the social, economic, political, and environmental conditions that face

the community.

These themes also influence the actions and tactics used by the members of the NFC.

There is an explicitly expressed mistrust of the role of governmental agencies, especially those

charged with environmental regulation. While the women of the NFC recognize that

environmental regulators are supposed to protect the community, past experiences and unclear

regulatory limits makes them weary of the practical applications and enforcements of

environmental regulations. The women have become weary of working with others, and they are

weary of forging alliances with governmental organizations. As Ms. Bush explained:

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[26] Butler High School was the all Black High School in Gainesville prior to desegregation in 1968. After
desegregation, the African-American students attended Gainesville High School, which had been the all-white
school, even though Butler High School was a newer facility.

> Uh, well I tell you a lot of it is distrust, you know, we've been working with the EPA and the EPD [Georgia Environmental Protection Division] . . . I mean, you just loose trust in them because they come in and try to cover up the wrong doing and they leave and you're still there suffering with the same thing . . . They try to make you look like you're crazy and you don't know you doing [laughter]. (interview with author, April 7, 2010)

The weariness has not stopped them from forging alliances – in many ways the fear and mistrust becomes a motivation to try anything to change the conditions in their community. It is the theme of hope or a vision for the future, which provides both the motivation for these women to continue their activism and a clear indication of their work against the racial state. The racial state might structure their lived experiences but it does not take away their agency as change agents. Through their storytelling that they are re-creating and re-defining racial formations, in this way their stories are racial projects (Omi and Winant 2014). The importance of hope and a vision of the future also does not romanticize the ability of redefinitions and stories to create change, because as the women of the NFC are aware and will happily explain, if their material reality doesn't change, than it does not matter what stories they tell. The stories are also at times painful stories, stories of life and death, they are using them to create a sense of place and bring attention to their lived experience. The pain of the stories makes them powerful for listeners, but it also makes them difficult for the tellers, especially when they are using their stories for political gain.

The significance of the pain and emotion of the telling, hearing, and living the stories cannot be minimized. The tellers use their pain and emotion to bring attention to their physical realities. The specific injustices they are fighting against become intertwined with the physical geography within which they live. The integration of the physical, the emotional, and the socio-cultural processes, highlights the human impacts of the materiality of racialized environments (McKittrick and Woods, 2007). By integrating the physical with economic, social, and political

geographies of their lives, place becomes simultaneously a character and a setting of their stories. In this way, place becomes a source of mobilization through the creation of a shared sense of history and as an external tool to bring attention to their lived experience of environmental injustices.

Conclusion

The process of making African-American spaces invisible within the landscape is a political tool used to perpetuate the racial state. For the members of the NFC the connection to place and telling their stories is one way they have tried to re-write themselves onto the landscape. By making themselves visible on the landscape, and making their lived experiences come alive through storytelling, they are combating the racial state simply by making their invisible geographies visible.

In the end, for the members of the NFC the telling of stories, making themselves visible on the landscape, and connecting themselves to place is all done to improve the quality of their neighborhood. They are doing what needs to get done - they are fighting for their survival. Their stories are bound into place because they are stories of a fight to survive - they are life and death stories. While members of the community concede there have been improvements in their community - there have been things they have accomplished - they still live in the shadows of industry and they still live next to a junkyard. For the members of the NFC, their fight is far from over, as long as there is injustice they will have stories to tell and they will continue to do what needs to be done, whether it be related to the environment, education policy, discipline in schools, youth empowerment, or community development.

While the stories they have told have not moved the junkyard, they have not changed city ordinances so the junkyard can be regulated, they have opened dialogue. They have opened

dialogue and collaboration between the NFC and researchers at the University of Georgia. They have opened dialogue and collaboration with EPA region 4. They have opened dialogue and potential collaboration between African-American community leaders working on Gainesville's Southside. While there have been accomplishments for the women of the NFC, their fight is far from over. As people in the community and people in the club age, they are faced with the challenge of how to continue their legacy, how to get the youth involved and how to get others to care about their story. They are also facing the challenge of who is going to tell their story and how are they going to tell it, especially as those that are carrying on the tradition of the NFC might not have experienced the story.

Ms. Bush often says with a laugh, "they think . . . we can move mountains but we can't even more the junkyard" (interview with author, April 27, 2012). I would argue that through her and the members of the NFC's everyday forms of resistance they can move mountains, even if they have not yet moved the junkyard. They have proven that they are not passive victims nor are they "willing accomplices to their own domination" instead they "have a self-defined standpoint on their own oppression." (Collins 2000 [1989], 184) which they share through their storytelling.

Making Newtown and communities of color invisible on the landscape is a tool used to maintain and perpetuate injustices. As long as these communities remain invisible, they remain powerless. The women of the NFC recognize this and are not just telling their stories so others will know their struggles; instead, they are making themselves visible so the material realities of their everyday lives cannot be ignored. In this way, they are not only bringing attention to the specific environmental injustices they are facing but also to the injustices of the racial state.

While bringing attention to injustices is not enough, it does not change their lived experiences, it is the first step in the long process of recognizing injustices in order to remedying it. Blackness and black female subjects are inscribed on the landscape, they are spatial - the women of the NFC understand this. Through their connection to place and their use of the landscape to tell their story, they are inscribing their experiences, their lives onto the landscape. Through their stories they make themselves visible on a landscape and make visible the impacts of intersecting oppressions based on race, class, and gender. They are doing this in the name of righting a specific environmental wrong, but in the process they are challenging the fatal coupling of difference and power which create the context within which injustices perpetuate. They rely on these methods because traditional methods and avenues for addressing environmental wrong have failed. They might not be able to move a junkyard, but in the process they are changing the boundaries of an entire system of oppression.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

The NFC's story has a beginning, and it has a middle, but it does not yet have an

end. This is because for the women of the NFC, until material changes have occurred in their

neighborhood, until they no longer fear for their health and the health of their families, until they

no longer have to breathe, taste, hear, and smell the by-products of industries, they are going to

keep fighting. They keep fighting despite the continued struggles they face. It may be more

appropriate to say they keep fighting *because* of the struggles they continue to face. Their fight

is a fight of survival. The project of the racial state is such that while the women of the NFC

focus on individual injustices – be they a junk yard sitting next to their homes or an African-

American child passed over as school valedictorian – they will have to dismantle the racial state

to achieve the goals they seek.[27] All the while, they will have to contend with the intentional

dismissal of their lived experiences. This intentional invisibility is a tool that allows injustices to

be ignored and the racial state to persist.

Environmental injustices are perpetuated by compounding socio-spatial processes. In this

dissertation, I argue that solely examining one of these explanations does not adequately explain

the existence and perpetuation of environmental injustices. Instead, building on the work of

Pulido (1996a, 1996c, 2000) and Kurtz (2009) I argue that by looking at urban spaces as

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[27] In spring 2012, Gainesville High School named co-valedictorians despite claims that Cody Stephens had the
single highest GPA of his senior class. Cody was to be the first African-American valedictorian at Gainesville High.
Community members, including members of the Newtown Florist Club, protested the co-valedictorian nomination.
The school and the board of education upheld the designation of dual valedictorians, but Charlie Bryant, the other
student named as co-valedictorian, who is white, asked to not be recognized for the honor during graduation, bring
the conflict to a close (Gill 2012, Hale, 2012).

processes, not as fixed entities, within the context of the racial state highlights the socio-spatial

processes that form and perpetuate places of persistence environmental injustice. While the

specifics of the experiences differ from community to community, I argue that these processes

fall into six intersecting, overlapping, and compounding categories: (1) urban planning, (2)

regulatory processes, (3) scale of analysis, (4) the role of science, (5) political economy, and (6)

cultural capital. These factors cannot be considered outside the context of the racial state with

attention to the role of intersecting forms of oppression on these categories and their interactions

with one another.

For people living in environmental justice communities, their material realities are

embedded within the fatal coupling of difference and power. Every day, women of color face

the compounding intersecting oppressions that come from living with their embodied

identities. In the case of the women of the NFC, they recognize the connection between the

conditions in their neighborhood, their identities, and their access to power. While their activism

is focused on individual campaigns to address environmental conditions in their community, they

are continually redressing and redefining what it means to be an African-American women in

Gainesville. They also challenge the political structures which limit their abilities to fully

participate on the political landscape. They do not just do this by trying to increase their own

participation in current manifestations of political processes, but they also work to redefine the

political landscape itself and what it means to participate (Isoke 2013). This is evident in their

work outside the traditional realm of environmental justice, specifically their work on

community building and girls' leadership. Another way they have attempted to do this is

through partnerships as a way to redefine their relationships with regulatory agencies. The

partnerships have had mixed effects – at times, they have led to small incremental changes, other

times they have had no impact at all. There is always the fear and the concern that these partnerships can have a detrimental impact, that they will redirect the efforts or divert the resources of the NFC. In the end, the women of the NFC decide on an individual basis what partnerships are worth pursuing. This is not to say that at times the women of the NFC and the people they are partnering with are not (re)creating the same uneven power dynamics they are trying to disrupt. In the end, for the women of the NFC, this risk is a risk worth taking. It is part of their strategy that they will try anything, because they have tried so much, and maybe, just maybe, this tactic or strategy or partnership will lead to positive change in their community. It is part of their strategy of survival.

Activists are faced with the challenge of not only remedying injustices in their community, but also proving the existence of these injustices. This is difficult because of the nature of our legal and regulatory system. In the instances of environmental injustice, the burden of proof is placed on the community to prove that (a) their community is negatively impacted by surrounding environmental harms such as factories, and (b) that their community is receiving a disproportionate burden of these environmental harms, both of which are exceedingly hard to prove. It is not the responsibility of industries to prove that their manufacturing processes are safe, nor is it the responsibility of city or state officials to prove that environmental harms are distributed evenly. This does not mean that there are not examples of specific cases, where those in power have to defend themselves and prove they were not liable, but it speaks to the innate injustice of our judiciary and regulatory processes - the burden of proof is not placed on those in power to prove that the system is just. Instead, in many instances, it is left to those people living in environmental justice communities to prove the existence of systematic injustices, and more often than not, the burden of proof is too high. In environmental justice communities, not only is

direct causation between industrial pollution and community health difficult to prove, so too is the relationship between the fatal couplings of difference and power, and the fact that these communities have to live next to industries in the first place. That is not to say the situation is hopeless. As the outrage, tenacity, and persistence of the women of the NFC demonstrates, the fight is far from over.

Using environmental justice communities to explore the development and persistence of injustices highlights the importance of examining these processes, not just in contemporary contexts, but in historical-geographic context because "racial practices are (re)constructed at different historical moments and places" (Wilson 2000, 32). Historical legacies not only contribute to contemporary conditions facing people living in environmental justice communities, but when these legacies are not explicitly addressed and rectified, local governments and planners, perhaps unintentionally, perpetuate the uneven development of historic discriminatory processes. By relying on the trope 'it happened in the past, it is not our fault, we need to move forward,' practitioners turn a blind eye to how the material consequences of the legacies of historical discriminatory decisions are reproduced through their inaction. It is necessary for practitioners to examine these legacies and use urban planning and regulatory processes to redress historical injustices instead of perpetuating the status quo. This allows government offices and at times the activists themselves the reprieve from asking the hard questions of what really caused these injustices, how am I contributing to these systems of injustice, and maybe most importantly, what can I do to change these process?

It is not just the deliberate disregard for history that leads to persistent injustices, it is also the strategic, and often deliberate ways that challenges facing environmental justice communities are discussed, framed, and identified can also contribute to the maintenance of inequalities. The

scale of analysis can make problems appear and disappear (Kurtz 2003, 2003), and micro-scalar politics can divide communities. Micro-scalar politics and different conceptions of place impact how problems are defined and how activists collaborate and mobilize against specific issues in their community. The differences in the ways that community members define their own sense of place and use this sense of place to create *place-frames,* can bring together people in their micro-scalar community, but it can also exclude others who are facing similar injustices, but might not feel the same connection to place. This can lead to a situation where activists compete with one another for scarce resources instead of collaborating. This is can be exacerbated by the homogenization of communities of color and expectations from city officials of a unified voice within these communities that eliminates, or at least minimizes, micro-scalar differentiations. This can be exemplified by the use of the word "we" to simultaneously unites and excludes populations.

The use of the word "we" is just one example of the discursive, social, and political practices that work to make communities of color invisible. This invisibility is important to critically analyze because of the political salience and power of not hearing the concerns of large portions of the population. In an acceptance speech for the Sydney Peace Prize, Arundhati Roy declared "We know of course there's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard" (Roy 2006[2004], 330).   It is a project of the gendered racial state that perpetuates deliberately silenced and preferably unheard environmental justice activists. Whether those in power are cognizant of these processes or not, whether they are consciously or unconsciously not hearing or ignoring the concerns of communities of color, and particularly women of color, unless they are deliberately working against these processes, they are part of the racial projects to that perpetuate injustices.   It is necessary to not understand

these communities as invisible, but as intentionally invisible at times and hypervisible at others times. Moments of hypervisibility often occur in times of crisis when negative conceptions of the community are sensationalized in news, political, social, and cultural settings. They also gain a status of hypervisiblity, but a different form of hypervisibility, almost a covert hypervisibility when factories are looking to locate their operations in places where they will have the least political and social resistance. While this is coded in neutral economic, and sometimes political, terms, when you examine the reasons why communities of color and poor communities are the places of least resistance, it becomes clear that you cannot separate these "color-blind" processes from the racial state. The hypervisibility is in contrast to the day-to-day invisibility of the lived experiences of the inhabitants of these places. While policymakers respond to the needs and appeals of corporate and other affluent interests, the voices of those living in poor or communities of color are often silenced, ignored, or deliberately not heard (Ducre 2006).

Activists do not sit idly by and watch as the needs of their community are deliberately ignored. In contrast, they acknowledge that their lack of recognition, and their intentional and strategic invisibility on the landscape, is a tool used to perpetuate injustices. If their day-to-day existence and struggles are construed as invisible, there is no incentive for regulators to make change, instead, it justifies the maintenance of the status quo. Activists use a variety of strategies to bring attention to their lived experience to counter the invisibility of their day-to-day lives. One such method is the use of partnerships to increase their political efficacy and cultural capital. Collaborative partnerships do not guarantee success or material change for environmental justice communities, but they often create new venues and situations for activists to make their case and tell their story.

Storytelling is another organizing strategy that activists can use to bring attention to their everyday experiences and to make their communities visible on the landscape. Activists use storytelling to create *place-frames* to bring people together, to motivate people to become involved in their struggle, and to maintain interest in their movement. Stories can also be used to draw attention to the invisible realities of their lives. Utilizing stories as a form of everyday resistance can draw out connections and similarities between groups who share experiences and with individuals and groups whose lived experiences are fundamentally different. Stories can be used to leverage support from arenas that normally would not be exposed to the experiences of environmental injustices. It also makes visible, in ways that are more difficult to ignore, their experiences.

That is not to say that storytelling is an uncontested form of activism. On the contrary, the use of stories can work against activists and further delegitimize their plight. This can be especially detrimental when personal stories are shared and then used against the storyteller. Since the context and the place where stories are told matter, the use of storytelling as a form of activism further highlights the importance of whose stories matter, whose stories get told, and how stories are interpreted. By using storytelling as a framework in this dissertation, I highlight that while we call the telling of experiences by activists stories, in reality, all narratives of place are stories. We just normalize and legitimize the stories told by those in dominant positions as realities, and those told by those in subordinate positions as stories (Bell 2010, Delgado 1989). It was my intention to highlight how all these processes are storytelling, and that it is an effective tool for activists and regulators to make sense of the world around them.

Stories are also a way to connect the individual's experiences with the structural forces that dictate their lives (Bell 2010, Cronon 1992). Since stories are always told within multiple

contexts, the context of the story and the context where the story is being told, they can work to connect experiences across time and space. They highlight the role that individuals play in the creation, perpetuation, and contestation of structural forces, whether they intentionally challenge these systems of oppression or if, as is the case with many environmental justice organizations, they challenge systems of oppressions through their work to change the material realities of their lives. While the stories told by environmental justice activists often focus on individual instances of injustice, whether they realize it or not, they also challenge the fatal coupling of difference and power. Through their storytelling, they bring attention to what it means to live as a person of color in the racial state. In this way, their story does not only contest one or two environmental injustices, they contest and challenge the racial state.

Environmental justice communities are not the only communities where the manifestation of persist injustices dictate and impact people's lives. Although other factors beyond the six I identified may also need to be considered, the compounding socio-spatial processes that create and maintain these places provide a context to examine other manifestations of persistent forms of injustice. The lens of persistent injustice can be used to examine the intersection of structural processes and individual actions to examine the senseless killing of unarmed African-American teenagers, such as Michael Brown and Trayvon Martin; schools where students face overcrowding, lack of resources, violence, and high teacher turnover; the U.S-Mexico border where over 63,000 unaccompanied minors crossed the border between October 2013 and August 2014 fleeing violence and poverty in their own countries; and Native American reservations where one in four juveniles suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) because of their frequent exposure to violent crime (Eid 2014, Queally 2014). In all these instances, regardless if the problem is one of environmental contamination, discrimination, persistent violence, racial

profiling, or unequal access to goods and services, the burden of proof falls on the community to prove that there is a problem. The geographic-historical context in which these injustices developed, and the failure of those in power to directly address the legacies of geographic histories, contribute to the perpetuation of these places through the maintenance of the status quo.

Future Research

As with any research project, this project raises unanswered questions which provide exciting avenues for future research. Much of the future research hinges on preliminary findings from intended and unintended questions that were raised through the research process. I hope to build on these finding to continue to investigate the role of persistent injustices, environmental policy, and the connections between difference, power, and injustice.

One avenue of research that has arisen is a further investigation of the ways governmental employees within EPA use partnerships with community members, federal, state, and local governmental agencies, and non-profits to address the concerns of the environmental justice communities that they cannot address through traditional avenues because they are limited by their regulatory authority. To do this, I would like to do an institutional ethnography of EPA to expand this research beyond EPA Region 4 to see if, and how, this process is institutionalized and the different approaches to these processes from people who are directly charged with environmental justice and community outreach as well as those that focus on regulatory and scientific processes. When taken in the context of the gendered racial state, by flipping my current analysis, I hope to gain further insight into the processes that lead to places of persistent injustices and strategies that can be used to overcome these injustices.

Continuing on the policy perspective, I am also interested in further exploring how local governments can work to recognize the past, acknowledge the past, and use the past to move forward in equitable ways. By ignoring the past, local regulators often perpetuate an inequitable status quo, whether they realize it or not. Local governmental officials, however, often express a desire to move on from past mistakes, to let history be history. Unfortunately, instead of having the desired effect of creating more equitable situations, this further exacerbates the perpetuation of the inequitable status quo. I am interested in exploring how environmental regulators at the local, state, and federal level can productively engage with their histories without guilt to work to redress past wrongs.

Throughout the course of this project and through conversations with others about this project, the question has been arisen time and again as to whether the framework of environmental justice is still salient given the way it is being used by the government. I would like to explore whether the framework of environmental justice has run its course and whether the continued use of the framework is actually a detriment, not an asset to activists. This will entail an examination of how the environmental justice framework is being used by regulatory agencies, as well as how it is being used by activists, and what alternatives, if there are any are available that can be used to address the concerns of people who currently identify as environmental justice activists.

I would also like to continue to explore how places of persistent injustice are created and maintained in different settings, particularly across diverse geographical spaces. I am interested in determining if the criteria I propose are specific to instances of environmental injustices, or if they are applicable to other forms of injustice. Additionally, I am interested in examining how different historical urban formations manifest themselves, how activists respond to these

developments, and successful examples of local governments who have worked in small ways to combat places of persistent injustice.

Finally, I am interested in further exploring the use of storytelling as an organizing strategy, with specific attention to the forms that stories take, how they are used as everyday forms of resistance, and how they work to build and break alliances between different organizations. Within this context, I am interested in examining how storytelling can be used to delegitimize or legitimize a specific struggle, and the impact this has on individuals, their experiences, and their places.

A Note on Positionality

Throughout this project, questions of positinality were never far from my mind. I continually assessed how my own positionality impacted my analysis of the situations I was experiencing, how my actions and my presence changed situations, and how the relationships I developed with research participants clouded my critique and perspectives. It is really difficult to critically analyze something that you are a part of, something that you feel passionate about, and something being done by people you care about. Through conversations with people and field notes, I tried to record and work through the impacts my positionaly had on this project – it was not always possible, and at times, I did a better job than at other times. Regardless, I want to use the example of the relationship that the NFC had with the UGA team to tease out and confront head on some of the challenges of positionality I encountered through the course of this project and as a way to sum up some of the tensions that arose throughout this project.

The work of the UGA team was one of many partnerships and points of tension that I analyzed. The partnership was designed to develop a multi-tiered approach to move the junkyard from the Newtown neighborhood, nine years later, the junkyard is still in Newtown and

the UGA team has all but dissolved. The EPA training that was the one tangible result of the efforts of the UGA team did nothing to achieve the original requests the members of the NFC and the UGA team put forth to EPA Region IV – to help them move the junkyard from their community. It could be easy to dismiss the work of the UGA team as a failure, but I think that it's more complicated. This might be that this is because I am a member of the team and I know most of the members personally, but I think that despite the failures or maybe because of the failures of the UGA team, the challenges facing places of persistent injustice are further highlighted. The legal and regulatory pathways that the UGA sought out tried to remedy the specific problem, in this case the junkyard next to people's homes, without addressing the underlying causes that permitted the injustices to persist in the first place. It highlighted what might be the failure of the environmental justice framework itself – if governmental officials cannot even recognize that these injustices exist or declare that it is enough to bring people together to talk about them – is this a framework that will actually make material change in these communities? For some, the environmental justice framework has been successful, it has brought people together, and it held some people accountable, but it has not made the large-scale change that people hoped it would. It might be time to re-think the framework.

Another important consideration in examining the relationship between the NFC and the UGA team is the complaint that researchers come into the Newtown community, do their research, profit off of the NFC and then leave. I am guilty of this. This dissertation is based on the lives and experiences of people who live hardships that I do not have to live because of the various privileges afforded to me that I did not earn. While I spent time with the women of the NFC, and we developed important bonds that went beyond my research, in the end, I went home to my family and I profit from their suffering, as all researchers who study injustice but do not

live injustice do. At times this paralyzed me, it made me question the legitimacy of my work, it

made me wonder if what I was doing was right. In the end, I decided that I could use my

position of privilege as a tool to help further the work of the women of the NFC and other

environmental justice activists.   This is not to say that I could do the work for them, they are so

much better at that then I am, but by thinking through these processes and their activism

critically, I could present another analysis, another viewpoint on the processes which were

causing the injustices in their neighborhood to give them, other activists, and maybe even

governmental regulators a perspective on how to address the persistence of environmental

injustices. By doing this reflexively, and continually (re)assessing my role in these processes, I

hope that I was able to stay true to the critical critique presented in their dissertation. This was

difficult at times because of the relationships I have developed with the members of the NFC. I

had to continually question whether I was glorifying their actions or overlooking their faults

because of the bonds we had built. In the end, I am sure that I am guilty of both, but I critically

engaged with these thoughts through the entirety of the project and this tension is reflected on

these pages.

I do think that it's important to add that for the women of the NFC, they saw the

relationship they had with the UGA team as something different. They saw it as a process which

they were part of, not something that was being done to them. They felt that their voices were

heard through the process, instead of intentionally ignored or unheard. This does not mean that

they thought it was perfect, nor that they are satisfied with the outcomes of the partnership. They

still live next to a junkyard, and there is nothing to change that fact. They do focus on the

positive outcomes of the relationship – for example from the EPA training, they focus on the

community and alliance building that occurred after the training with members of the African-

American and Latino community in Gainesville. Time will tell how they see these relationship, between both the UGA team, and on a personal level, with myself, will these events just be another item they list when they talk about who has studied them and why, or will there be something more enduring. I can only hope for the later.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Questions for members of the Newtown Florist Club

1. How do you define the word "environment"?
2. Describe your "ideal environment."
3. Describe your environment.
4. How did you first learn about the environment? How did you develop your definition of the environment?
5. What influences your description of the environment?
6. How have your own experiences impacted your understandings of what the environment means?
7. What changes, if any, would you like to see in your environment?
8. How does your definition of the environment impact your organizing strategies?
9. What does the word "race" mean to you?
10. How do you describe your own race?
11. Is your race an important way you identify yourself? Why or why not?
12. How do you think your race impacts your daily life?
13. How have your own experiences impacted your understandings of race?
14. Does race impact how you interact with others of a different race?
15. Do you see a connection between race and the environment? Why or why not?
16. Does your race impact how you understand the environment? Why or why not?
17. What connections, if any, do you think exist between the conditions in Newtown and the racial composition of the neighborhood?
18. Do you think your definition of the environment is different from the state/local government/EPA/industry?
19. What does environmental justice mean to you?
20. Are there instances of environmental injustice in Gainesville?
21. What, if anything, needs to be done to address instances of environmental injustice?
22. How do you advocate for environmental justice in instances where governmental or industrial representatives deny these injustices exist?
23. What does it mean to you when on their website Blaze claims that "Blaze Recycling is safeguarding the environment now and into the future, preserving valuable raw materials and packaging them for reuse. It's the power for everyone to win"?
24. What does it mean to you that both Cargill and Purina have sustainability statements on their websites and claim that "We look to innovation as a way to preserve and protect the environment, whether by using energy and resources more wisely" (Cargill) and "we're passionately committed to creating a better world for pets and their owners, now and for generations to come . . . We're working with stakeholders inside and outside the company, up and down the supply chain, to find solutions that are good for the environment and good for our business" (Purina)?
25. Describe the Newtown Florist Club.

26. What is the history of the Newtown Florist Club?
27. How did you become involved in the NFC?
28. What does the NFC mean to you?
29. What does your involvement in the NFC mean to you?
30. Why are you a part of the NFC?
31. Describe the Newtown Neighborhood/community?
32. Do you feel a connection to the Newtown neighborhood? Why/Why not?
33. To you, what is the connection between the NFC and the Newtown neighborhood?
34. Do you still live in Newtown? If not, why do you continue to work with the NFC? Do you still feel a part of the Newtown community?
35. Does the Newtown Florist Club work only for the Newtown community or for the Southside of Gainesville or for all of Gainesville?

Interview Questions for representatives of the City of Gainesville

1. State your name and your title
2. Describe your responsibilities with the city of Gainesville
3. How long have you been in your current position?
4. Why did you get involved in your current position?
5. What is your background beyond public services (if applicable)?
6. How do you define the word "environment"?
7. How did you first learn about the environment? How did you develop this definition?
8. What influences your description of the environment? How have your own experiences impacted your understandings of what the environment means?
9. What role do you have in environmental management, planning, and/or regulation, if any?
a. How does your definition of the environment impact your approach to environmental policies and environment regulation?
b. How does your definition of the environment impact how you do your job?
10. How does Gainesville approach questions of environmental management?
     a. What factors are taken into account?
     b. Do you consider demographic information in planning decisions? If so, how?
11. How are citizens environmental concerns incorporated into the planning process?
12. How much interaction/coordination do you have with state, EPD and federal officials, EPA in the environmental planning and regulation process?
     a. Are there conflicts that arise?
     b. How do you resolve those conflicts?
13. Do you think your definition of the environment is different from the state government/EPA/industry?
14. Describe Gainesville
15. How would you describe Gainesville's environment?
16. Looking at this map, where would you take a first time visitor to Gainesville? How would you/do you promote the city?
17. Looking at this map, what are the positive environmental amenities in Gainesville?
18. Do you believe positive environmental amenities are distributed evenly across the city?
19. Are there any areas of environmental concern in Gainesville? Or areas where there are disproportion numbers of environmental bads?

      a. If yes, what if anything is the City of Gainesville doing to address these environmental concerns?
20. Are there differences between the environment on the Northside and Southside of the city?
      a. If yes, why do you think these differences occur?
21. What does the word "race" mean to you?
22. How do you describe your own race?
23. Is your race an important way you identify yourself? Why or why not?
24. Do you think your race impacts your daily life? How?
25. Do you see a connection between race and the environment? Why or why not?
26. What do you know about environmental justice?
27. Do you think that instances of environmental injustice exist in Gainesville?
      a. If yes, where?
      b. What is the city doing to address these concerns?
28. What do you know about the Newtown Florist Club?
29. What interactions, if any have you had with the Newtown Florist Club?

Interview Questions for representatives of EPA Region 4

1. Describe your job at EPA. What are your responsibilities?
2. How did you get involved in this work? What training did you receive?
      a. Why did you get involved in this work?
      b. Why did you begin working at EPA?
3. How do you define the word "environment"?
4. How did you first learn about the environment? How did you develop your definition of the environment?
5. What influences your description of the environment? How have your own experiences impacted your understandings of what the environment means?
6. How does your definition of the environment impact your approach to environmental policies and environment regulation?
      a. How does your definition of the environment impact how you do your job?
7. Do you think your definition of the environment is different from the state/local government/industry/local activists?
8. How do you negotiate differences that may arise in definitions of the environment?
9. What does the word "race" mean to you?
10. How do you self-identify racially?
11. Is your race an important way you identify yourself? Why or why not?
12. Do you think your race impacts your daily life? How?
13. Do you see a connection between race and the environment? Why or why not?
14. Does your race impact how you understand the environment? Why or why not?
15. Do instances of environmental justices exist? Why or why not?
16. How does your work with environmental justice address issues of race and the environment?
17. What, if anything, needs to be done to address instances of environmental injustice?

18. How do you address accusations of environmental injustice in instances you do not believe these injustices exist? (or How do you advocate for environmental justice in instances where governmental or industrial representatives deny these injustices exist?)
19. What is EPA/your division doing to address these issues? Does this relate to your understandings of race and the environment?

Appendix B: IRB Consent Form

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled **"Environmental Identity: The influences of identity on the engagement in environmental politics"** conducted by Ellen Kohl from the Department of Geography at the University of Georgia (706-542-2926) under the direction of Dr. Nik Heynen, Department of Geography, University of Georgia (706-542-1954).

I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information that can be identified as mine returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to understand how identity impacts the ways in which people engage in environmental politics.

I will be asked to answer questions about my opinions, and experiences dealing with my engagement in environmental politics as well as how my self-defined identity impacts these choices. This study will provide a greater understanding of how race, class, and gender influences how and why people become engaged in political processes. It will provide information to people involved in local political activism that will enable them to make political participation more accessible to those groups who may currently feel marginalized by these political processes. The interview will last approximately one hour. I will not benefit directly from this research. No discomforts or stresses are expected. No risks are expected.

The interview will be taped and transcribed by the researcher. The tapes will enable the researcher to accurately account the conversation we have. The audio files will be securely stored in on a password-protected computer and will be destroyed at the end of the research project. The tapes will only be made available to the researcher. The researcher will transcribe the tapes. All data files will be stripped of individually-identifiable information with the exception of the specific identifiable information I indicate can be use (see below).
The only people that will know that I am a research participant are the researcher, Ellen Kohl and research advisor, Dr. Nik Heynen. No individually identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission. The interview will be recorded using an audio recorder, and the files will be stored on a password-protected computer.

Due to my public position, I give my permission for identifiable information, specifically my name and title of my public position, to be used when this research is presented and published. Circle One: Yes/No Initial_____

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project and can be reached by telephone at 706-542-2926.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Ellen Kohl_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Signature   Date
Telephone: 706-542-2926
Email: ekohl@uga.edu
_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Signature   Date
Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu