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– HEALTHY FOOD STORES, GREENLINING AND FOOD GENTRIFICATION: Contesting New Forms of Privilege, Displacement and Locally Unwanted Land Uses in Racially Mixed Neighborhoods

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Abstract

Local activists engaged in contemporary environmental justice struggles not only fight against traditional forms of hazardous locally unwanted land uses (LULUs), they also organize to make their neighborhoods livable and green. However, urban environmental justice activism is at a crossroads: as marginalized neighborhoods become revitalized, outside investors start to value them again and they themselves invest in green amenities. Yet vulnerable residents are now raising concerns about the risk of displacement from their neighborhoods in consequence of environmental gentrification processes. Their fear is linked to environmental amenities such as new parks or remodeled waterfronts, as well as (most recently) healthy food stores. Using the case of a conflict around a new Whole Foods supermarket in Boston, MA, I examine how food venues and stores labeled as healthy and natural can create socio-spatial inequality together with privilege, exclusion and displacement in racially diverse neighborhoods. I analyze how high-end supermarket chains target inner-city neighborhoods for their growth and profit potential, and demonstrate that their arrival contributes to what I call 'supermarket greenlining'. This greenlining illustrates the process of food gentrification, and the manipulation of health and sustainability discourses about food by healthy and natural food investors and their supporters. The opening of high-end supermarkets thus converts such stores into new LULUs for historically marginalized groups.

Introduction

For 40 years, Hi-Lo Foods in Jamaica Plain, Boston was a neighborhood institution. This was much more than a supermarket: it was a traditional Latino venue where customers would spend hours browsing through thousands of products, spices and herbs from all over Latin America and sharing life stories with one another. Some would sit on milk crates outside the store to play dominos. Even if many white middle-class residents saw the store as untidy and poorly managed, for Latino residents and customers Hi-Lo represented a community, a neighborhood and a safe haven. It was a thriving business. Yet, on 14 January 2011, when Knapp Foods Inc. (owner of Hi-Lo) announced that the supermarket would close (offering no justification for the decision), it declared that the new management, Whole Foods Inc., would convert the store into a Whole Foods Market. Within a few days, a long-running conflict began between supporters of the new store and activists opposing the opening of a Whole Foods Market in the traditionally Latino area of Hyde Square.

Traditional environmental justice (EJ) struggles were centered around toxic waste sites and contaminating facilities and industries, traditionally known as locally unwanted land uses (LULUs) (Bullard, 1990; Bryant and Mohai, 1992; Lerner, 2005; Sze, 2007; Downey and Hawkins, 2008; Mohai *et al*., 2009). Over time, however, the urban EJ agenda has become more diversified, targeting neighborhood blight and degradation so that historically marginalized neighborhoods may benefit from improved environmental conditions and become more green and livable (Agyeman *et al*., 2003; Pellow and Brulle, 2005; Gottlieb, 2009; Fitzgerald, 2010; Checker, 2011; Gould and Lewis,

2012; Anguelovski, 2013a; 2014). Examples include the growth of urban farming and community gardening in Boston around foreclosed abandoned houses or on vacant dirty lots; the regeneration of rivers and parks in Los Angeles; or the retrofitting of low-income housing in Baltimore.

Yet EJ activism in cities seems to be at crossroads: as neighborhoods become revitalized, private investors start to value them again. After decades of disinvestment, municipalities are cleaning up dirty waterfronts and restoring parks; private developers are buying dilapidated buildings and transforming them into luxury condominiums with adjacent community gardens; and subsequently residents from higher economic backgrounds are moving in and enjoying new amenities such as parks and other green spaces. Neighborhood environmental transformation is slowly triggering the displacement of low-income residents and people of color. This process, generally studied through municipal sustainability planning and projects, illustrates what is now called 'green gentrification' or 'ecological gentrification' (Dooling, 2009; Checker, 2011; Gould and Lewis, 2012). Environmental gentrification trends complicate the task of environmental justice groups and the residents they support, with activists at risk of suffering a backlash manifested as co-optation of much of their long-term work towards more green, livable and sustainable neighborhoods (Checker, 2011).

As a result, environmental gentrification has met with protest—most recently directed not only at municipal plans for neighborhood greening: conflicts are also emerging focused on new stores offering fresh, natural and organic produce. This has been the case with the corporate supermarket chain Whole Foods and its acknowledged 'Whole Foods effect' (i.e. the increase in property prices in the vicinity of a new Whole Foods Market and the related socio-demographic changes this process entails) (Goss, 2006). News reports proliferate concerning this trend (Doig, 2012; Donato-Weinstein, 2014). A November 2014 Google search using 'Whole Foods' and 'gentrification' generated more than 58,900 results. Greater scholarly attention thus needs to be paid to environmental gentrification in the form of healthy food stores, the symbolism and significance they carry for a neighborhood, and the multiple experiences of displacement that arise from them. In this article, I use qualitative data obtained through fieldwork during and after a conflict over the opening of a Whole Foods Market in Jamaica Plain, Boston to examine the production of healthy food stores as undesirable places in the multiracial neighborhood. This article is emplaced in the environmental justice and environmental gentrification literature. Even though some of the concerns of activists are related to the alternative food movement and threats to food justice, I choose here to focus my analysis using a different framework that emphasizes new forms and processes of (environmental) gentrification.[1]

Data analysis shows that environmental goods in the forms of 'natural' healthy food stores are perceived by activists as new incarnations of environmental gentrification and 'environmental privilege' (Park and Pellow, 2011), that is the exclusive access that whiter and wealthier residents have to prime environmental amenities (parks, woodland, etc.) and to exclusive green neighborhoods—triggering heightened feelings of erasure and displacement. They are the reverse manifestation of supermarket redlining (Eisenhauer, 2001) in the 1970s, when supermarket chains left declining inner-city neighborhoods in search of higher profits and new customers in the suburbs (even though both processes of redlining and greenlining result in the decreased availability of affordable food for vulnerable residents, while more affluent and whiter communities are assured that access). Today, high-end supermarket chains identify inner-city neighborhoods as desirable for growth and profit potential, and their arrival

1 I examine the conflict in the context of the alternative food movement and food justice literatures in a separate article (Anguelovski, 2015).

contributes to the multifaceted transformation of neighborhoods. I call this trend 'supermarket greenlining', encompassing both act (i.e. targeting certain neighborhoods for 'healthy' supermarket development) and outcome (i.e. decreased access to multiple resources—reasonably priced food and cultural safe havens—for minority and low-income communities).

I thus argue that when supermarket greenlining occurs, it produces new socio-spatial patterns and experiences of environmental inequality and exclusion, transforming these amenities into new locally unwanted land uses (LULUs) for vulnerable residents. LULUs comprise not only toxic sites and industries, as highlighted by much of the traditional EJ literature, but can also include green amenities. Protests against current urban redevelopment dynamics highlight the multiple forms of exclusion and displacement produced by food gentrification, and by the manipulation of health and sustainability discourses about food. While such trends are now increasingly frequent in revitalizing US metropolises, they also are present in European and Canadian cities where large health food chains are opening stores in changing neighborhoods and where there is much talk about 'food gentrification'.

Neighborhood revitalization, environmental gentrification and recent environmental justice activism

In neighborhoods undergoing gentrification, developers, investors and higher-income individuals purchase properties and redevelop them for richer residents (Smith, 1986; Anderson, 1990). Profits are made through the exploitation of rent gaps, with canny investors buying up dilapidated and abandoned houses and plots (Smith, 1987). Today, neighborhoods like Harlem (New York), Bronzeville (Chicago) and Treme (New Orleans) are seeing a form of 'new urban renewal' as their land is appropriated afresh and speculated upon. Municipal decision-makers rebrand neighborhoods previously portrayed as blighted, declaring them to be new cultural artifacts and sites of revitalization and tourism development, which investors then colonize for their own development projects (Dávila, 2004; Boyd, 2008; Hyra, 2008; Brand, 2015). Over the last few years, these multi-tier dynamics have come to include another dimension: neighborhood greening through public and private investments. Urban environmental improvements are intertwined with processes of inequality (re)formation and gentrification.

Recent studies have unveiled correlations between urban land clean-up; investment in green or open space creation or rehabilitation, waterfront redevelopment, ecological/green design or ecological restoration; and changes in demographic patterns and property values. For instance, as contaminated Superfund sites are cleaned up, housing values appreciate by up to 18% within a 1 km radius (Gamper-Rabindran *et al*., 2011).[2] When sites are removed from the Superfund list, mean household income tends to increase by 26% and the share of college graduates by 31% (Gamper-Rabindran and Timmins, 2011). In other words, the reduction of contamination and redevelopment of brownfield sites do not seem to work for the benefit of those residents originally exposed to environmental toxins, but rather for wealthier and more educated groups who choose to move into the neighborhood.

This process of combined greening and marginalization has been called ecological gentrification, that is 'the implementation of an environmental planning agenda related to public green spaces that leads to the displacement or exclusion of the most economically vulnerable human population while espousing an environmental ethic' (Dooling, 2009: 630). 'Gentrification' highlights the fact that new or restored environmental goods tend to be followed by rising property values, which in turn attracts the higher

2 The US Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program is responsible for cleaning up some of the country's most contaminated land and responding to environmental emergencies, oil spills and natural disasters.

social classes, while creating a greater gap with poorer neighborhoods where the lower socio-economic classes are forced to move because these are the only places they can afford (Gould and Lewis, 2012).

A variety of social actors—public officials, private investors and homebuyers themselves—participate in and produce patterns of neighborhood greening and ecological gentrification. Political leaders advance urban sustainable development and livability plans designed to increase urban density and create compact and green development (Rosol, 2013). For instance, in the context of urban development and sustainability planning, the City of Toronto recently sold public waterfront land and offered financial and educational incentives, such as LEED (green building certification) training, to real estate developers (Bunce, 2009). In turn, real estate developers use discourses highlighting the value of their environmental projects, while for the most part defending their corporate interests. In Vancouver, for example, developers are encouraging people's engagement in gardens adjacent to new high-end housing, pointing to the importance of such engagement in enhancing residents' quality of life and promoting community wellbeing (Quastel, 2009). New residents also play a role in environmental gentrification: they purchase houses in revitalized neighborhoods, use new amenities and even shape rules and norms for the use of amenities such as parks (Checker, 2011). Poorer people are removed from their former residences and kept away from environmental transformations and the spaces where they lived (and would like to continue living). In some cases, wealthier and white groups even enjoy natural areas thanks to the invisible dedication of marginalized workers, while at the same time accusing them of damaging pristine natural spaces and excluding them from spaces of 'environmental privilege' (Park and Pellow, 2011). In sum, elites control and manipulate urban environments for their own interest, and do so at the expense of fragile groups (Heynen *et al*., 2006; Bryson, 2013).

The process of environmental gentrification holds the promise of multiple economic benefits. Green spaces and infrastructure have been shown to foster economic growth and regeneration through new business development (De Sousa, 2003; Low *et al*., 2005; Dooling, 2009; Quastel, 2009). Cities enhance their competitiveness and strategic growth as they encourage new green investments and projects (Tretter, 2013). Today, the economic success of cities seems to depend on good quality of life and an attractive environment, making the manipulation of this environment a critical factor in enhancing the competitive landscapes of cities (Gibbs and Krueger, 2007). In a neoliberal urban agenda, cities capture mobile capital and compete for urban green transformations that can make them more attractive to investors. Sustainability agendas reflect a logic of competitive and entrepreneurial urbanism in which real estate development occupies a key role. Rather than being an obstacle to capital accumulation, sustainability planning and implementation are actually constituent parts of it and enable its survival (Gibbs and Krueger, 2007; Keil, 2007).

Today, 'sustainability' also embodies a post-political, post-democratic and aconflictual turn, in which neoliberal governance regimes promote greening projects in cities while putting an end to real politics of the environment and debates about the goals and impacts of such projects (Swyngedouw, 2007; 2009). It has become a rather technical question, pushing aside core urban issues at the intersection of racial inequalities, social hierarchies and environmental privilege. Many green urban redevelopment projects promoted on the grounds of their sustainability-enhancing potential fail in reality to consider the existing conditions of the area, including social vulnerabilities (Pearsall and Pierce, 2010; Rosan, 2012). For instance, in New York City, elderly residents, people in rent-stabilized units and families receiving government assistance seem to be particularly vulnerable to sustainability planning and brownfield redevelopment sponsored by PlaNYC (New York's sustainability plan), and often have no choice other

than moving out because of the lack of existing policies to support them (Pearsall, 2008; Checker, 2011).

In many ways, green gentrification is the logical follow-up and extension of what urban renewal critics such as Don Parson (1982), Mindy Fullilove (2001) and John Betancur (2002) called 'Negro removal' or 'Latino removal': displacement is followed by 'green and white arrival'. In other words, the racial aspect of whiteness is in some ways invisibilized by words such as 'green'. As new luxury housing developments accompany greening, developers and real estate agents often point to the diversity and 'authentic' black experiences of residents for newcomers who might move into places such as Harlem, ultimately reshaping and sacrificing the sites where local identity was best represented. As they benefit from the greening of the neighborhood, they also physically and symbolically whiten it.

Environmental gentrification is increasingly being met with civic protest. As residents fight against the replacement of their community space and gardens by housing complexes and other developments, they express concern about government projects to maximize exchange value while making the city more beautiful and sanitized (Tretter, 2013). Most recently, activists have also contested the transformation of streets into motors of gentrification. In Portland, municipal plans created in the context of the Complete Streets movement and meant to improve biking safety along North Williams Avenue have met with resistance from locals, who argue that safety seems to have only become a concern since white residents started moving to the neighborhood (Agyeman, 2013).

Today, the greatest conundrum for EJ groups and organizations is seeing their longstanding demands for urban sustainability backfiring on them. For instance, in NYC during the 2000s, the EJ organization WEACT had the opportunity to influence and shape the city's green agenda as developed in PlaNYC. However, the renovation of parks such as Marcus Garvey Park showed how much sustainability initiatives in the city underestimated social and political considerations, with the restoration being accompanied by the construction of expensive condominiums ranging in price from US $500,000 to US $2 million and the enforcement of new park rules outlawing cultural practices by traditional users (e.g. drummers) (Checker, 2011). As this example suggests, municipal sustainability planning is often couched in the successes of the EJ movement, and at times seems to use its discourses, but to the actual detriment of the principles and values espoused by EJ groups. Public authorities can co-opt EJ discourses to foster redevelopment that will benefit high-income residents while displacing fragile groups.

As a result, EJ organizations are adjusting their organizing and advocacy strategy to include projects that might generate environmental gentrification. In 2006, the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council released a report entitled 'Unintended Impacts of Redevelopment and Revitalization Efforts in Five Environmental Justice Communities'. Traditional EJ activism has suggested that residents are fixed in their neighborhoods and cannot move away from toxic industries or waste sites. Conversely, recent EJ activism related to gentrification is about fighting displacement. Taking into consideration the process of (green) gentrification, organizations associate the pursuit of environmental justice with affordable homes and neighborhoods and place identity (Anguelovski, 2013b). For instance, in Brooklyn, longstanding residents of Newtown Creek together with business owners advance the idea of a 'just green enough' strategy, which translates into protecting the industrial history of their neighborhood (Curran and Hamilton, 2012). In Boston, the EJ organization ACE has recently included affordable housing or rent stabilization within its advocacy strategy (Anguelovski, 2014). In other cases, vulnerable groups ally themselves with middle-class residents who support their advocacy and invigorate their environmental activism (Curran and Hamilton, 2012; Hamilton and Curran, 2013).

Green gentrification activism does not only concern the sustainability plans sponsored by municipalities and the subsequent waterfront redevelopment or park creation projects. Much media attention has been paid to the arrival of new food stores and venues that seem to indicate the readiness of a revitalizing neighborhood to be more broadly redeveloped. High-end supermarkets' branding stresses that their produce is sourced from organic food systems, with attendant environmental and health benefits (Hartman Group, 2002; Whole Foods Market, 2004), but their social and racial impact is starting to become more obvious. Nascent scholarly research has started to highlight the transformation of neighborhoods from 'food deserts'—areas with fewer grocery stores and poorer access to healthy food (Guy *et al*., 2004; Neil *et al*., 2004; Smoyer-Tomic *et al*., 2006; Raja *et al*., 2008; Beaulac *et al*., 2009; Walker *et al*., 2010)—to 'food mirages' (Sullivan, 2014). In food mirages, grocery stores abound, but they are unaffordable for lower-income residents (Breyer and Voss-Andreae, 2013). Such grocery stores are the traditional shopping places of higher-income and whiter residents, who see them as destination stores because of their aesthetically pleasing, relaxing and calm atmosphere (Slocum, 2007; Johnston and Szabo, 2011). As they describe their shopping experience, their language reflects a higher-class social status and image which they wish to preserve (Johnston, 2008; Johnston and Szabo, 2011).

In other words, pricing and poverty are the crucial elements determining the real access to food for historically marginalized groups. The increased presence of grocery stores is not sufficient to produce healthier diets (Boone-Heinonen *et al*., 2011) or an increase in daily fruit and vegetable consumption (Cummins *et al*., 2014). This is the context in which recent protests, such as the one against a Trader Joe's grocery store in the black district of Northeast Portland, have erupted against new food stores and venues that seemingly accelerate the transformation of formerly undesirable neighborhoods into foci of gentrification (Parks, 2014).

Yet this most recent aspect of environmental justice mobilization and conflicts—as the defense of the right to place and territory, to stay and enjoy new green amenities without being displaced, and to remain protected from waves of uncontrolled green investment, land grabbing, speculation and disinvestment—is understudied. Furthermore, the environmental gentrification literature has not yet examined the role of urban food systems (and especially new food stores and venues) in triggering or accelerating experienced or perceived displacement. Few studies qualitatively consider the role that factors such as healthy foodscapes play as tools and resources used by city planners, real estate agents, homeowners, private businesses and developers to produce or accelerate gentrification. Yet such places are often appealing to or promoted by gentrifiers, especially those involved in alternative food systems, because they enhance local access to fresh food while making these neighborhoods more desirable.

This article examines environmental gentrification in the form of 'natural' healthy food stores, and the symbolism and meanings they carry for neighborhoods' long-standing residents through the following research questions:

- Why and how have 'natural' healthy food stores become the site of passionate and organized resistance?
- How do such places establish new forms of neighborhood privilege and come to be perceived as new locally unwanted land uses?

The article emphasizes how long-established environmental goods and resources 'owned' by minorities—not only housing prices and changes in demographics (the traditional units of analysis examined in much of the gentrification literature)—are affected by socio-spatial changes and urban redevelopment at the neighborhood scale. It responds to the call for more critical analyses of gentrification and its new

dimensions related to the loss of key resources and services for vulnerable groups (Slater, 2006; 2008). It also addresses the scholarly neglect towards more 'mundane and chronic forms of injustice' in the urban environment (Bickerstaff *et al*., 2009: 594)—as opposed to toxins, dangerous contamination and the effects of major environmental hazards on urban residents.

Methods

This article is based on an emblematic and critical case study of a conflict around a 'natural' healthy food store, Whole Foods Market, which opened in October 2011 in Hyde Square, the Latino area of Jamaica Plain (JP) in Boston. From the start of the conflict in 2011 to the end of my fieldwork in 2014, I collected data from local newspapers (*The Boston Globe*, *Boston Herald*, *Boston Phoenix*, *JP Gazette*, *JP Patch*), radio stations (WBUR) and community organizations (i.e. Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council, Hyde Square Task Force, Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation) in the form of articles, reports, video clips, comments and blog entries from supporters and opponents of Whole Foods. My objective was to better understand the context in which the controversy took place, the development of the conflict, the stakeholders involved, and the perceptions and interpretations of the supporters and opponents of Hi-Lo's closing and Whole Foods opening. The data collected was particularly vast and rich, reflecting the level of activism for and against Whole Foods and the use of social media by both sides. Every few days, I checked the main sources listed above online for new comments, blog entries and articles. I also collected statistical information on neighborhood demographic and real estate changes, and on local business trends (e.g. opening of stores, real estate advertising) in the neighborhood.

My fieldwork consisted of regular visits to the neighborhood between 2011 and 2014, during which I conducted various rounds of observation and semi-structured interviews. During observations, I paid particular attention to neighborhood business and development changes, the opening and closing of different stores, the way that advertising promoting the neighborhood and its assets evolved over three and a half years, and the community events that took place during and after the conflict. I attended several of these, including meetings of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council. In 2012 and 2013, I also conducted 19 interviews in JP with members of the Whose Foods/Whose Community coalition who organized to protest against Whole Foods, members of the JP for All coalition who voiced their support of Whole Foods, members of the JP Neighborhood Council (and members of the Whole Foods Ad-Hoc Committee), the JP Neighborhood Development Corporation, the Latin American Family Culture Network, the Hyde Jackson Square Business Association, Hyde Square Task Force, Whole Foods employees, the former manager of Hi-Lo, local food business owners, and members of local groups and organizations working on community farming. The first interviews I conducted were with the core leaders of the pro- and anti-Whole Foods coalitions. From there, I used snowball sampling to cover a diversity of activism, perceptions, experiences and opinions. From the press articles and online blogs, as well as from talking to key informants, I was also able to identify the main community organizations and groups whose engagement shaped the development of the neighborhood and the mobilization of residents, and I interviewed their relevant members. My questions were related to each interviewee's perception of Whole Foods opening, his/her involvement in the conflict and motivation behind this, the broader perceived impact of Whole Foods on community life and affordability, and finally his/her understanding and experiences of gentrification processes. I analyzed my data using process tracing and analytical narrative techniques, which helped me understand the evolution of activists' engagement in the neighborhood, the construction and transformation of their individual and collective identities and experiences, and unravel their perception of

neighborhood gentrification and the role that they perceived Whole Foods to play in this process.

A green conflict in a gentrifying multi-racial neighborhood: community resistance to Whole Foods in Jamaica Plain, Boston

Jamaica Plain has traditionally been a multiracial neighborhood, with a high proportion of Latinos, especially around Hyde Square, and with many African-American families living in Jackson Square (which borders Hyde Square). In the 1960s, many of the numerous Cubans who settled in JP opened restaurants or construction businesses, which by the end of the 1970s made JP the biggest Latino neighborhood in Boston. At that time, however, the neighborhood was blighted by dilapidated and abandoned properties, arson incidents, boarded-up storefronts and declining industries (Douglas, 2013).

Gentrification in Jamaica Plain is a phenomenon dating back to the late 1980s, when many members of the LGBT community, artists and musicians, together with progressive white baby boomers, moved to the neighborhood in search of affordable houses and attracted by JP's pleasant green spaces and its proximity to downtown (Hirsch, 1998). Many residents also moved in to counter white flight and rebuild the community, after 700 homes and 300 businesses were obliterated to make way for the extension of the I-95 highway. By the 1990s, their activism transformed JP in a welcoming, affordable, livable and vibrant community, well connected to downtown Boston thanks to the creation in 1987 of the MBTA Subway Orange Line (Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council, 2011). Additionally, individual property owners and real estate professionals restored much of the housing stock for market-rate sales and rentals, benefiting also from rent-control elimination in 1994 (Douglas, 2013). As a result of this, average rents in JP increased by 64% between 1994 and 1999 (Boston Tenant Coalition and City Life/Vida Urbana, n.d.).

During the 2000s, the transformation of the neighborhood and its renewed attractiveness accelerated gentrification. High property prices held steady despite the economic downturn (Swenson, 2011) and JP's demographics changed drastically. According to 2011 US census data, between 2000 and 2010 Jamaica Plain lost 1,041 Hispanic/Latino residents (almost a 10% decline) and 862 African–American residents (a 14.6% decline), while the white population grew by 5.4%. Median house prices increased from US $241,750 in 2000 to US $375,000 in 2011. Today this is higher than the Boston average (US $362,500) (Department of Neighborhood Development, 2011). While the median rent in Jamaica Plain was less than US $1,000 per month in 1999, by 2009 it had reached over US $1,700 per month (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). This surge is particularly worrisome from a displacement standpoint; as of 2009, 53% of Jamaica Plain's housing units were rental units and 64% of Hyde Square's housing units were rental units (Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, 2009). Finally, median income rose from US $48,000 in 2000 to US $73,000 in 2009, as indicated by the US Census Bureau.

Along with gentrification trends, patterns of anti-poor and anti-homeless behavior have recently become apparent. In 2012, some groups in JP protested against plans to build 20 housing units for sick and homeless residents because they saw such projects as detrimental to the 'local quality of life' (Walker, 2012). Despite the fact that the expression 'two JPs' (used by many residents and community organizations during interviews) oversimplifies social and ethnic lines of belonging and overlooks the complexities of residents' experiences, recent developments in JP reflect the presence of two opposing sides within one neighborhood: a JP with higher income, better housing, greater access to green space, whiter, with people shopping at the trendy art stores and galleries along Center Street; and a lower-income JP, with struggling families,

many of them Latinos or blacks, living in subsidized housing such as Bromley Heath and resorting to dollar stores or fast-food restaurants.

This is the broader context within which the news broke in January 2011 that almost 50 workers from the Hi-Lo Foods supermarket operating in Hyde Square would be laid off because of the business closing down. At the exact same time, Whole Foods announced that it would open a new store in Hyde Square. This piece of news generated an unprecedented and passionate conflict in the neighborhood. No further details were provided about the business decision. Whole Foods vision was to 'provide access to the freshest and healthiest local, natural and organic products at an affordable price' (Whole Foods Market, n.d.), including meat, seafood and fresh bakery products. It was replacing a Latino institution and core business—Hi-Lo—which had been a JP landmark for 47 years, seen as the biggest and best Latino market in Massachusetts (indeed, some say, in all New England). Even though Hi-Lo had grown as a successful and active food business, the offer made by Whole Foods was too attractive to turn down (Helms, 2011). Knapp Foods (which ran Hi-Lo and owned the building itself) granted a 20-year lease to Whole Foods.

A few days later, protestors started hanging anti-Whole Foods banners in Hyde Square and objecting to the new store in newspaper articles, online forums and street events. Those protestors were members of a newly created 'Whose Foods/Whose Community' coalition. The coalition itself, which spontaneously formed upon the news of Hi-Lo closing and Whole Foods opening, included longstanding active Latino female leaders in JP, Latino and white workers from community organizations, white residents who moved to JP in the 1990s or early 2000s and who were committed to preserving the diversity and affordability of Hyde Square, and students from local colleges. The Latino leaders knew each other from their longstanding organization of and participation in community cultural and political events or from their engagement in the JP Neighborhood Council. During the mobilization, the students and other younger residents produced four videos, gathered 400 Facebook fans and created a website. The work of the coalition demonstrated traditional and modern activism strategies and tactics coming together to produce a broad and efficient campaign. During the conflict, this coalition opposed the JP for All coalition, which brought together JP residents who supported Whole Foods' arrival. It was composed primarily of white middle-class property owners, many of them committed to alternative food practices. Outside this coalition, but still in support of Whole Foods, were some business owners who were eager to attract the former Hi-Lo clientele.

During most of February and March 2011, Whole Foods opening remained at the center of much of local media and blog activity. The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) quickly became the focus of people's anger or excitement, prompting its members to organize a vote on Whole Foods on 8 March, in which Whole Foods was declared as 'not a good fit for Hyde Square'. During the spring of 2011, Boston politicians intervened in an attempt to acknowledge community suffering while also trying to mollify both sides. For instance, on 28 April, Councilor-at-large Felix Arroyo and State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz published letters about the conflict. Arroyo emphasized the divisions in JP, the opportunities and risks in the arrival of Whole Foods, and provided recommendations on local hiring, neighborhood small businesses and Latino products. He also encouraged Whole Foods to support issues of affordable housing and youth development and training. Raising similar concerns, Chang-Diaz's letter urged Whole Foods to focus on local hiring and endow a community preservation fund.

In the following weeks, JPNC worked on a 70-page Whole Foods impact report, pleading for affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food, and analyzing gentrification in JP. Among other issues, the report (released in June 2011) examined food affordability in JP by producing a 'supermarket comparison' of items such as fruit,

vegetables, meat, Latino products and other basic items. After the report was released and protestors realized that Whole Foods was going to open no matter what in the autumn of 2011 (it had received approval from the city authorities and the transaction was a legal deal between two corporations), activists fought to establish a community benefits agreement, which would include funding to support affordable housing and local organizations working to prevent foreclosure (Rocheleau, 2011). However, their attempt failed because Whole Foods refused to set a precedent that would oblige the company to sign similar agreements in other neighborhoods.

For many more months that followed, opponents remained active on a variety of fronts (including a campaign to obtain permits authorizing locals to continue sitting outside Whole Foods), but slowly the fight began to lose momentum. Four years later, the community remains divided and scarred. Why did differences between residents become so entrenched in a place that prided itself in being inclusive, open and solidary? The next section analyzes the data obtained through fieldwork. I use quotes throughout to illustrate my findings. Much of the analysis is centered on the experiences of activists, and their interpretation of exclusion and privilege in Jamaica Plain.

The politics of exclusion through new 'green' locally unwanted land uses and supermarket greenlining

– Food gentrification and aggravated environmental privilege

Today, accelerated environmental privilege in JP is embodied by vulnerable Latino residents' loss of precious environmental resources and goods, and the access that higher classes are gaining to new and existing environmental goods and resources. The closing of Hi-Lo in 2011 and the arrival of Whole Foods in Jamaica Plain symbolizes the difference between proximity and access, between convenience and access, as well as between proximity and affordability of food. With Hi-Lo's closure, Latino residents saw the reliability of affordable food disappear. During the conflict, anti-Whole Foods protestors denounced the absence of any debate about pricing. As many activists explained, lower-income residents buy what they can afford in order to make a large meal that can fulfill the needs of their families. The owner of the restaurant El Oriental de Cuba summarized this reality:

> Whole Foods is whole paycheck. One pepper is US $1.50. At Hi-Lo, people used to fill a shopping cart for US $45, now you have a small shopping bag for US $100. If I wanted to go out and spent US $100, I'd go eat at Legal Sea Foods.[3]

In 2011, a supermarket comparison study conducted by JPNC exposed that, among 13 staple items, Whole Foods prices were 39% higher than Hi-Lo's, while prices at Stop & Shop (another local supermarket) were 12% higher than Hi-Lo's. The total price difference between Hi-Lo and Whole Foods was US $15. This difference is significant in a neighborhood where 65% of Latino residents earn less than US $35,000 per year (Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council, 2011). Such a price difference discourages lower-income residents from shopping at Whole Foods. Coupled with this new reality of a food mirage, the remaining stores offering Latino products in JP—many of them corner stores owned by Latinos—sell them at higher prices than Hi-Lo.

Yet, during the 2011 conflict, even with Whole Foods' arrival set to eliminate sources of affordable food options in JP (including fresh fruit and vegetables), some Whole Foods enthusiasts described Hyde Square as a 'food desert'. This strategic choice of phrase reveals that the discourse of 'food desert', used in order to justify Whole Foods

3 Legal Sea Foods is an upscale seafood restaurant chain operating across New England, especially in the greater Boston area.

opening, does not always show a commitment to enhancing environmental justice. This new discourse appropriates and co-opts EJ claims for the benefits of higher classes who defend their own environmental and food privileges, and their desire to make their food shopping more convenient—by having a local Whole Foods within walking distance—and more part of the urban experience of shopping on foot and enjoying spending time in food stores. Their own right to the neighborhood and high-end customer preferences are to the detriment of Latinos' (and others') ability to purchase the diverse foods they were hitherto able to afford. The expression 'food desert' also homogenizes and flattens the variety of local food 'ecosystems' and diversity of food options that Hyde Square offered when Hi-Lo was in business.

The misuse of the term 'food desert' was accompanied by a socio-cultural imposition of what defines healthy food and healthy eating. Discourses about food from Whole Foods supporters were at times condescending, presuming that Latinos do not eat well and eat processed food. Many white middle-class residents accused Latinos of buying 'dirty and smelly foods' and 'coming from third-world countries'. These discourses shocked many Latino activists, because they came from residents portraying themselves as liberal and progressive citizens. Many of the statements from Whole Foods supporters—for instance about finally having healthy food in JP and being able to walk to the store to get it—reflect a form of metaprivilege (Flagg, 2005): ignorance of one's privilege and whitened cultural histories and lack of reflection upon them. Even though many of these residents said that they moved to JP for its diversity, history and vibrancy, their ability to shape what is green and healthy food accelerates the whitening of the neighborhood.

Coupled with this privileged positioning, Whole Foods supporters and consumers seemed to invisibilize sustainable JP Latino food practices and traditions. As one Latina female activist explained:

> If you buy organic products from Whole Foods but fry them all, that's not going to result in a healthy meal. On the other hand, I could shop at Hi-Lo and buy chicken breast, some vegetables and herbs, and make something pretty healthy … I know a good number of Latinos from JP who shop and cook this way, using fresh affordable ingredients. Many privileged food activists do not like to acknowledge this.

Members of the Whose Foods/Whose Community coalition also point to the appropriation of traditional staples of Latino culinary culture, such as quinoa or yerba mate, by Whole Foods enthusiasts and Whole Foods itself. Such grains and plants are now popular whole foods, praised for their health benefits. Whole Foods does indeed seem to be appropriating traditional vegetables associated with the working class or people of color and selling them at higher prices than minority supermarkets. News articles and blog entries (Brones, 2014; Ho, 2014) have commented on this appropriation, reflecting on Whole Foods Market's (2014) advertising that 'collards are the new kale'. Such ads recommend the consumption of 'superfoods' like collard greens for their health benefits, but fail to emplace these recommendations within the cultural traditions of black or Brazilian residents, or to recognize the healthy habits of groups generally portrayed as unhealthy consumers. At the same time, these ads popularize such staples among foodies who suddenly 'discover' them.

Here, the gentrification dimension also comes from the price inflation that tends to affect such items on account of increase in demand, fitting into the strategy of corporations such as Whole Foods (Ho, 2014; Loftis, 2014). Twitter users like black feminist writer Mikki Kendall (2014) have named this process '#food gentrification', that is, the increase in price of traditional working-class or minority staples resulting from

mainstream demand for them, thereby excluding groups who have traditionally bought them. This is reflected in the current pricing strategies of Whole Foods in JP. As of October 2014, collard greens were priced at US $2.99 a pound (compared to US $0.99 a pound at Tropical Foods, a store many former Hi-Lo customers have resorted to, despite having to travel to neighboring Roxbury to shop there), plantains at 3 for US $2 (3 for US $1 at Tropical Foods), pineapples at US $4.99 each (US $4.99 for two at Tropical Foods) and mangos at US $2.49 each (US $1.49 each at Tropical Foods).

In contrast to Whole Foods, Hi-Lo was a place owned and shaped over decades by the Latino community, with customers advising the manager on the purchase at best price of an immense variety of products from across Latin America such as camote, yucca, mate and recao. Hi-Lo's former manager recalled the popularity of the store:

> Hi-Lo was an anchor business in the community. We filled a void in the community with products from everywhere. The TV and radio would come to the store. People would write to me about new products.

Such a statement highlights the wealth of products offered by Hi-Lo and the broader attraction that the store had beyond its usual customers. Hi-Lo was considered to be one of the best Latino supermarkets in New England and its prices were even lower than at Tropical Foods (the store located in the neighboring area of Roxbury).

Additionally, the arrival of Whole Foods is particularly poignant for many Whose Foods/Whose Community activists because they see it as another manifestation of environmental privilege, the latest in a series of losses of existing environmental goods formerly accessible to JP's vulnerable residents. In the 1980s and 1990s, many JP residents had engaged in sustainability projects to restore JP's green space while rebuilding the neighborhood for marginalized residents. For instance, they targeted an eight-mile strip of empty land with a view to developing new public transport links, green-space infrastructure and affordable housing. In addition, they opened a Latino food co-op, created community gardens (such as the Paul Gore or the Mozart Street gardens), helped clean up the land and also eliminated food-desert conditions by bringing in new supermarkets such as Stop and Shop (a 30,000-square-foot supermarket on Center Street). These were the first EJ fights in JP. Yet today, the Latino co-op has disappeared because of organizational challenges and weaknesses. Gardens such as Paul Gore and Beecher Street, which were considered Latino gardens, are today mostly cultivated by white young professionals. There are fewer Latino gardeners in JP and those who remain explain that they now feel out of place. As workers from the Boston Natural Areas Network (which supports many community gardens in Boston) highlight, the irony is that the wealthier families are the ones now working in the gardens and benefiting from growing their own vegetables. In this case as well, neighborhood greening is accompanied by garden whitening.

Lastly, the desirability of JP as a green and livable neighborhood and the arrival of whiter and wealthier residents in search of green amenities and stores show that long-term EJ strategies in the neighborhood are backfiring on the activists. They are seeing a process of green gentrification through a new 'natural' healthy food store accelerating the exclusion of JP's traditional residents—who are slowly being deprived of the natural beauty, healthy environment and safety that they helped restore, as their neighborhood gradually becomes less and less affordable. The fear of displacement was illustrated by John, a staff member in a local neighborhood organization:

> People are afraid that they will have to leave. There is a strong pressure for displacement. Even business owners feel this way. People take control over the

> neighborhood. As a result, residents feel they are paying the price of making the neighborhood safer.

This statement points to a new structural disincentive for lower-income people to work towards the environmental improvement of their neighborhood and explains how 'natural' food stores might be perceived as locally unwanted land uses.

If residents become displaced, those who will be able to enjoy environmental enhancements in JP (i.e. gardens, supermarkets) as well as its natural beauty (Jamaica Pond and the Jamaica Way) are likely to be newcomers who can afford higher prices. Ben, a longstanding neighborhood resident and activist, explained this green exclusion:

> Rich people are taking over the natural beauty of JP. This beauty is less and less accessible to lower-income residents. The new condo developments on South Huntington will have a beautiful view on the pond.

Jamaica Plain has undergone wholesale change since the days when the neighborhood had stores such as Hi-Lo, diverse community gardens and more affordable properties close to desirable green space. It has been gradually transformed into a potentially environmentally unjust place. Anti-Whole Foods activists perceive that JP is becoming an ecologically sacrificed zone. In other words, the arrival of Whole Foods is a case of regressive environmental justice; previous achievements are wiped away by the presence of Whole Foods and through its role in accelerating displacement.

– An accelerated economic displacement of Latinos and low-income residents through 'supermarket greenlining'

According to supporters of Whose Foods/Whose Community, Whole Foods sends out a signal about neighborhood changes and triggers real estate investment. Its arrival is perceived as an aggressive socio-economic claim on the neighborhood, a trend towards greater community economic, racial and class homogeneity and standardization. Latino residents, lower-income JP residents more generally and several longstanding Latino business owners are afraid that they will be unable to withstand these displacement pressures. Such fears were embodied by the marketing of Whole Foods' arrival in JP by transnational high-end real estate groups such as Sotheby's (2012):

> Live in the heart of JP … Close to the 'T', Brewery District, cafés, and Whole Foods Market … make this home the perfect setting for a vibrant Urban lifestyle.

Norma, one of the Whose Foods/Whose Community leaders, summarized her fears about neighborhood changes:

> There is a well-documented evidence about Whole Foods effect on rent, we got discredited left and right about this. But now I see community space gone, rent going up.

Real estate groups, financial analysts and policy analysts alike have commented on and exposed the socio-economic and demographic impact of Whole Foods on urban neighborhoods. After a Whole Foods store opens, reports have shown that real estate prices tend to increase. In Portland, for instance, the price premium for living next to a specialty grocer has been estimated to range between 5.8% and 29.3% (Johnson Gardner, 2007). This is the 'Whole Foods effect'. In 2006, Citigroup analyst Greg Badishkanian (whose job entailed tracking Whole Foods investments) explained:

> When Whole Foods opens up a store in a particular market, all of the real estate in the area gets a nice uplift. It could be a few percent to 10, 15, 20 percent in terms of the real estate value.

Today in JP, as Whole Foods has moved in, displacement is directly experienced through the accelerated condoization of triple-decker houses, reduced availability of rental units (especially the few remaining affordable ones) and higher house prices. For instance, between January 2013 and January 2014, home values in JP increased by 9.1% (Zillow, n.d.). After the opening of Whole Foods, luxury developments by Boston Residential Group such as Olmsted Place were announced, just a few blocks away on South Huntington Avenue. Studio rental prices were initially advertised at US $2,000 per month.

Economic displacement in Hyde Square is also felt by local Latino cultural centers in the shape of increased prices and reduction in audience numbers. For instance, La Piñata, a program offering performing arts training for young people, has suffered from lower attendance. Its coordinator fears that the higher rent for spaces used by cultural associations such as hers will price them out of the neighborhood. The composition of JP's residents since the opening of Whole Foods is clearly changing towards whiter and more economically privileged groups who can afford higher property prices. As mentioned earlier, the 2011 US census data had already revealed that, between 2000 and 2010, Jamaica Plain lost 1,041 Hispanic/Latino residents (10% decline) and 862 African–American residents (14.6% decline), while the white population increased by 5.4%.

Many media reports, press releases and blogs have written about the expansion of Whole Foods into gentrifying neighborhoods across the US and Canada. Cases range from a Whole Foods Market in the Glebe area of Ottawa, a highly 'desirable, if somewhat patchy, and eminently walkable neighborhood' (Thomas, 2014), to a Whole Foods Market in post-industrial environmentally remediating Gowanus in Brooklyn in 2013, which was accompanied by the development of a new 700-unit condominium building. As a December 2013 article in *The New Yorker* highlighted, Whole Foods embodies 'a hip, eclectic sort of vibe that feels like a Berkeley revival with no credit limit' (Greenspan, 2013). Both developments in Brooklyn provoked much protest against investments that might not be sustainable or inclusive for all residents.

Several Whole Foods testimonies, some relating directly to their JP store, reveal that part of the company's strategy is indeed to invest in changing neighborhoods that are ripe for greater socio-economic and demographic transformation likely to attract a higher concentration of white college graduates. This trend is what I call 'supermarket greenlining': the socio-demographic and physical transformation of a neighborhood through the strategic opening of so-called healthy, natural, organic stores in racially mixed neighborhoods. A community liaison officer for a Whole Foods Market on P Street in Washington, DC recognized the role played by Whole Foods in accelerating gentrification:

> How do I see our store as part of the gentrification? The newer residents wanted us to come, so we came and we catered to the newer residents … While we didn't cause it, it was already happening before we got here … it was well on its way by the time we showed up, but I guess we sort of helped the process along (Public Radio Exchange, 'Gentrification on Logan Circle, 19 November 2010').

Another quote, from Whole Foods CEO John Makey (in an interview with CNNMoney in 2007)—'The joke is that we could have made a lot more money just buying up real estate around our stores and developing it than we could make selling groceries'—

acknowledged the company's ability to target changing neighborhoods and stimulate gentrification trends.

Consequently, in order to tackle increases in rent or sale prices in JP, Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council, together with concerned residents (both Latino residents and social preservationists), is monitoring zoning relief and licensing to developers (as requests have to obtain JPNC approval before going to the city authorities). It is also working with developers to meet minimum requirements for JP in respect of affordable housing (25% of units). In October 2013, JPNC won a lawsuit obliging the Boston Residential Group to rent 32 units at reduced rates to people earning 70–90% of AMI (area median income). Anti-Whole Foods organizing has thus had spillover effects into a different form of organizing—affordable housing. It is what some activists, such as Helen Matthews, call the 'Jamaica Plain effect':

> The Jamaica Plain effect—the impact of a powerful, loving, grassroots community taking ownership of itself.

In the end, then, opposition to Whole Foods is also a class conflict and a conflict about social status. It signals the presence of a gentrifying middle class, seeing itself as progressive and liberal, but in fact supporting a large corporation embodying higher-class choices and transformations. As a member of the Whose Foods/Whose Community coalition, Jen, explained:

> Whole Foods is a class marker: healthy food. It represents affluent lifestyles. Whole Foods represents 'my healthy body' community versus people who focus more on public interest.

Yet the support of Whole Foods shown by white middle-class residents seems to represent a cultural dissonance and reflects the challenges of the 'citizen–customer hybrid' (Johnston, 2008). Those against Whole Foods see their opponents' support of the business as a betrayal of the principles guiding those who had chosen to move to JP in support of class diversity and multiculturalism, as JPNC member Jesse highlighted:

> It is a contradiction because Whole Foods is going to speed up the process against what you supposedly came for when you moved to JP. There was no wider debate within Whole Foods consumers and pro-Whole Foods about the wider impact of the store beyond the impact on the customers.

Rather than behaving as 'social home steaders' (Brown-Saracino, 2010)—people who vow to only cautiously and carefully alter a neighborhood—as their discourse would suggest, many Whole Foods enthusiasts are apparently unrepentant 'urban pioneers' (Brown-Saracino, 2010), that is people who have moved into a neighborhood without showing (at least today) much concern for its social urban fabric, and who weaken and whiten it through their presence and differentiated 'green' consumption habits. During interviews, most of them did not acknowledge their position of environmental, economic and social privilege, and did not question the behavior of Whole Foods as a large corporation. As one of them explained:

> People are misinformed about Whole Foods when actually it was Hi-Lo who did those bad things. On the other hand, Whole Foods employees are treated fairly and are offered decent jobs. Neighborhoods are always changing, they are dynamic not static. The mobile US society has to be protected and saved (white female activist, JP for All coalition).

Pro-Whole Foods voices defended their position by emphasizing the fact that gentrification was already well underway in JP and that change had to be accepted. This position was also at times taken by Latino property owners:

> Gentrification was already happening and there were other factors. I don't pay attention to the other side who says that the Latino culture is dissolving. Now there will be more businesses and restaurants for everybody and more diversity in all classes.

During interviews, many Whole Foods defenders also expressed concerns about empty storefronts and a declining neighborhood if no new business were to replace Hi-Lo. By defending Whole Foods, they claimed that they also had a right to define and shape the neighborhood: they had a right to it.

– Increasing evidence of Latino political exclusion and cultural erosion

Feelings of displacement in JP were experienced not only in economic terms, but politically and culturally too. Anti-Whole Foods activists were adamantly against the opening of the store because they perceived it to be a broader sign and accelerator of erosion of Latino cultural community and political power in JP. According to them, their role was thus to protect Latino presence and culture, and its broader political influence in the neighborhood and city. Part of the activists' evidence of growing political exclusion is that Latino officials representing JP and some executive directors of Latino non-profit organizations failed to defend what activists call the 'Latino identity' in JP. Officials did not offer backing for the opening of a new Latino supermarket, nor did they assess feasible business plans for a Latino alternative to the Whole Foods store. In their criticism, protesters pointed to local officials' and community leaders' 'mayoral loyalty'. One organizer explained the delicate position of one non-profit organization's Latino director:

> Raul partnered with the mayor and the mayor got him where he is. He had nothing to say. Latino officials have a very strong loyalty towards the mayor; they worked for him. It is about [Mayor] Menino's political machine and loyalty and dictatorship.

In this context, the political weight and clout of new Latino leaders—especially new female leaders—with regard to neighborhood developments was minimal in comparison with the 'old guard', comprising more experienced male figures close to Mayor Menino. The conflict around Whole Foods disintegrated and disoriented community and political organizing in the neighborhood. Overall, JP Latinos seem to have lost much political power and clout, and appear unable to influence municipal decisions in favor of Latino businesses.

Whose Foods/Whose Community activists do not just feel betrayed by the Latino leaders close to the mayor and by former supporters in the city authorities, they also regret that those same people use the neighborhood for their own goals. They criticize the use of neighborhood cultural features, such as festivals and art venues, in ways that benefit newcomers and investors. Their perception is that the mayor's office and the municipal departments in charge of community development have transformed JP into a Latino theme park (calling it and advertising it as Boston's 'Latin quarter'), without considering the rights of Latinos to their city and neighborhood, while giving in to the demands of wealthier and whiter newcomers for revitalization and for the opening of upscale stores, supermarkets and restaurants. They are accused of banking on the neighborhood's identity for their own electoral purposes while endangering the

roots of that very same identity. Their neighborhood and its cultural character are being commoditized as an attraction and destination for outsiders and newcomers. Yet, many longstanding residents refuse to be branded as part of a Latin quarter. An organizer within the community organization City Life summarized the situation as follows:

> The City of Boston makes the Latino business district a theme park, a 'Latin quarter', a destination but it is not actually related to the clientele of the neighborhood.

In the words of activists, this branding just serves the vision of a few within City Hall, of developers and real estate agents, and of Whole Foods itself.

Broader cultural losses for the Latino community and other longstanding residents have resulted from the opening of Whole Foods. First, interviews and observations reveal that Latino restaurants and food venues in Jamaica Plain have lost much of their clientele since Hi-Lo closed. Hi-Lo clients used to go to places such as Tacos el Charro or the Miami Restaurant, but such food venues are now struggling and open fewer hours during the week on account of the drop in clientele. One JP Neighborhood Council member described the new competition that Whole Foods is creating for Latino businesses:

> Whole Foods bypassed the JP Neighborhood Council for its outdoor seating application and went directly to the City. Whole Foods should remain more a supermarket than a restaurant, or it will otherwise compete with Latino businesses or restaurants such as the Oriental.

At the same time, new high-end restaurants such as Canary Square, Tres Gatos or Ten Tables have seen an influx of (gentrifying) clientele.

Many interviewees also regret the loss of Hi-Lo as a cultural safe haven offering customers and residents a sense of place in Jamaica Plain. Over 40 years, the store had allowed immigrants to re-territorialize their traditions around *comida* and their socio-cultural food practices, with dozens of coffee beans and rice varieties, Caribbean fruit, Guatemalan sauces and Peruvian spices on sale. Hi-Lo was a meeting point where people would nurture social relations, share life experiences or just converse about family and the Latino community. As Kyle, a member of a community organization, recalled:

> Everyone would go by van, but now they get things delivered to their home. There is a loss of place. It was a haven for Latino people even if it was portrayed differently. People felt comfortable and it was also the same language. People gravitated towards this.

Yet many Whole Foods supporters, as 'urban pioneer' gentrifiers (Brown-Saracino, 2010), seem to overlook the cultural and social significance of food and forget that Hi-Lo was a central hangout and gathering place for JP Latinos:

> Hi-Lo was for the Hispanic community, but it was sad, run down, smelled, never clean, and it had bad-quality food (white female Whole Foods supporter).

Other Whole Foods supporters, such as several small *bodega* owners hoping to capture new business from Hi-Lo's closing, also underplay the importance of safe haven and refuge for lower-income and longstanding Latino residents:

> Now, people can go to Dudley and to businesses who say they welcome Hi-Lo customers. *Bodegas* can also sell more products. Whole Foods has also brought more people to the community and people can stop in other places.

The extent of cultural loss was highlighted by the many white residents who joined anti-Whole Foods protests. Many of them also felt a loss of sense of place when Hi-Lo closed and objected to the neighborhood being remade for them with a new Whole Foods store. They were conscious that Whole Foods' arrival sent a direct message to them as 'progressive' nature-conscious white middle-class residents, but many, such as Jen, a PhD graduate and member of the Whose Foods/Whose Community coalition, resented that message: 'white supporters in Whose Foods saw something marketed for them, but they did not like it'. Most people who participated in the anti-Whole Foods coalition built strong ties in the neighborhood and felt a well-established sense of belonging towards JP and its traditional identity. They refused to see their neighborhood become an enclave for white yuppies. For many Whose Food/Whose Community coalition members, including higher-income white residents, the core of the conflict was ultimately about place and community identity, as Dave, a business owner emphasized:

> The whole battle was also about place. Everything was place. Building community through service, being open to friendly discussions. Lots of people cared about the same things as us.

Such resident activists are defined as 'social preservationists' by Brown-Saracino (2010), people who cherish their neighborhood culture and traditions. As in other environmental gentrification fights (Curran and Hamilton, 2012; Hamilton and Curran, 2013), they ally themselves with Latino residents, invigorate their activism and participate in local causes to protect the 'authenticity' of the place against new forms of privilege.

Conclusions

This research into the experiences and perceptions of vulnerable residents affected by the loss of environmental goods and resources in a racially mixed neighborhood offers a timely critical analysis of gentrification and its new dimensions (Slater, 2006; 2008). In this article, I have argued that when a process such as 'supermarket greenlining' takes place, it produces new socio-spatial patterns and experiences of environmental inequality and exclusion, transforming amenities for vulnerable traditional residents into new forms of locally unwanted land uses (LULUs). As so-called natural food corporations and their supporters shape what is green and healthy food, they accelerate the whitening of multiracial neighborhoods.

The accounts and experiences of those protesting against the arrival of a high-end healthy-food chain in Jamaica Plain illustrate that environmental gentrification activism is more than simply being skeptical about new green spaces, green buildings and waterfront promenades promoted by municipalities (Pearsall, 2008; Dooling, 2009; Checker, 2011; Curran and Hamilton, 2012; Gould and Lewis, 2012). Residents are also apprehensive about the impact of so-called healthy food stores moving into the neighborhood. Environmental gentrification through healthy food stores has pernicious effects revealing the instrumentalization of green discourses, environmental goods and 'natural' food for the benefit of higher and whiter classes. Data analysis highlights how gentrification erodes community resources—such as environmental goods—for historically marginalized groups. Such goods and resources are affected by international corporations exploiting and shaping socio-spatial changes at the neighborhood scale.

Green gentrification in the form of high-end healthy food stores creates new forms of environmental inequities, with sources of affordable food vanishing. In the JP conflict, white middle-class supporters of Whole Foods manipulated the concept of food desert, using it in a regressive way against the interests of lower-income residents. As they benefited from the 'greening' of the neighborhood (and encouraged it), they also physically and symbolically contributed to whiten it. Whole Foods has also appropriated items traditionally used in Latino cuisine while pricing them higher, a process illustrating food gentrification. Thus, the conflict in JP reveals that anti-Whole Foods activists are still fighting the collective imaginary that green equals white and middle class. This equation is reinforced by the way the urban political economy is structured and by the fact that discourses of urban sustainability, environmentalism and alternative food are rarely critical of the inequalities underpinning them.

Additionally, new environmental amenities such as a Whole Foods Market indeed indicate to developers, real estate agents and outsiders that a neighborhood is 'ready' to be further changed. Increases in house prices jeopardize vulnerable residents' access to other environmental amenities such as green space, water features and community gardens. Whole Foods' arrival is a form of supermarket greenlining, exemplifying corporations' selection of store locations on the basis of potential to attract residents—who can in turn become customers—from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Supermarket greenlining encompasses both act (i.e. identifying certain neighborhoods as ripe for opening healthy food stores) and outcome (i.e. decreased access to multiple resources—reasonably priced food and cultural safe havens—for vulnerable residents). The JP conflict also shows that such stores herald the end of traditional foodways, foodscapes and related cultural practices for minority and more vulnerable groups, highlighting and reinforcing the waning of their cultural and political power. In sum, multiple forms of exclusion and displacement are illustrated in the JP environmental gentrification conflict: environmental, socio-economic, cultural and political exclusion and displacement.

The protests against Whole Foods thus expose the transformation of LULUs in EJ struggles. Traditional 'brown' LULUs continue to blight the environment and health of historically marginalized groups. Yet, today the creation of new environmental amenities in cities have transformed parks, revitalized waterfronts, healthy food stores and other new or improved environmental amenities into LULUs, against which vulnerable residents and their supporters mobilize. People fight against these 'green' LULUs because they contribute not only to the loss of their own environmental goods (i.e. Latino food stores) but also to new socio-spatial inequalities. Indeed, their impact might be more acute in terms of community stability and resilience than toxic waste sites, as longstanding residents might be forced to move, unable to remain in the neighborhood and access environmental goods—including traditional food supplies in demand among people of color—and unable to maintain existing social and spatial capital.

These struggles reveal the importance of questioning ongoing research, and redefining what it means to be green in the city and fight for urban sustainability. They also call for more research on the different dimensions that gentrification is taking in the city and the different conflicts it is producing. Scholars and practitioners must rethink urban sustainability in ways that address environmental gentrification, encroachment, affordability and greening as the new urban frontier in a revanchist city. Can only middle-class and white residents be green in the long term? If being green means having sustained access to new environmental goods, then this might well be the case. Such a reality requires a more critical examination of discourses and practices of urban environmentalism. It also means accepting that, while the term 'green gentrification' is powerful, it is just another way of understanding environmental injustices in cities and does not represent a fundamentally new process in terms of the underlying political economy and urban geography dynamics. Traditional 'brown' concerns of the

EJ movement criticized dominant institutions for treating marginalized groups as if they did not deserve to live in healthy neighborhoods, and for allowing the siting of waste sites and other LULUs where they lived. Green gentrification is the flipside of that process, through which the urban poor and people of color are only allowed to live in less healthy and livable neighborhoods, because they are pushed away politically, physically, economically and culturally from their neighborhoods.

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