

A Grassroots Alternative to Urban Shrinkage? A Comparative Analysis of Place Reputational Remaking in Buffalo and Cleveland

Urban Affairs Review

1–38

© The Author(s) 2024

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/10780874241237435

journals.sagepub.com/home/uar

**Randolph Hohle¹** 

Abstract

This article explores how local actors in Buffalo and Cleveland mobilized through garden tourism as a form of alternative urbanism to rehabilitate heavily stigmatized places and remake their city's reputations. Building off the concepts of civic action and scene styles, I compare how grassroots actors in Buffalo mobilized through a symbolic purity scene style to deracialize urban stigmas to how grassroots actors in Cleveland mobilized through a diversity scene style to create an inclusive place reputation that addressed the city's internal racial and ethnic divisions. I found that in the process of rehabbing their communities, grassroots actors in both cities replaced racialized urban stigmas with a different form of Whiteness, and when residents and elites shared the same scene style, they were more likely to cooperate, which entrenched the garden tour with local elites and other organizations in the cultural tourism field. Cultural variables like a place's reputation matter in how and what kind of Rust Belt city will emerge from the era of urban shrinkage. Data for this article comes from 50 semistructured in-depth interviews, fieldwork, and archival data.

Keywords

urban shrinkage, rust belt, place reputations, cultural tourism, scene styles

¹SUNY at Fredonia, Fredonia, NY, USA

Corresponding Author:

Randolph Hohle, Sociocultural and Justice Sciences, SUNY at Fredonia, Fredonia, NY 14063-1136, USA.

Email: hohle@fredonia.edu

In 1995, a handful of residents organized a seven house garden tour on a single city block on Buffalo's Westside. Over the next two decades, the garden tour emerged as one of Buffalo's signature cultural tourism events of the summer, growing from a two-day event in 1995 to a five-week event featuring fifteen different garden tours and over 1000 gardens across the metropolitan region. National media used the garden tour to frame Buffalo as a revitalizing Rust Belt city. After reading about the Buffalo Garden tour in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and visiting the Buffalo tour in 2010, a handful of Cleveland residents, with help from organizers involved with the Buffalo garden tour, organized an ambitious city-wide tour featuring private, community, and municipal gardens. Although the size and scope of the Cleveland garden tour have varied since the first one in 2011, it has persisted for over ten years and has expanded to Cleveland's inner-ring suburbs.

This article explores how local actors in Buffalo and Cleveland mobilized through garden tourism as a form of alternative urbanism to rehabilitate heavily stigmatized places and remake their city's reputations. Rather than give in to a metanarrative of inevitable urban decline, the garden tours provide a case study to understand how grassroots actors in the Rust Belt have taken it upon themselves to create new place reputations in hopes of attracting capital investment and increasing their stagnant or declining populations. Building on the concepts of civic action and scene styles (Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014; Lichterman 2021) and place reputations (Bell 2016; Brown-Saracino and Parker 2017; Hohle 2023). I show how residents in Buffalo and Cleveland attempt to rehabilitate place reputations by (1) mobilizing through either a symbolic purity or diversity scene style to debunk racial stigmas and (2) how these scene styles led to or failed to form new political configurations with local elites. Buffalo organizers mobilized through the symbolic purity scene style and sought to remove the existing racialized Rust Belt stigmas. Cleveland organizers mobilized through the diversity scene style and sought to create an inclusive place reputation that addressed the city's internal racial, ethnic, and class divisions. I found that local actors used different scene styles to deracialize urban stigmas and replace them with a different form of Whiteness. Residents and elites were more likely to cooperate when they shared the same scene style, which linked the garden tour with other organizations in the regional cultural tourism field.

America's Rust Belt, which stretches from the Northeast to the Midwest, was the center of its industrial growth from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century and symbolizes the social trauma and spatial dislocation that accompanies economic restructuring. Rust Belt cities have endured a prolonged period of urban shrinkage that began at the end of World War II. Urban shrinkage is defined as continual population loss amidst the transition from an industrial to a postindustrial city (Wiechmann and Pallagst 2012; Coppola 2019). Racism

is a core if not the central process driving urban shrinkage in the Rust Belt. Racial capitalism explains how racism and capitalism drive urban development through exploitation and appropriation, and that racial inequalities are not an unfortunate consequence of urbanization (Bledsoe and Wright 2019; Dantzer, Korver-Glenn and Hall 2022). Dantzer (2021) classifies dispossession and displacement as part of a larger matrix of racial ideologies and agents that structure urban political economy, which accounts for the physical and symbolic displacement of Black people. This includes the territorial stigmatization of Black spaces (Taylor 1991, 2020; Wacquant 2008; Freeman 2019), gentrification (Rucks-Ahidiana 2022), and segregation (Massey and Denton 1993).

The paradox of White residents' efforts to remake racially stigmatized place reputations is that as they rejected racist narratives and created value in stigmatized spaces, they inadvertently embedded a different form of Whiteness into the place's reputations. Gardening is one way that residents create values in places that neoliberal urban policy and the conservative movement racialized and subsequently devalued. Shabazz argued that residents use various forms of gardening to create agricultural and green spaces in areas to provide social, mental, and physical benefits because gardens create "social spaces where community members gather and build relationships with one another" (2015: 117). Shabazz highlights the agency of residents who use gardens to create new landscapes and the potential of gardening to do what gentrification cannot: "give hope, revitalize, nourish, and create sustainability in a community that has faced significant social problems" (2015: 118). However, dominant groups have the power to make the meanings of place, and White residents inscribe their normative imprint into places. This echoes Summers (2021) findings that the cultural work of racialized placemaking redefines notions of belonging and creates cultural displacement for Black residents. In this regard, reputational remaking and scene styles can lead to symbolic erasure and/or displacement in two ways. First, dispossession is not always a deliberate plan by residents or an intentional state-driven program (Manning-Thomas 1997; Levenson 2018). Second, existing racial structures influence how residents develop alternative forms of capitalism and urbanization (Bledsoe, McCreary and Wright 2022). The power of existing racial structures explains the difficulty that White-led movements have creating new inclusive place reputations. It also explains why Black communities in Buffalo and Cleveland mobilized through dominant scene styles as they made claims for civic inclusion, which limits their agency and their visions of alternative urbanism.

The symbolic and physical erasure of racial and marginalized communities from place reputations connects racial capitalism and the concept of settler colonialism. Racial capitalism and discourses of settler colonialism work together to explain how racial ideologies are inherently a spatial process (Coulthard 2014),

demonstrated through racial ideologies that make divergent processes like inclusive place narratives and gentrification appear compatible (Petersen 2022). Images of settler colonialism are often discreet, lingering in the image of ruin porn that pits urban blight against nature (Millington 2013) and suburban White residents' nostalgia for the old neighborhood (Pedroni 2011). In Rust Belt cities like Detroit and Cleveland, urban planners, government officials, and local economic elites have embraced a neoliberal "right-sizing" and "smart shrinkage" approach to manage urban shrinkage. In practice, smart shrinkage focuses on housing demolition and reducing municipal services to the poorest parts of the city to protect adjacent housing markets (Akers 2013; Safransky 2014, 2016). To whip up support for neoliberal austerity projects, planners and state officials have avoided the traditional racist tropes associated with urban renewal in favor of embedding racial languages into the discourse of greening urban spaces. The greening of urban spaces relies on a racist rationale of settler colonialism that creates the abandoned space that it seeks to reclaim for private capital investment, even if residents still reside there, and the inflow of capital never arrives (Safransky 2014). Akers, Beal and Rousseau (2020) argue that greening is a "techno-environmental urban policy" that reframes mass demolition in racially segregated and marginalized places as an ecological solution to urban decline.

The language of greening urban spaces to achieve urban revitalization is not the exclusive property of elites. In this regard, urban shrinkage creates what Coppola (2014) calls "alternative urbanism"—how local actors embrace a diverse set of urban policies and experiment with new forms of land use. In contrast to the elite's techno-environmental urban policy initiatives designed to protect housing markets, the garden tours represent how ordinary citizens use green civic practices like gardening to highlight how places have value and are worth saving. Ordinary citizens work through civil society and organize community gardens, food production, and urban beautification efforts that reject the mass demolition of communities (Eizenberg 2012; Ghose and Pettygrove 2014). Since the 1970s, ordinary residents in Detroit have worked with nonprofit organizations to use gardening as a response to austerity and to rebuild their communities (Cialdella 2020). Black residents use gardening and food justice to counter displacement (Ramirez 2015; Reese 2018, 2019). Thus, greening is a contested term used by both planners and citizens to define the present and future of Rust Belt cities.

Place Reputational Remaking, Civic Actions, and Scene Styles

Local grassroots actors in Buffalo and Cleveland used garden tours as reputational remaking social activities to rehabilitate their communities and

debunk the stigma attached to the Rust Belt. Garden tourism is part of the \$1.4 trillion global tourism industry (UNWTO 2018) classified as cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is visiting a place or attraction to experience its tangible and intangible cultural attributes (Richards 1996, 2018; Noonan and Rizzo 2017). Distressed Rust Belt cities turned to tourism to address urban decline and revitalize their urban cores after World War II. Cowan (2016) showed how the initial phase of urban tourism, which began in the 1950s, focused on convention centers and was funded by federal urban renewal funds, but then, by the late 1960s, gave way to a second phase of tourism that sought to market cities as a desirable place to visit and live. The field of cultural tourism emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s from the growing interest in heritage tourism and reflects Cowan's second phase of urban tourism. Because cultural tourism involves sending cultural signals about a place, garden tourism functions as a medium to change a place's reputation. The garden tours in my study differed from traditional forms of cultural tourism in two ways. First, government policy or public-private partnerships create the majority of cultural tourism to generate revenue for local businesses and governments (McCarthy 2012; Borzyskowski and Marczak 2015). However, the Buffalo and Cleveland garden tours are rooted in civil society and reflect community-based tourism, which emphasizes civic pride (Murphy and Boyle 2006; Wang, Yamada and Brothers 2011), is led by local guides who have considerable agency in how they represent the place (Salazar 2012), and is done to change how outsiders perceive the regions. Second, while cultural tourism typically involves creating "tourist bubbles" that separate spaces for tourists from the spaces for locals, the garden tours provided hybrid spaces for tourists and locals, and relied on residents to show their gardens and homes and represent the city in a positive light. In turn, the garden tours do what Summers (2022) identified in protest art in Oakland: they temporarily co-constitute one public that represents the privileged class of Whites and tourists with a public that represents an oppressed class of poor and often Black residents.

Place reputations are the socially recognized and collective understandings that outsiders have of a place, and are made by the discourses, narratives, and collective actions of politicians, ordinary residents, and business leaders (Nelson 2015; Bell 2016; Brown-Saracino and Parker 2017). Place reputations are the cultural attributes that reflect an urban region's political economy, but they cannot be reduced to the state of its political economy. Uneven development created concentrations of poverty and segregation in cities that endured urban shrinkage and cities that were the sites of population and economic growth. The concept of reputational remaking is based on an understanding of place as giving the capacity for agency, which is found in grassroots social and civic activities, directed at changing the existing place's reputation (Hohle 2023). Malpas (2018) conceptualized place as

providing the structure of subjectivity for the inhabitants of a place. This means that agency is somewhat conditioned on a place's history because social action is inseparable from a place. The social meanings attributed to places are splintered along social groups, making a place's meanings inherently unstable and open to modification and reinterpretation through collective action (Smith 1999). For example, Summers's (2021, 2022) research on Black people in Oakland and Washington DC highlights how the meanings of place are layered and constructed through collective engagement and conflicts, and highlights how placemaking is a political act to preserve Black culture. Summers argues that Black residents use cultural events as reclamation esthetics to make Black people visible in cities and places where the process of gentrification has physically and culturally displaced Blackness. Because the meaning of place is always open to reinterpretation, and while we can assume that residents and outsiders have a shared awareness of the stigma, place also grants local actors the agency to try and change the stigma.

The garden tours are dependent on an ever-changing group of volunteers who share an interest in gardening and revitalizing their communities. The concept of civic action explains how actors create civically oriented cultural tourism events that can change place reputations. Lichterman and Eliasoph (2014) define civic action as any social activity that involves the ongoing collective coordination of people working for their idea of the common good (also see Eliasoph and Cefai 2021; Blok et al. 2022). The analysis of civic actions is on the collective nature of social actions, rather than individual behaviors or values, that structure social actions. The focus on the collective nature of civic actions captures how participants implicitly act as members of an imaginary community. Civic actions are not the exclusive property of the civil sphere or the type of organization associated with the civil sphere, for example, the voluntary organization (see Alexander 2006). Local actors in my study worked "civically" through different kinds of organizations—including voluntary organizations, block clubs, neighborhood and business organizations, and public-private organizations—to solve problems and advance their normative imprint on the world, which may or may not be one that espoused democratic and egalitarian values.

Civic actions create scene styles, which in turn, shape how a group acts, the form of solidarity within a group, and how they construct their normative imagination of the good place. Scene styles are patterned and routine ways of acting and relating to others in a group of people that capture the implicit expectations and agreements about what they are doing and how they are doing it, and are necessary to reduce a wide range of perceptions of what should be done to a point that shared action is possible (Lichterman 2021: 27). Lichterman and Eliasoph note that participants have agency because they have some say over how they coordinate social actions, however, agency is limited by the

group's dominant scene style (2014: 811). A given scene style is constructed through the relationship between how other groups have organized to solve a problem and how an existing community adopts a scene style to fit their visions and social relationships. Scene styles are embedded in larger discursive fields, which is how groups learn how others use scene styles to solve similar problems. Discursive fields define the groups' goals/objectives, set limits to what is considered acceptable behaviors, and provide a language to inscribe normative meanings into actions. Consensus is achieved through the relational process between the discursive fields and what Lichterman calls a "chain of action," the process of trying out new ideas, interpreting civic actions, and then forming perceptions of who we are. This process of experimentation through a chain of action allows volunteers to shift between scene styles as new problems arise.

Discursive fields reside in racialized spaces. Racial inequalities have historically been spatialized, where racial representations are ordered by government officials and planners (Summers and Howell 2019), linked with ideas of community and belonging (Gibbons 2016), and impact entire Black communities regardless of which neighborhood they live in (Freeman 2019). Elite and ordinary Whites racially code Black and White spaces as they construct what Lipsitz called the White spatial imagery that "idealizes 'pure' and homogeneous spaces, controlled by environments, and predicted patterns of design and behavior" (2011: 29). Pritchett (2003) explained how the racialized discourse of blight settled legal and political tensions between White elites who viewed property rights as sacred and urban renewal advocates who argued for the expansive use of government power to remake cities by equating Black neighborhoods with blight, and thus, protecting elite White property rights and selectively targeting Black neighborhoods for demolition. Conservative elites still use the racialized discourse of blight and abandonment to mark the entire Rust Belt region as a bad place unworthy of capital investment (Hackworth 2019). The White spatial imagery matters as ordinary Whites express their racial preferences for majority and all-White neighborhoods through the housing market (Krysan and Crowder 2017). Research shows that middle-class White residents also inscribe their identities in space as the social and class character of the neighborhood changes (Benson and Jackson 2012). Since place reputations are unstable cultural structures, White residents act to change the meaning of Whiteness without displacing the White spatial imagery.

Symbolic purity was the dominant scene style in Buffalo while the diversity scene style was the dominant scene style in Cleveland. Mary Douglas (2002) defined symbolic purity as a system of purity and pollution, where pollution is matter out of place and must be removed. The symbolic purity scene style seeks to remove all elements that reflect the urban stigma by replacing

the racialized imagery of urban blight and poverty with the image of idealized middle-class White residents with elite cultural tastes. The symbolic purity scene style served as the basis for residents to coordinate and organize garden tours with groups from different parts of the city and region who shared the same common goal of removing negative stigmas. However, Black residents used the symbolic purity scene style to define what constitutes a good Black neighborhood by shifting the narrative away from racialized concepts like blight and crime, to emphasizing the positive elements of the community, including how Black neighborhoods have value and are good places to raise a family. Rather than pathologize Black places as lacking something found in upper-middle-class White places, Black geographies focus on Black agency, the political and cultural practices of what Black people are doing as they struggle against inequality, including self-reliance and self-sufficiency through community gardens and food justice (Ramirez 2015; Reese 2018, 2019) and cultural preservation against gentrification (Reese 2020; Summers 2021). Black Buffalonians took the familiar and dominant scene style and repurposed it for their objectives. Rather than make a claim for inclusion into an already existing reputation, the Eastside garden tours challenged the implicit racial representations in the new place reputation and redrew the boundaries of belonging in the city's new reputation.

In contrast, Cleveland residents constructed a diversity scene style to create a multicultural place reputation that addressed Cleveland's internal racial, ethnic, and class divisions. They sought to replace the racialized imagery of urban blight with one of a liberal tolerant whiteness open to difference. The diversity scene style reflects the "development-inclusionary" (Pottie-Sherman 2018) efforts and policies Rust Belt actors pursue that links diversity with economic development. However, the discursive meanings of diversity cannot be separated from the historical or spatial context of segregated cities and stigmatized regions that create the privileged position of upper-class White residents to define the meanings of a place. Ramirez (2015) explained how well-meaning Whites involved in food justice movements cannot always distance themselves from their privilege and assumptions that they speak for all communities, which prevents inclusive efforts from being realized. Similarly, Summers (2019) showed how Washington DC used diversity narratives to create a new spatial identity by separating blackness from actual Black people. Rather than create cultural inclusion, diversity works as a discursive process of displacement by selecting nonthreatening aspects of Blackness that work with larger notions of cultural diversity while erasing the grittier and dangerous association of Blackness, including music. Whereas the symbolic purity scene style was open to Black residents who reflected the same cultural values and collective goals as White residents, the diversity scene style sought to include marginalized Black neighborhoods on the logic that embracing difference would

counter a city's segregated past. Each scene style explains why residents viewed gardening as something more than a leisure activity or urban beautification event.

Methods

Data for this article comes from field notes and 50 semistructured interviews of residents who participated in garden tourism in the greater Buffalo, New York, and Cleveland, Ohio metropolitan areas. Semistructured interviews are a type of in-depth interview that resembles a guided conversation based on topics and themes instead of a predetermined set of questions characteristic of a formal interview or questionnaire. The strength of the semistructured interview is probing for depth and nuance regarding the variation of interests and experiences of respondents from different social positions, such as social class and racial differences between urban and suburban neighborhoods. I created the interview guide (Supplemental Appendix 1) based on the literature in civil society, specifically on the voluntary sector (see Eliasoph 1998, Alexander 2006). Each interview started with a series of questions that asked respondents how they got involved in the garden tours, the relationship, if any, between their involvement in the garden tour and other forms of civic engagement, and the work that goes into participating in the tour.

I used field research to participate in various events to observe the civic actions and understand the cultural context of each place. I volunteered to be a garden scout. I attended some garden tour organizational meetings and block club meetings where the block clubs were using the garden tours to revitalize the community. I placed my house on the garden walk. My participation in the tour granted me opportunities to interact with and observe the reactions of visitors. It also alerted me to the stress and unmentioned obligations to participate in the tour each year and how to maintain the gardens in spring, summer, and fall. I visited garden tours of each city to get a feel for neighborhoods by walking the tour and having informal conversations with participants and other visitors. This was especially important for collecting data in Cleveland, as it was the only garden tourism-related event I could attend in person.

I conducted the first wave of 42 interviews between 2010 and 2014, and the second round of eight interviews in 2018 and 2019 to follow up on key organizational developments that occurred since 2014, specifically the expansion of the Buffalo garden tour into racially segregated areas, and the formation of a regional garden tour organization that coordinated the city and suburban garden tours across Erie County. I used purposive sampling to select the garden tour organizations in advance because they matched the population of the study. I recruited participants by sending an email through the

garden tour email listserv asking members to contact me if they wanted to be interviewed for the study. I also met some participants while conducting field research who agreed to an interview. The larger number of interviews in Buffalo (36) relative to Cleveland (14), as well as the small (5) number of Black respondents, reflects the time, space, size, and longevity of each garden tour. During my study, there were between 300 and 370 houses that featured private gardens that participated in the Buffalo garden tour. The Buffalo garden tour was already a well-attended annual event when I began the study in 2010. In comparison, the Cleveland Garden Tour averaged about 160 houses. The Buffalo garden tours are consistently held in the same neighborhoods while the number of participating neighborhoods in Cleveland varies from year to year. The greater number of participants identifying as women in the study reflects national trends that women volunteer more than men do (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015), and how block clubs and community organizing are sites that blur the gendered public and private spheres by combining physical upkeep of a neighborhood with community building (Martin 2002). The smaller number of Black respondents was due to the Buffalo garden tours being held in almost exclusively White places until Black residents organized a garden tour in Buffalo's Eastside, the predominantly Black section of the city, in 2018. This was also the case in Cleveland. Black participants who resided on Cleveland's Eastside, specifically the Hough and Glenville neighborhoods, were more likely to participate through community gardens than private houses. All interviews were conducted face-to-face or over the phone, recorded, and transcribed. The analysis was theoretically driven. I constructed a code book guided by central themes in the literature on civil society and boundary formation and how they shaped urban regeneration efforts. The specific themes were social relations, networks, and belonging (which included the categories of race and place) that indicated how the persons in my sample constructed each scene styles. I did not use any qualitative software to aid in the analysis (Table 1).

Case Selection

On the surface, Buffalo and Cleveland are similar. Both are Rust Belt cities located on Lake Erie, have endured population loss and economic contraction since 1950, and endure urban stigmas. Consistent with the economic metrics of urban shrinkage, both cities have some of the highest poverty rates of all American cities. Buffalo has a larger proportion of White residents, a higher median income, and a lower poverty rate than Cleveland (US Census 2010, 2019, 2020). However, 35 percent of African-Americans in Buffalo live below the poverty line, compared with 27.5 percent of Cleveland's Black population. Comparatively, the proportion of Whites in

Table 1. Characteristics of Interviewees.

	Buffalo	Cleveland
Total Interviews	36	14
Gender	21 Female 15 Male	10 Female 4 Male
Race and Ethnicity	32 White 3 African-American 1 Hispanic	12 White 2 African-American 0 Hispanic
Involvement in Civic Groups	Zero = 8 One = 17 Two = 7 Three or more = 2	Zero = 6 One = 6 Two = 1 Three or more = 1
Originally from the region	19 Yes 17 No	7 Yes 5 No
Long-term resident (defined as living in current house/apartment for more than 10 years)	30	11

each city who live in poverty is about 10 percent. The disproportionate number of Black residents who live in poverty and racially segregated neighborhoods indicates place-based structural racism. Recent census data indicates that the process of population shrinkage has stopped in Buffalo but continues in Cleveland. From 2010 to 2020, the city of Buffalo’s population increased by 6.5 percent while Erie County’s population increased by 3.8 percent. In contrast, Cleveland’s population decreased by about 6 percent while Cuyahoga County’s population decreased by about 1 percent. Some of the population declines in Cuyahoga County are due to sprawl into neighboring counties. Beyond that, what we have are two cities located in states with different approaches to urban regeneration, and a different configuration of regional elites, nonprofits, and civic associations that control local development.

The first difference is each state’s response to urban shrinkage. In the aftermath of the 2008 Great Recession, New York State attempted to engineer economic restructuring and urban regeneration through neoliberal pro-growth policy. Neoliberal pro-growth policy issues public money and tax subsidies directly to specific businesses and industries rather than to infrastructure. It pivoted off of New York State’s history, beginning with Governor Nelson Rockefeller, of using federal and state funds on infrastructure and using the power of state government to supplant local control to shape regional economic and urban development (Bloom 2019). This included state attempts

to link tourism to urban development, including remaking Times Square and the Javits Center, the New York State Museum and Egg Performance Hall in Albany, and financing state parks anchored in natural attractions like Niagara Falls. By the 1980s, however, direct state intervention and funding declined due to cuts in federal funding targeting cities, and subsequent Democratic and Republican governors used enterprise zones as a form of urban redevelopment (Weaver 2016). This change of focus is symbolized by the New York State Development Corporation, which the state created in 1995 by merging the Urban Development Corporation and The Department of Economic Development, which creates corporate subsidiaries to manage long-term urban development (Bloom 2019: 46). In contrast, economic development in rural areas centered on the prison industry (Wacquant 2009: 68–71). New York State's neoliberal pro-growth model usurped Buffalo's control over its urban development.

The 2012 Buffalo Billion Plan epitomizes New York State's neoliberal growth model. The Buffalo Billion Plan, which is managed by the Erie County Development Corporation, refers to the state's billion dollar investment in the Buffalo area to develop an economic infrastructure around green energy, create a business startup competition, and construct a medical campus. In reality, the Buffalo Billion Plan contributed to regional uneven development and further entrenched racial segregation even as the city received positive media coverage from national media and development periodicals like *Site Selection*. \$750 million went directly to Solar City, which was acquired by Tesla. That dollar figure does not include the \$250 million state-constructed and owned factory Tesla uses to make solar panels and the \$200 million directed to the biotech firm Athenex, which filed for bankruptcy in 2021. The construction of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus reflects the Rust Belt development schemes around higher education and medicine, known as "Eds and Meds" prominent in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and other Rust Belt cities (see Mallach 2018: 49–74). State leaders and planners envisioned its economic investments spearheading outside investments into a biotech sector. Although the Eds and Meds model can revitalize local areas around the university, it tends to push out existing poor and Black populations (Baldwin 2021). The Buffalo Medical Campus invited real estate speculation into a nearby Black neighborhood. Black residents and other local stakeholders were not included in the state's decision making process and experienced institutional indifference when they suggested alternative forms of placemaking, such as Community Benefits Agreements and Community Land Trusts (Silverman, Lewis and Patterson 2014; Silverman et al. 2019).

Whereas New York State dictates Buffalo's urban regeneration efforts, the state of Ohio does not directly impact Cleveland's urban policy. Ohio reflects a neoliberal austerity urbanism model (Hackworth 2015; Rosenman and

Walker 2016) that disinvests in neighborhoods to remove unwanted populations and empowers elites to right size the city and prepare for future capital investments. The vast majority of Cleveland's budget comes from the general fund, which is funded by a 2.5 percent income tax on residents and nonresidents who work in Cleveland, user fees, debt, and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants that are diverted into Community Block Grants. In turn, Cleveland's private and nonprofit actors, including think tanks and academic institutions, such as Cleveland NOW, the Greater University Circle Initiative, and the formation of Cuyahoga County Land Re-utilization Corporation, play an important and outsized role in the city's urban regeneration efforts (McQuarrie 2010; Coppola 2014). This led to divergent approaches to urban development between downtown and neighborhood revitalization. On the one hand, starting in the 1980s Cleveland's business and real estate elites pursued a pro-growth approach that diverted funds from Ohio's industrial policy into downtown redevelopment (Armstrong 2021) and rebranded the city through a series of slogans, such as the 1944 "Best Location in the Nation" slogan giving way to 1978's "New Cleveland Campaign" and then 2005's "Believe in Cleveland" (Souther 2017). These large-scale projects include the Gateway District, Tower City, Public Square, Riverfront Development, and the expansion of the convention center. Elites focused on anchor institutions, including the Eds and Meds model, but also on the hospitality and tourism sector that would bring outsiders to Cleveland. This included Erieview, The Flats, Playhouse Square, the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame, and new professional sports stadiums (Austrian and Rosentraub 2002). The city used the downtown infrastructure to raise its national profile by hosting the Major League Baseball (MLB) and National Basketball Association (NBA) all-star games, the National Football League (NFL) draft, and the Republican National Convention. On the other hand, Ohio followed Michigan's austerity approach to manage urban shrinkage on the neighborhood level by promoting demolition as a way to create green infrastructure. Michigan passed the Urban Homesteading in Single-Family Public Housing Act in 1999. Ohio's adoption of Michigan's urban shrinkage policy follows how neoliberal policies are institutionalized through state and local governments (Hackworth 2019). While the idea behind the act was using tax incentives to create urban homesteads, which would repopulate abandoned areas and eliminate the need for public housing, the act has been derided by Safransky (2014) and Akers (2013) as a ruse to implement austerity over city budgets and endorse settler colonialism to demolish Black neighborhoods under the framework that they are abandoned neighborhoods. The homesteading policy targeted Cleveland's majority Black neighborhoods (Akers, Beal and Rousseau 2020).

The second contextual difference between Buffalo and Cleveland is the institutional arrangements between civil society and state and municipal officials that created a weak civil society in Buffalo and a strong civil society in Cleveland. Since 1980, urban governance—the political arrangement of organizations, discourses, practices, and institutional logics—has become more entrepreneurial, less bureaucratic, and emphasized partnerships between state and civil society actors (McQuarrie 2010; McQuarrie and Krumholz 2011). Nonprofits and think tanks are more entrenched in Cleveland's urban governance than in Buffalo due to the history of a neighborhood organization that led to the creation of Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and the flexibility of nonprofit groups to respond to community problems (Krumholz et al. 2006; McQuarrie 2010; Coppola 2014). Research shows that creating civic–municipal relationships leads to better long-term planning that can benefit marginalized actors (Zilberstein 2019; Christensen 2020), and how elite connections to places result in community growth coalitions (Safford 2009) and public–private partnerships (Neumann 2016) in Rust Belt cities. The strength of Cleveland's civil sector is also due to the legacy of neighborhood-based grassroots activities that formed in the 1960s in relation to urban renewal and White flight (Cunningham 2007). As McQuarrie (2010; also see McQuarrie and Krumholz 2011) showed, the rise of grassroots neighborhood activities occurred as the political consensus around pro-growth dissolved and was replaced with a system where neighborhood-based groups and politicians competed for limited resources. These political efforts were funneled through CDCs and the Community Development Industry (CDI) (Coppola 2019) which focused on housing and the built environment. Residents formed the garden tours in the context of a matrix of nonprofits, think tanks, and CDIs that focused on housing and the built environment.

In contrast, the institutional arrangements between civil society and state and municipal officials created a weak civil society in Buffalo. Grassroots actions were funneled through block clubs that addressed neighborhood problems or went through the Black or White ethnic Catholic churches. This led to an uneven place-based organizing between neighborhoods. Buffalo's Black Eastside residents maintained its tradition of organizing through social and civic organizations, including churches, block clubs, and civil rights organizations, and focused on the problems of housing and poverty (Taylor 1991; Williams 1999; Alfonso 2017). Neither worked with local elites. Rather, local elites worked with the state to direct capital investments into suburban areas or embraced large urban infrastructure projects that would serve as an antidote to deindustrialization and urban shrinkage (Dillaway 2006). The majority of these city-based projects never got past the planning and proposal stage, and Buffalo's urban core became a wasteland. Similar to Cleveland,

Buffalo residents organized their neighborhood-based activities through block clubs, but the state's strong role in urban development marginalized grassroots voices. Buffalo's Westside was historically a mixture of middle-class White bohemian, working-class Puerto Rican and Italian residents, and college housing. However, during the early 2000s parts of Westside began to lose their ethnic diversity, as capital and young adults moved into this section of the city (Goldman 2007; Adelman, Ozgen and Rabii 2019; Coley and Adelman 2021). From the 1980s onward, uneven development, White flight, and racial segregation isolated Buffalo's Eastside from the rest of the city and county. Although 14 percent of Erie County and 35 percent of Buffalo's population is African-American, 85 percent of African-Americans in metro Buffalo live in the racially segregated Eastside. Taylor, Jung and Dash (2021) found that from 1991 to 2021, Black Buffalo made no gains in annual income, and still endured an unemployment rate above 10 percent and a poverty rate of 35 percent.

The presence of a weak civil society in Buffalo turned out to be an unanticipated strength for experimenting with alternative urbanism grassroots activities while Cleveland's strong civil society turned out to be a hindrance. The Buffalo garden tour originated in a Westside block club. Seligman argues that residents form block clubs to focus on manageable issues to improve their immediate surroundings, and beautification efforts are a way to inspire neighbors to invest their time and energy into the block or neighborhood (Seligman 2016: 119–20). As the garden tour grew in popularity and expanded across the Westside and residents formed new organizations, volunteers continued to act civically and organize their efforts around the symbolic purity scene style. A legacy feature of its block club origins was how the Buffalo Garden tour worked with block clubs to create clusters of gardens on city blocks so that visitors could walk the city. By 2012, organizers estimated 45,000 to 55,000 visitors attended the city based garden tour, a number that increased to about 70,000 in 2022. A 2011 study showed that visitors came from Canada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Florida, and other parts of New York State, and spent an average of \$67.82 per person (Benfield 2013). Based on these estimates, the revenue generated by the garden tour grew from \$3 to \$3.7 million to \$4 to 4.7 million in 2022. The success of the Buffalo garden tour led to the formation of a regional garden tour organization, which they named the National Garden Festival, that coordinated a five-week event featuring thirteen different local garden tours across Erie County, in 2010. Data reported by the National Buffalo Garden Festival (2010) indicated that 24 percent of their attendees came from outside the region, representing 36 states. In 2015, the organization changed its name to Gardens Buffalo Niagara. By 2019, there were fifteen garden tours featuring over 1000 private gardens across Erie County, including 20 homes on the inaugural

Eastside garden tour. The expansion of the garden tours into the Eastside created an opportunity for Black residents to challenge the cultural dispossession of Black people from the new place reputation.

In contrast, Cleveland formed their garden tour outside of the block club structure and worked under the CDC, which took the Cleveland garden tour and spread it throughout the city. While the Buffalo garden tour emphasizes creating clusters of private house gardens in neighborhoods to make it walkable, the geographic dispersion of Cleveland's garden tour meant you had to drive it. Similarly, the CDC interfered with community building because garden tour organizers were working through them instead of letting neighbors do the community building work. Unlike the Buffalo garden tour, the Cleveland garden tour featured home, community, and civic gardens from around the city. Garden tour organizers wanted a city-wide tour to address the spatial boundary between Cleveland's East and Westside. Cleveland's Eastside is predominantly Black while its Westside is a mixture of White, Black, and Hispanic residents. They designed a city-wide tour that had an equal number of East and Westside neighborhoods. Despite the availability of resources, the Cleveland garden tour could not sustain itself as a city-wide tour. The initial garden tour that featured over 100 private gardens, 24 urban farms, and 155 community gardens across the city quickly dissolved. In 2014, the garden tour shifted its focus to highlight specific neighborhoods. Although the size of the tour and the number of participating neighborhoods has been uneven, ranging from five neighborhoods in 2014 to ten in 2022, the garden tour continued to emphasize an equal number of Eastside and Westside neighborhoods. The popularity of the garden tour influenced two residents in South Euclid, an Eastern suburb of Cleveland, to form a garden tour in 2016. The Cleveland garden tour is not as established or well-known as the Buffalo garden tour and attracts visitors primarily from the greater Cleveland area.

the Symbolic Purity Scene Style and the Buffalo Garden Tours

Buffalo area organizers and residents mobilized through the symbolic purity scene style to replace the racialized stigmas of urban blight with a racialized image of middle-class Whiteness. It was the cultural basis to determine who and what was included in the place's reputation and signaled a message that the city was a safe place to live, visit, and invest in. When White city residents spoke of bringing in folks to the city, they meant other Whites coming to the city to see the garden tours in the White neighborhoods. One respondent, a White male in his 60s and a lifelong city resident, reflected on how the garden tour changed Buffalo's image:

I'm not sure what the impact is now, but I think that when things were starting with the Garden Walk, this is the Buffalo Walk, I think it did help out the image of the city. I think the people that came were from the suburbs, the local suburbs. I think many of them were just taken by the city, and maybe there are even some white people here! As opposed to what they see on the news. So, I think it's had a big influence on that.

Residents had a mental map that associated the city with Black and the suburbs with White, despite Whites comprising 47 percent of the city's population. This was evident in other respondents too. A leading organizer of the Buffalo garden tour noted how White people seeing and experiencing the garden tour helped to deracialize the urban stigma around the threat of violence: "The more you get people, especially white suburban people, into these neighborhoods, to say, ahh, the neighborhoods aren't that scary, oh, they're nice people." These two respondents highlight how residents discursively constructed middle-class Whiteness to challenge the city's reputation as Black and poor. The garden tours functioned as sign vehicles communicating this message to outsiders visiting the city.

Respondents in my sample often used the terms beautification and urban revitalization to explain why they got involved with gardening and garden tourism. However, within a symbolic purity scene style, beautification meant changing the esthetic of a city block and erasing the racialized meanings embedded in urban blight as they rehabbed their communities. One respondent, a male in his 50s, who, along with his wife, moved to the Westside in the mid-2000s, explained to me that despite no prior interest in gardening, he joined the garden tour because of how he saw it impacting his block:

So usually what happens then is the front of the house starts to get, they may not be fixed up to the level of an exhibition of the garden walk, but they get cleaned up, fixed up, weeded, and kind of landscaped better. And that creates a sort of energy that kind of spreads outside the front, and the streetscape, rather than just in backyards. So that's important I think too in terms of urban revitalization.

This respondent was typical of those in my sample who understood gardening and garden tourism as a means to do their part to revitalize the city. However, he also noted the importance of bringing White outsiders to deracialize the city's reputation:

I think those from the suburbs thought it was a warzone or something haha. So that's been encouraging to me to get people interested in seeing the city, and seeing urban life, and seeing it's not in total decay and all that kind of jazz. To get that energy going. That's the main thrust of why I got on.

This particular respondent expressed the new cultural feel of the city as a new energy, which I found captured a new sense of collective optimism and hope that Buffalo could emerge from its decades-long struggle with urban shrinkage. The new cultural feel illustrates how the White racial imagery operates within a symbolic purity scene style. Urban revitalization means rejecting racial stereotypes of the city by emphasizing the physical presence of Whites and idealizing the cultural feel of the White middle class. In effect, it was swapping out an image of the city anchored in racial stereotypes with a form of middle-class Whiteness that other Whites could identify with.

Remaking the Region's Reputation: Connecting the City and Suburban Garden Tours

Organizers worked through the symbolic purity scene style to shape the ongoing coordination and expansion of the city-based garden tour into a regional cultural tourism event. This exemplifies how institutional innovation occurs at the local and regional scale and how coordinating social action involves the construction of mutual interest between elites, organizers, and residents. The White spatial imagery embedded in the symbolic purity scene style was a precondition for city and suburban Whites to construct a mutual interest. In Buffalo, the place-based racial and class differences mattered more than the difference between a city and a suburban neighborhood. Garden tourism became a medium for organizers from the city and suburbs to realize that they shared an interest in debunking the urban stigma that affected the entire region. The meanings of middle-class Whiteness embedded in the symbolic purity scene helped facilitate the coordination of regional garden tours between majority White urban and suburban places, however, it also served as a weakness because it excludes places that do not reflect the idealized White middle-class community. I will address the limits of the symbolic purity scene style in the next section. For now, I will focus on how organizers coordinated relationships between the garden tour and municipal, private, and nonprofit organizations.

The expansion of the garden tour from its original city block was a slow and meticulous process. The original garden tour organization sprouted from a block club. They focused exclusively on the Westside. They worked with individuals who wanted to show their homes on the tour. If these individual gardeners belonged to a block club, then they would use the block club to create a cluster of gardens for the tour. They declined to work with other groups and organizations, including the city. The willingness of the garden tour organizers to work with other municipal and civic organizations changed as they constructed mutual interests through the symbolic purity scene style. For example, the Westside garden tour refused to work with

the city because they wanted to preserve their autonomy and remain politically neutral. This was a purposeful decision. As an organizational leader explained to me in a 2010 interview:

Our relationships are mainly with the gardeners in the area. We have successfully avoided any politicians to date. We have nothing to do with the city of Buffalo, they provide us with no funds.... We have called the city ahead of time, just to say that Garden Walk is coming up, let's not schedule heavy trash pickup that day. We want the city to look good. And even though we have nothing to do with the city, it seems like the week before they are out with the street cleaners.

When I asked him why they choose to work independently, he said that "it comes down to wherewithal," which in this case meant the ability to take on additional duties to speak to and on behalf of the city in any official capacity. However, they changed their go-it-alone approach after a change of leadership in the regional Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). The change of leadership is notable because the new CVB leader shared the same symbolic purity scene style and wanted to use the resources of the CVB to amplify the garden tour's cultural work in presenting a new place reputation for the region. The interests of the Westside garden tour to expand its regional footprint aligned with the CVB, which had the resources to create a regional garden tour.

During this point of transition, I attended a meeting hosted by the Westside garden tour. It was in November, after the gardening season ended. They brought in a consultant to help them rethink their purpose and mission statement. There was a small group that wanted the organization to remain like a block club and focus on beautifying the block. I was seated at a table of White-collar professionals. We threw around ideas on the various ways the tour could acquire revenue, especially through corporate sponsorships. The majority of folks there wanted to expand the garden tour across the region because they believed the garden tour had a positive effect on the region. The compromise was to create a new organization, The National Garden Festival that focused on cultural tourism and would coordinate all regional garden tours and let the Westside tour continue to operate independently as a voluntary organization in the spirit of a block club. The formation of the National Garden Festival allowed organizers to promote garden tourism without sacrificing the local tours' focus on rehabilitating their communities. The reason was, as the organizer stated, "We were born as a block club, and we still had a lot of club kind of people in it. Just neighbors trying to do good." An organizer who attended the meeting and eventually left the Westside tour to work with the regional garden tour explained the new focus:

I tell them that we are not a gardening group. We are a tourism group. I think of us as one of the cultural organizations in the area rather than as one of the gardening groups, like, The Massachusetts Avenue project, or Buffalo Niagara River Keepers, or Grassroots Gardens. We never, none of us on our board or committees, have ever had to shovel or plant a plant together. We facilitate sharing gardens now. We defined our mission as that we like to share our gardens with the world. It is definitely a different organization, a little bit more on the cultural side than it is a garden group.

Although the creation of a regional organization provided the bureaucratic solution to coordinate all the garden tours into a single cultural tourism event, the symbolic purity scene style ensured that leaders and volunteers for each tour agreed on the conceptual aspects of the tour.

The relationship between the garden tourism groups and the CVB ended once the CVB no longer acted civically. While the CVB still shared the same scene style, their actions were now characterized as non-civic actions. The non-civic actions meant forming financial and contractual relationships with the National Garden Festival. The issue that triggered the change from civic to non-civic actions was that hosting and planning the garden tours cost money. Although the CVB was fine promoting the garden tours, they hired a different director who no longer wanted to fund them. As the story was told to me, "The funding was being outpaced by the spending because we had to print this booklet for open gardens and we had to print flyers we had to promote things and spend money on ads, and then we had to pay the executive director a little bit." Although this relationship ended, the National Garden Festival proceeded to become an independent 501 3c non-profit group. They coordinated civic actions with other cultural institutions interested in improving Buffalo's place reputation, such as art galleries and the botanical gardens, as well as local foundations, banks, and businesses. By focusing on civic actions rather than civil society as a sector, we can understand how the symbolic purity scene style allowed for the ongoing collective coordination of people working for their idea of the common good.

Settler Colonialism and Black Claims for Reputational Inclusion

The urban regeneration that was taking place on Buffalo's Westside prompted other neighborhoods and communities around Buffalo to experiment with garden tours and the symbolic purity scene style. For them, a garden tour was a means to rehabilitate their communities and be part of what they perceived as Buffalo's emerging new place reputation. White residents in mixed-class and mixed-race neighborhoods that sat on the periphery of Buffalo's West and Eastside used the symbolic scene style differently than Black residents in Buffalo's segregated Eastside. In marginalized White communities, the

garden tours were emblematic of how the White spatial imagery and settler colonialism are embedded in the symbolic purity scene style. Specifically, we can see how residents in peripheral White places associated garden tourism with reclaiming abandoned spaces from slumlords, student housing, and addressing physical blight. For example, I spoke with a woman who lived in a periphery neighborhood and was active in her local garden tour:

The garden walk started basically 10 years ago. Our area was changing and going downhill. Many of the students were living out of the [University at Buffalo] North Campus, and there was a deterioration in all the neighborhoods surrounding the University South Campus.

Q: How are they deteriorating? Can you describe it a little bit?

There were many great absentee landlords. They were taking advantage of the system. There were more students living in [each of the] houses. There was very little police involvement and the situation was worsening. The economy was changing and the people were leaving the city, so it was a combination of many, many things where people were abandoning this community. Drugs, that type of thing.

Rather than work through the block club to connect with their council person, residents formed a garden tour to rehabilitate their community in hopes of changing the neighborhood's reputation. Garden tourism conjured the White spatial imagery that contrasted with the racialized urban blight. It was a pretext to define who was welcomed and who should be displaced.

Other sympathetic Whites used urban gardening as a form of alternative urbanism to highlight how blighted places still had value and were worth saving. It was an attempt to rehabilitate communities without causing displacement. For example, a White male in his late 50s, who lived in a periphery White neighborhood and was involved with a gardening group that worked on the Eastside, discussed how gardening was a way to rehabilitate the stigmatized community:

I think the community gets a real self-satisfaction out of it. Like I said, it's literally depressing to go down some streets on the Eastside. When you get to the next block and see one house gardened, or two houses gardened, it just brightens the block and makes it seem less dismal than it is. We have seen a number of blocks, and people will tell the story of how they started gardening at their house and the neighbors started after that, so it's good that it kind of feeds on itself at certain times.

For him, urban gardening created value in "dismal places" and was a means to get neighbors involved in cleaning up blight. Another organizer from the

Westside garden tour helped Black Eastside residents start a tour in a manner that would help Eastside residents reclaim their spaces. Some Eastside residents asked to be on a garden tour as early as 2009. As one organizational leader recounted in a 2010 interview, “We’ve had many requests, and we sent them out this package of information, and nothing ever happened. I think what they need is a leader over there, to either start their own tour or bring in volunteers so that we can help them and become even bigger.” Leaders on the Eastside did step up in 2018 and organized a tour. In a follow-up interview, I asked this same respondent about how they helped with the Eastside tour. He explained that they gave the Eastside information on how to plan the tour and let them use the Westside tour’s 501c3 status and insurance, and framed urban blight against the symbolic purity of greening spaces: “There is poverty over there. A majority of it needs to be cleaned up. There are areas that are beautiful. There is some great architecture.” The Eastside residents chose to create their independent tour that would be part of the National Garden Festival like the other city-based and suburban garden tours. The tour grew from 20 gardens in 2019 to 69 in 2022.

Black Eastside residents organized through a symbolic purity scene style but downplayed the language of settler colonialism for a language of reputational inclusion. Although Black residents, especially in majority Black city neighborhoods, shared the same interests in deracializing the urban stigmas and revitalizing their communities, they did not share the same desire to center a new place reputation on middle-class Whiteness. Rather, the participants in my study used the garden tours to pit a normative image of the good Black neighborhood against the racial stigmas that mark segregated places. They used garden tours to create new meaning in Black places despite racist political structures of dispossession (Summers 2019). In this sense, the Eastside garden tours are an example of what Taylor (2020: 19) characterizes as a disruption to White spatial exclusivity and revitalizing existing Black spaces by pursuing nonmarket-based approaches centered on people, building community, and acquiring political power through civic inclusion. While the garden tours were designed to change an outsider’s impression of a place, they also changed how residents experienced their neighborhoods. After the tour, I interviewed a retired Black woman who placed her home on the tour. I asked her what she thought about the tour, and her response was:

I felt safe during the event. I let people into my backyard. Nothing was stolen. I’ve been in the neighborhood for a while. There are still couples with children that move in. But the Central Park Plaza neighborhood is still a dangerous place.

This resident illustrates how the symbolic purity scene style helps residents reject the stigma and see value in their neighborhoods. While she noted the

real existing dangers of where she lived, however, she reframed her neighborhood as a good Black neighborhood by noting that she felt safe and that Black families continued to move there. The garden tour and symbolic purity scene style created the conditions for Black residents to reimagine Black spaces as they just resist cultural displacement and dispossession.

The good Black neighborhood emphasized the same attributes of a stable middle-class community embedded in the symbolic purity scene style, just without the emphasis on it being a middle-class White neighborhood. For example, another Eastside resident who placed her house on the garden tour stated:

I think it's a good thing to get people to come to the Eastside, quote-unquote, Eastside, and see that it is not the place that it is depicted all the time in the news as being not a good place to go. It's still really nice, pretty, and attractive and people here care just as much about their houses as any other part of the city.

Urban stigmas are amplified in racially segregated neighborhoods, especially where the only information or knowledge Whites have about a place is through the media. The garden tours were a way to counter negative media images by providing a positive experience of a good Black neighborhood. As one long-term resident of the Eastside noted, she was surprised at who visited the tour:

I thought it would be more people from the Eastside or nearby little neighborhoods, but there were a lot of people from the suburbs too. People who are into gardening are like a different type or breed of people. And they're usually very nice and very friendly.

Q: You were surprised that people came from Olcott and Lockport? Do you think this is the first time they've ventured to the Eastside?

I think a lot of them, yes.

Q: Their impressions were 'This is not what I saw on TV'?

Yeah, pretty much. I mean, some people I talked to who went down into the Fruit Belt [a majority Black neighborhood] were amazed at the gardens down there. I guess there was a gentleman who had two plots of vegetables that were phenomenal. They were totally surprised. I don't think you expect that here. You expect to see burned down buildings, rundown buildings, not kept up neighborhoods. And that's not the case. The Eastside gets a bad rep.

Similar to the White residents on the Westside, Eastside residents used the garden tours to connect with others across the region. Although the garden

tour only provides a moment where a connection like this can be made, it was nevertheless a moment where the racialized stigma was suspended and perhaps opened up a space for a new form of inclusion for Black Buffalonians.

The Diversity Scene Style and the Cleveland Garden Tours

After reading about the Buffalo garden tour in the local paper, a small group of Cleveland residents made the three-hour drive down the I-90 highway to see it for themselves. For the respondents in my sample, the allure of the Buffalo Garden Tour was how it changed Buffalo's place reputation to them. This is unsurprising since the Buffalo garden tour created an isomorphic relationship between garden tourism, community building, and place reputational remaking. The organizer who helped arrange the first tour, a White woman in her late 50s who immigrated to Cleveland in the 1970s, reflected on how visiting Buffalo's garden tour helped her view Cleveland in terms outside of its urban stigma:

Cleveland has such a dismal reputation. People just think Cleveland is, you know, really a loser place, a rust belt, you know, it's the butt of many jokes. So that was one of the things, just thinking about how my perception of Buffalo [was] transformed by being there. I know Cleveland has just beautiful areas. It's a wonderful city to live in. And the people who live here really love it.

Another one of the residents, a gay man in his 50s who helped start the Cleveland garden tour said this about the impact the Buffalo garden tour had on them,

A couple of people said if Buffalo can do it dammit Cleveland can do it! We benchmarked off the Buffalo committee a lot. Our hope and goal are, hey folks, things really aren't as bad as it seems in the Rustbelt ... and we're trying to do Garden Walk Cleveland as a means of bringing it to the attention of sometimes just the people in their own backyard because it only happens in the city limits of Cleveland.

After they returned home, they contacted an organizer of the Buffalo garden tour, who shared their materials and templates and gave them advice on how to organize a garden tour in Cleveland.

Although Cleveland residents adopted Buffalo's organizational model to create a garden tour in hopes of achieving similar results, they worked together through a diversity scene style rather than a symbolic purity scene

style. The woman I quoted above explained to me that they had three goals when they formed the Cleveland garden tour: “To build community, encourage beautification in the city, and to change the perception of Cleveland. The Perception of the people within the city, everybody’s perception of Cleveland. Those were our three goals.” While the mission statement was broad enough to deploy any type of scene style, the reason why the Cleveland residents constructed and then worked through a diversity scene style was that the legacy of Cleveland’s place-based racial histories created a shared subjectivity among White and Black organizers about the impact of racial segregation on the region. They viewed the existing racial divisions as something holding back Cleveland from attracting capital investment in a world of global cosmopolitan cities. Even in racially integrated Shaker Heights, the social lives of Black adults do not overlap with White adults (Grigsby 2021). Breaking from the history of politicians and business boosters focusing on generic slogans and targeting Black neighborhoods for demolition, they viewed Cleveland’s past racial, ethnic, and economic diversity as something to showcase rather than hide. She explained how a city-wide garden tour was necessary to showcase Cleveland’s diversity:

Geographically it’s different from Buffalo. Buffalo’s garden walk is kind of on the Westside. It’s more continuous. In Cleveland, right from the beginning, we always wanted to have an equal number of Eastside and Westside neighborhoods. And an equal number of African Americans and predominantly white. Which meant we had to be very spread out.

Whereas the main Buffalo garden tour was overwhelmingly located on the city’s Westside and centered on the image of its middle-class White residents, the Cleveland garden tour included Black and White neighborhoods across the city, which prevented any one racial or class group from dominating the representation of the tour. By consciously working through a diversity scene style, Cleveland sought to deracialize urban stigmas by centering an image of a diverse and unified metropolitan region.

The Cleveland garden tour used the diversity scene style to build civic relationships across Cleveland’s historically racially segregated neighborhoods. Racism plagued mid-twentieth century urban development that focused on downtown development, while simultaneously disinvesting in neighborhoods, especially Black neighborhoods that sit adjacent to the central business district. As an organizer and I were discussing what she meant by community building, the issue of racial segregation came up:

The building [of] community for instance. Cleveland is a very divided city. Racially it’s really divided. There’s the Eastside and Westside. People kind

of joke about getting a passport to go across the [Cuyahoga] River, but really, there are people who never cross the river or who hardly ever cross the river. One of our goals was to get white people to go to Black neighborhoods and get Black people to go to white neighborhoods and suburbanites to come into the city.

As her statement indicates, she was aware of the long-term impact of residential segregation and the race-based territorial stigma on Cleveland. Organizing the tours around the diversity scene style was a way to build community ties between Black and White neighborhoods. This differed from how Buffalo used a symbolic purity scene style that sought to deracialize its current reputation by emphasizing middle-class Whiteness. The Cleveland organizers hoped the tour would change the internal perceptions of Cuyahoga County that read East and West Cleveland through a lens of divisive racial categories.

Coordinating the Cleveland Garden Tour

The Cleveland organizers worked through the diversity scene style to coordinate the relationships between the garden tour and municipal, private, and nonprofit organizations that make up Cleveland's influential CDI. In addition to geographic differences between Buffalo and Cleveland—Cleveland is 82.47 square miles while Buffalo is 52.51—that posed a logistic challenge to the Cleveland organizers, they also had to create the diverse garden tour they wanted to represent the city while navigating the political landscape between often competing neighborhoods. This meant organizing through a diversity scene style to suppress local neighborhood-level problems and identities. This suppression of local differences is necessary to project a unitary identity, even if that unitary identity is an expression of difference.

The power of Cleveland's CDI over urban development required the garden tour to work with the CDI's techno-environmental green initiatives. The garden tour fits with the CDI's green approach to reusing abandoned land. While this gave the Cleveland garden tour access to resources that were not readily available to the Buffalo garden tour, the involvement of the CDI impeded the community building that occurs between neighbors. As one organizer explained to me, "Cleveland has a very, very rich group of people, not rich, wealthy. Just amazing people who are absolutely invested in the city. Most people are very much into the environment [and] community." In their first year, the Cleveland Garden tour raised \$14,000 from six different sponsors. In contrast to the Buffalo garden tour, which initially had limited help from municipal actors and civic organizations and grew over time from a single city block into a regional event, Cleveland's garden tour was a city-wide tour from the outset.

Despite the presence of the CDI, we can still identify how the Cleveland garden tour exhibited agency and used the diversity scene style to control the representation of the gardens. Similar to Buffalo, this arrangement shows how coordinating social action involves the construction of mutual interest between elites, organizers, and residents.

The gardeners got creative within the CDI's urban policy initiatives. For example, one important project was "Reimagining a More Sustainable Cleveland," which ran from 2008 to 2014. Reimagining Cleveland was the brainchild of the nonprofit Neighborhood Progress Inc. (now called Cleveland Neighborhood Progress) which worked with the CDCs to coordinate residents to creatively reuse vacant land. Reimagining Cleveland focused on reusing and redeveloping about 3300 acres of vacant land in the city of Cleveland and its inner-ring suburbs. The City of Cleveland Land Bank owned about 8,000 of the 20,000 vacant lots. Reimagining Cleveland received funding from the US Department of HUD and the US Environmental Protection Agency. It printed an *Re-Imagining Cleveland: Ideas to Action Resource Book* (2011) that explained the cost and process of acquiring vacant land and turning it into a useful community asset. An organizer simplified the program for me: "If the house next door to you is pulled down you can buy that land for a dollar, and Reimagining Cleveland will give you \$3000 to establish raised beds or whatever." Cleveland garden tour organizers worked with Reimagining Cleveland to connect with locals who used Reimagining Cleveland funds to build gardens, urban farms, and even an urban vineyard. The urban vineyard was located in Hough. It was appropriately named "Chateau Hough." Chateau Hough was not yet producing grapes ready for wine production when I initially visited the vineyard. It can take a minimum of three years before grapes are ready to be harvested. They began selling wine in 2018. Echoing the diversity scene style, Chateau Hough defined their mission as "Hough is poised to fulfill the dream of recreating a vibrant mixed-income and mixed-race community that fits the desires and needs of a wide variety of families seeking an urban living experience" (Chateau Hough 2018). This type of collaboration gave the Cleveland garden tour unique sites that showed the city in a different light and generated a new place reputation for the city through cultural tourism.

Segregation and the Limits of the Diversity Scene Style

Despite their commitment to building a garden tour that would highlight Cleveland's racial diversity, the history of racial segregation shaped the different interests between White and Black neighborhoods for wanting to be on the garden tour. Whereas Buffalo's use of the symbolic purity scene

style connected the garden tour with Black neighborhoods that wanted to deracialize urban stigmas without centering the city's reputation on a new form of Whiteness, Cleveland's use of the diversity scene style to ensure equal representation conflicted with why residents wanted to be on the tour and why organizers wanted them to be on the garden tour. For example, the organizers contacted a community garden in the Hough neighborhood and asked them to be on the tour. Cleveland's Black neighborhoods like Hough have shrunk at a faster rate than White neighborhoods due to demolition, housing vacancies, and a decline in household size (Price-Spratlen and Guest 2002). The Hough neighborhood is important in Cleveland's history because of the 1966 riot. The riots occurred at a time of racial and economic transition in the neighborhood and city. Since then, Hough has symbolized racism, urban violence, capital disinvestment, and poverty. A Hough resident, a retired Black woman who lived in the house she grew up in and volunteered at the community garden, explained to me why she joined the garden tour:

Showing Hough because we do have somewhat of a negative connotation behind the Hough neighborhood. Riots and other negative things are thought of, but especially for the inner city. This was a way of showing our pride, and our commitment to our community. That we weren't left behind somewhere in the dark ages. And that there were many of us that, you know, we're happy where we live. We're proud of where we live. We feel secure where we live. We weren't running out of the neighborhood. We weren't abandoning it, as much with an economy being about to sustain where we live.

Hough residents wanted to be on the Garden Tour in hopes of debunking anti-Black stereotypes, but also as a means of Black placemaking that would create Black visibility, social and community spaces, and some hope for the residents of Hough. She separated the racist impacts of deindustrialization from the African-American community. It was the last sentence, about being able to sustain where she lived, where we see how the community garden's participation in the tour was as much about changing how Hough residents viewed Hough as it was about how White outsiders viewed Hough. In contrast, the White Cleveland garden tour organizers wanted Black neighborhoods represented on the tour because they wanted to change the reputation of Black neighborhoods to Whites. This meant getting Whites to physically visit Black neighborhoods on the Eastside. A White woman who lived on Cleveland's Westside reflected on her experiences with Hough:

I go by Hough and I go through Hough and Hough is known for, you know, the late 60s, the riots. And you think, this neighborhood, if you drive through the

main streets, is blighted and you don't want to be anywhere. But then you go on the garden tour and it's amazing, you have little places and people taking care of the place and beautifying things, and that makes it, so you notice all of that. You've changed your idea of what, this is not just what you thought it was. There's more to this, there are different things, it's a neighborhood.

My field notes show how the Garden Tour staged Hough an event to showcase the diversity of the tour and city. However, the event used diversity to separate and highlight nonthreatening aspects of Blackness that reflected the garden tour's goal from the more dangerous association of Blackness connected to poverty and hypersegregated spaces (Summers 2019). Local media covered the event. Students from a local university volunteered by handing out maps and other informational material on community gardens. Despite the positive media attention, the aftermath of the housing crisis surrounded the community garden. As I walked around the neighborhood, it was impossible to miss the abandoned houses, with the small White posters advertising new vinyl replacement windows plastered on the particle board covering up the existing windows, or what was left of them, sitting next to empty lots, just as it was impossible to find anyone else walking around the neighborhood. The willingness of local Whites to come into Hough was limited to the immediate area around the community garden.

Conclusion

There has not been a universal response to urban shrinkage in the Rust Belt. While some cities opted to manage urban shrinkage by demolishing Black neighborhoods to protect the value of their housing markets, the garden tours represent a case study where grassroots actors attempt to rehab their communities and change the city's reputation to make the Rust Belt attractive to outsiders looking for a place to live and invest capital. Theoretically, we can expect a city's or region's reputation to attract or repel capital investment whether states and the federal government invest in a region or not. This indicates the limits that supply-side investments can make toward urban regeneration. In line with the research on civic action, scene styles, and reputational remaking, I showed how grassroots actors in Buffalo and Cleveland used garden tourism to try and rehab communities and change each city's reputation. Garden tourism was an accessible means for residents to signal a new reputation to insiders and outsiders. Reputational remaking is a collective effort between actors in the civil, political, and economic spheres. Actors mobilized through scene styles to coordinate collective action, construct mutual interests, and create normative images of the idealized resident. Buffalo residents used a symbolic purity scene style because they wanted

to remove the Rust Belt stigma they perceived as acting as a barrier to economic investment and population growth. In contrast, Cleveland residents used a diversity scene style as a means to overcome past racial and ethnic divisions they perceived as damaging Cleveland's reputation. Thus, cultural variables like a place's reputation matter in how and what kind of Rust Belt city will emerge from the era of urban shrinkage.

Grassroots actors work within the confines of state-level urban policy and the history of local political action. New York State's strong presence in Buffalo's urban development signaled to outsiders that the state still invested in the declining region of Western New York. New York State's neoliberal pro-growth urban policy led to state investments into Buffalo only after a decade of grassroots efforts to rehab neighborhoods and make state investment seem worthwhile. The relative absence of local elites involved in Buffalo inadvertently left the task of rehabbing communities and the city's reputation to residents. Not surprisingly, the grassroots reputational remaking efforts were led by White residents in high socioeconomic neighborhoods with the necessary forms of cultural and social capital to create and then expand the garden tour across the region. In contrast, Ohio embraced the same austerity measures pioneered in Michigan that funded neighborhood demolition rather than rehabilitation. Even though the cities of Buffalo and Cleveland have limited influence over urban development, it is Cleveland's CDI rather than the state of Ohio that is the main influential actor in urban development. Because the CDI are civil society actors, grassroots groups work through them to establish any kind of cultural event. However, Cleveland residents used garden tourism to go against elites that wrote off Cleveland's neighborhood and community to the inevitability of urban shrinkage. They hoped to rehabilitate local neighborhoods, shine a spotlight on Black neighborhoods targeted for demolition, and change how outsiders perceive Cleveland. Even though residents faced the paradox of being supported and limited by local elites, they still created something new for Cleveland and showed residents that alternative forms of urbanism are possible.

The different ways that ordinary White and Black citizens engage in place-making activities illustrate how the dialectic relationship between structure and agency is concretized through how actors construct and implement scene styles and organize urban regeneration activities. In line with the research on racial capitalism and settler colonialism, I showed how racial structures continue to impact revitalization efforts and alternative urbanisms. The Rust Belt's urban and economic restructuring was a political act that created a racialized urban stigma and then drew from that stigma to justify subsequent capital disinvestment. The White spatial imagery haunts Rust Belt cities because the discursive fields that residents draw from to construct

scene styles and civic actions reside in racialized spaces. Even when White residents made conscious efforts to challenge the racial stigma, images of middle-class Whiteness were still embedded into the scene styles they constructed. Consistent with research on how discourses of diversity embrace Blackness while erasing Black people from urban regeneration efforts, White place-making activities struggle to simultaneously address racist constructs and provide meaningful forms of inclusion. Because blight and abandonment are so embedded with anti-Black meanings, efforts to symbolically or materially remove urban blight is synonymous with removing Blackness. However, actors do exhibit agency as they adopt, experiment, and then adapt a scene style to fit their objectives. White organizers in Cleveland adopted the Buffalo garden tour's model but mobilized through a diversity scene style because it addressed Cleveland's stigma. Black residents in Buffalo and Cleveland adapted the dominant scene styles to construct discourses of the good black neighborhood to debunk racist urban stigmas and make Black communities visible to stop cultural displacement. In turn, they created openings to rethink and reimagine garden tourism's reputational remaking potential.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article

ORCID iD

Randolph Hohle  <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0157-3510>

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

References

- Adelman, Robert, Aysegul Balta Ozgen, and Watoii Rabii. 2019. "Buffalo's West Side Story: Migration, Gentrification, and Neighborhood Change." *City and Community* 18 (3): 770–91. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12412>.
- Akers, Joshua. 2013. "Making Markets: Think Tank Legislation and Private Property in Detroit." *Urban Geography* 34 (8): 1070–95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2013.814272>.

- Akers, Joshua, Vincent Beal, and Max Rousseau. 2020. "Redefining the City and Demolishing the Rest: The Techno-Green Fix in Post-Crash Cleveland, Ohio." *Nature and Space* 3 (1): 207–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848619854371>.
- Alexander, Jeffery C. 2006. *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alfonso, Rowena Ianthe. 2017. "Crucial to the Survival of Black People: Local People, Black Power, and the Community Organizations in Buffalo, New York, 1966–1968." *Journal of Urban History* 43 (1): 140–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144215583984>.
- Armstrong, Ben. 2021. "Industrial Policy and Local Economic Transformation: Evidence from the US Rust Belt." *Economic Development Quarterly* 35 (3): 181–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08912424211022822>.
- Austrian, Ziona, and Mark Rosentraub. 2002. "Cities, Sports, and Economic Change: A Retrospective Assessment." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24 (5): 549–63. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9906.00137>.
- Baldwin, Davarian. 2021. *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower: How Universities are Plundering Our Cities*. New York: Bold Type Books.
- Bell, Fraser. 2016. "Looking Beyond Place Branding: The Emergence of Place Reputation." *Journal of Place Management and Development* 9 (3): 247–54. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-08-2016-0055>.
- Benfield, Richard. 2013. *Garden Tourism*. Oxfordshire and Boston: CABI.
- Benson, Michaela, and Emma Jackson. 2012. "Place-Making and Place Maintenance: Performativity, Place, and Belonging among the Middle Classes." *Sociology* 47 (4): 793–809. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038512454350>.
- Bledsoe, Adam, Tyler McCreary, and Willie Wright. 2022. "Theorizing Diverse Economies in the Context of Racial Capitalism." *Geoforum; Journal of Physical, Human, and Regional Geosciences* 132: 281–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775818805102>.
- Bledsoe, Adam, and Willie Wright. 2019. "The Anti-Blackness of Global Capital." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 37 (1): 8–26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2019.07.004>.
- Blok, Anders, Amanda K. Juvik, Anna Helene Kvist Møller, Skjold Raaschou-Pedersen, and Jakob Laage-Thomsen. 2022. "The Place of Greening: Comparing Civic Engagement Scenes of Urban Natures across Danish Cities." *City & Community* 21 (2): 91–112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15356841211073589>.
- Bloom, Nicholas Dagen. 2019. *How States Shaped Postwar America: State Government and Urban Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Borzyskowski, Jacek, and Mirosław Marczak. 2015. "Education Section as a Stakeholder of Destination Management Organizations: Cooperation of Local DMOs with Educational Institutions." *European Review* 23 (4): 527–39. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798715000228>.
- Brown-Saracino, Japonica, and Jeffrey Nathaniel Parker. 2017. "“What is up with My Sisters? Where are You?” The Origins and Consequences of Lesbian-Friendly Place Reputations for LBQ Migrants." *Sexualities* 20 (7): 835–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716658407>.

- Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2015. *Volunteering in the United States*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Labor. URL located at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/volun.pdf>
- Chateau Hough. 2018. "About Us". URL located at <https://www.chateauhough.com/aboutus.html>
- Christensen, Anette Gravgaard. 2020. "Composing Urban Green Collaboration: Exploring Coordination in Long-Term Civic-Municipal Greenspace Planning." *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 7 (4): 477–501. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23254823.2020.1772843>.
- Cialdella, Robert Stanhope. 2020. *Motor City Green: A Century of Landscapes and Environmentalism in Detroit*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Coley, J., and Robert Adelman. 2021. "Gentrification in the "City of Good Neighbors": Race, Class, and Neighborhoods in Buffalo." *Sociological Inquiry* 91 (4): 824–48. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soin.12387>.
- Coppola, Alessandro. 2014. "A Cleveland Model? Experiments in Alternative Urbanism in the Rust Belt." *Metropolises* 15: 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.4000/metropolises.4950>.
- Coppola, Alessandro. 2019. "Projects of Becoming in a Right Sizing Shrinking City." *Urban Geography* 40 (2): 237–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2017.1421391>.
- Coulthard, Glen Sean. 2014. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cowan, Aaron. 2016. *A Nice Place to Visit: Tourism and Urban Revitalization in the Postwar Rust Belt*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Cunningham, Randy. 2007. *Democratizing Cleveland: The Rise and Fall of Community Organizing in Cleveland Ohio, 1975–1985*. Cleveland, OH: Arambala Press.
- Dantzler, Prentiss A. 2021. "The Urban Process under Racial Capitalism: Race, Anti-Blackness, and Capital Accumulation." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and the City* 2 (2): 113–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26884674.2021.1934201>.
- Dantzler, Prentiss, Elizabeth Korver-Glenn, and Junia Howell. 2022. "Introduction: What Does Racial Capitalism Have to Do With Cities and Communities?" *City & Community* 21 (3): 163–72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15356841221103978>.
- Dillaway, Diana. 2006. *Power Failure: Politics, Patronage, and Economic Future of Buffalo*. New York: Prometheus.
- Douglas, Mary. 2002. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. New York: Routledge.
- Eizenberg, Efrat. 2012. "The Changing Meaning of Community Space: Two Models of NGO Management of Community Gardens in New York City." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36 (1): 106–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2011.01065.x>.
- Eliasoph, Nina. 1998. *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eliasoph, Nina, and Daniel Cefai. 2021. "Bringing the Civic Landscape into Being: How Varied Patterns of Civic Action Respond to and Create Dilemmas in Empowered Projects." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 34: 217–235. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-020-09380-6>.

- Freeman, Lance. 2019. *A Haven and a Hell: The Ghetto in Black America*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ghose, Rina, and Margaret Pettygrove. 2014. "Urban Community Gardens as Spaces of Citizenship." *Antipode* 46 (4): 1092–12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12077>.
- Gibbons, Andrea. 2016. "Linking Race, the Value of Land and the Value of Life." *City* 20 (6): 863–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2016.1245049>.
- Goldman, Mark. 2007. *City on the Edge: Buffalo, New York 1900-present*. New York: Prometheus.
- Grigsby, Alan V. 2021. "Black Activity Spaces in Shaker Heights." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and the City* 2 (2): 158–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26884674.2021.1972774>.
- Hackworth, Jason. 2015. "Rightsizing as Spatial Austerity in the American Rust Belt." *Environment and Planning A* 47 (4): 766–82. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a140327p>.
- Hackworth, Jason. 2019. *Manufacturing Decline: How Racism and the Conservative Movement Crush the American Rust Belt*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hohle, Randolph. 2023. "Rusty Gardens: Stigma and the Making of a New Place Reputation in Buffalo, New York." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 11 (2): 193–219. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41290-022-00159-0>.
- Krumholz, Norman, W. Dennis Keating, Philip D. Star, and Mark Chupp. 2006. "The Long-Term Impact of CDCs on Urban Neighborhoods: Case Studies of Cleveland's Broadway-Slavic Village and Tremont Neighborhoods." *Community Development* 37 (4): 33–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330609490194>.
- Krysan, Maria, and Kyle Crowder. 2017. *Cycle of Segregation: Social Processes and Residential Stratification*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Levenson, Zachary. 2018. "The Road to TRAs is Paved with Good Intentions: Dispossession Through Delivery in Post-Apartheid Cape Town." *Urban Studies* 55 (14): 3218–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098017735244>.
- Lichterman, Paul. 2021. *How Civic Action Works: Fighting for Housing in Los Angeles*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Lichterman, Paul, and Nina Eliasoph. 2014. "Civic Action." *American Journal of Sociology* 120 (3): 798–863. <https://doi.org/10.1086/679189>.
- Lipsitz, George. 2011. *How Racism Takes Place*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Mallach, Alan. 2018. *The Divided City: Poverty and Prosperity in Urban America*. Island Press.
- Malpas, Jeff. 2018. *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography 2nd Edition*. New York: Routledge.
- Manning-Thomas, June. 1997. *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- Martin, Deborah. 2002. "Constructing the 'Neighborhood Sphere': Gender and Community Organizing." *Gender, Place, and Culture* 9 (4): 333–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369022000024678>.
- Massey, Douglas., and Nancy. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McCarthy, Brenda. 2012. "From Fishing and Factories to Cultural Tourism: The Role of Social Entrepreneurs in the Construction of a New Institutional Field."

- Entrepreneurs and Regional Development* 24 (3–4): 259–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2012.670916>.
- McQuarrie, Michael. 2010. “Nonprofits and the Reconstruction of Urban Governance: Housing Production and Community Development in Cleveland, 1975–2005.” In *Politics and Partnerships: The Role of Voluntary Associations in America’s Political Past and Present*, edited by Elisabeth Clemens, and Doug Guthrie, 237–68. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McQuarrie, Michael, and Normal Krumholz. 2011. “Institutionalized Social Skill and the Rise of Mediating Organizations in Urban Governance: The Case of Cleveland Housing Networks.” *Housing Policy Debate* 21 (3): 421–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2011.591408>.
- Millington, Nate. 2013. “Post-Industrial Imaginaries: Nature, Representation, and Ruin in Detroit, Michigan.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37 (1): 279–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01206.x>.
- Murphy, C., and E. Boyle. 2006. “Testing a Conceptual Model of Cultural Tourism in the Post-Industrial City: A Case Study of Glasgow.” *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 6 (2): 111–28. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.thr.6040050>.
- National Buffalo Garden Festival. 2010. Final Report.
- Nelson, Velvet. 2015. “Place Reputation: Representing Houston, Texas as a Creative Destination through Culinary Culture.” *Tourism Geographies* 17 (2): 192–207. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2014.986751>.
- Neumann, Tracy. 2016. *Remaking the Rust Belt: The Post-Industrial Transformation of North America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Noonan, Douglas, and Idle Rizzo. 2017. “Economics of Cultural Tourism: Issues and Perspectives.” *Journal of Cultural Economics* 41: 95–107. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10824-017-9300-6>.
- Pedroni, Thomas. 2011. “Urban Shrinkage as a Performance of Whiteness: Neoliberal Urban Restructuring, Education, and Racial Containment in the Post-Industrial Global Niche City.” *Discourse: Studies in the Critical Politics of Education* 32 (2): 203–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2011.562666>.
- Petersen, Camille. 2022. “Capitalizing on Heritage: St. Augustine, Florida, and the Landscape of American Racial Ideology.” *City and Community* 2 (3): 193–213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15356841221101568>.
- Pottie-Sherman, Yolande. 2018. “Austerity Urbanism and the Promise of Immigrant and Refugee-Centered Urban Revitalization in the US Rust Belt.” *Urban Geography* 39 (3): 438–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2017.1342398>.
- Price-Spratlen, Townsend, and Avery M. Guest. 2002. “Race and Population Change: A Longitudinal Look at Cleveland Neighborhoods.” *Sociological Forum* 17 (1): 105–36. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014545607737>.
- Pritchett, Wendell E. 2003. “The Public Menace of Blight: Urban Renewal and the Private Uses of Eminent Domain.” *Yale Law and Policy Review* 21 (1): 1–52. <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.13051/16977>.
- Ramirez, Margaret Marietta. 2015. “The Elusive Inclusive: Black Food Geographies and Racialized Food Spaces.” *Antipode* 47 (3): 748–69. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12131>.

- Reese, Ashante M. 2018. "We will Not Perish; We're Going to Keep Flourishing": Race, Food Access, and Geographies of Self-Reliance." *Antipode* 50 (2): 407–24. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12359>.
- Reese, Ashante M. 2019. *Black Food Geographies: Race, Self-Reliance, and Food Access in Washington, DC*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Reese, Ashante M. 2020. "'DC is Mambo Sauce': Black Cultural Production in a Gentrifying City." *Human Geography* 13 (3): 253–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1942778620962046>.
- Re-Imagining Cleveland: Ideas to Action Resource Book. 2011. Kent State University's Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative.
- Richards, Greg. 1996. "Production and Consumption of European Cultural Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 23 (2): 261–87. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(95\)00063-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(95)00063-1).
- Richards, Greg. 2018. "Cultural Tourism: A Review of Recent Research and Trends." *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 36: 12–21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2018.03.005>.
- Rosenman, Emily, and Samuel Walker. 2016. "Tearing Down the City to Save It? 'Back Door Regionalism' and the Demolition Coalition in Cleveland Ohio." *Environment and Planning A* 48 (2): 273–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X15609741>.
- Rucks-Ahidiana, Zawdi. 2022. "Theorizing Gentrification as a Process of Racial Capitalism." *City and Community* 21 (3): 173–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15356841211054790>.
- Safford, Sean. 2009. *Why the Garden Club Couldn't Save Youngstown: The Transformation of the Rust Belt*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Safransky, Sara. 2014. "Greening the Urban Frontier: Race, Property, and Resettlement in Detroit." *Geoforum; Journal of Physical, Human, and Regional Geosciences* 56: 237–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15356841211054790>.
- Safransky, Sara. 2017. "Rethinking Land Struggle in the Postindustrial City." *Antipode* 49 (4): 1079–1100. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12225>.
- Salazar, Noel. 2012. "Community-Based Cultural Tourism: Issues, Threats, and Opportunities." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 20 (1): 9–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.596279>.
- Seligman, Amanda. 2016. *Chicago's Block Clubs: How Neighbors Shape the City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shabazz, Rashad. 2015. *Spatializing Blackness: Architectures of Confinement and Black Masculinity in Chicago*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Silverman, Robert M., Jade Lewis, and Kelly L. Patterson. 2014. "William Worthy's Concept of 'Institutional Rape' Revisited: Anchor Institutions and Residential Displacement in Buffalo, NY." *Humanity & Society* 38 (2): 158–81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0160597614529114>.
- Silverman, Robert Mark, Henry Louis Taylor Jr, Li Yin, Camden Miller, and Pascal Briggs. 2019. "Place Making as a Form of Place Taking: Residential Displacement and Grassroots Resistance to Institutional Encroachment in Buffalo, New York" *Journal of Place Management and Development* 12 (4): 566–80. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-11-2018-0082>.

- Smith, Phillip. 1999. "The Elementary Forms of Place and Their Transformations: A Durkheimian Model." *Qualitative Sociology* 22 (1): 13–36. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022179131684>.
- Souther, J. Mark. 2017. *Believing in Cleveland: Managing Decline in the "Best Location in the Nation"*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Summers, Brandi Thompson. 2019. *Black in Place: The Spatial Aesthetics of Race in a Post-Industrial City*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Summers, Brandi Thompson. 2021. "Reclaiming the Chocolate City: Soundscapes of Gentrification and Resistance in Washington DC." *Society and Space* 39 (1): 30–46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775820978242>.
- Summers, Brandi Thompson. 2022. "Black Insurgent Aesthetics and the Public Imaginary" *Urban Geography* 43 (6): 837–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2022.2049084>.
- Summers, Brandi Thompson, and Kathryn Howell. 2019. "Fear and Loathing (of Others): Race, Class, and the Contestation of Space in Washington D.C." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 1085–1105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12811>.
- Taylor, Henry Louis Jr. 1991. "Social Transformation Theory, African Americans and the Rise of Buffalo's Post-Industrial City." *Buffalo Law Review* 39 (2), 569–606. <https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/buffalolawreview/vol39/iss2/15/>.
- Taylor, Henry Louis Jr. 2020. "Disrupting Market-Based Predatory Development: Race, Class, and the Underdevelopment of Black Neighborhoods in the US." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and the City* 1 (1–2): 16–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26884674.2020.1798204>.
- Taylor, Henry-Louis Jr., Jin-Kyu Jung, and Evan Dash. 2021. "The State of Black Buffalo in 1990 and the Present" U.B. Center for Urban Studies, School of Architecture and Planning.
- United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). 2018. Country Profile, Inbound Profile. URL located at <https://www.unwto.org/country-profile-inbound-tourism>
- US Census. 2010. American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates, Selected Housing Characteristics.
- US Census. 2019. Population estimates.
- US Census. 2020. Census
- Wacquant, Loic. 2008. *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Wacquant, Loic. 2009. *Prisons of Poverty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Wang, Suosheng, Naoko Yamada, and Linda Brothers. 2011. "A Case Study: Discussions of Factors and Challenges for Urban Cultural Tourism Development." *International Journal of Tourism Research* 13: 553–69. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.826>.
- Weaver, Timothy. 2016. *Blazing the Neoliberal Trail: Urban Political Development in the United States and the United Kingdom*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Wiechmann, Thorsten, and Karina Pallagst. 2012. "Urban Shrinkage in Germany and the USA: A Comparison of Transformation Patterns and Local Strategies."

- International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36 (2): 261–80. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2011.01095.x>.
- Williams, Lillian Serece. 1999. *Strangers in the Land of Paradise: The Creation of an African American Community, Buffalo, New York 1900–1940*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Zilberstein, Shira. 2019. “Space Making as Artistic Practice: The Relationship between Grassroots Art Organizations and the Political Economy of Urban Development.” *City and Community* 18 (4): 1142–61. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12458>.

Author Biography

Randolph Hohle is a professor of Sociology at SUNY Fredonia. Some of his recent work includes *The American Housing Question: Racism, Urban Citizenship, and the Privilege of Mobility* (Lexington Press, 2021), *Racism in the Neoliberal Era: A Meta History of Elite White Power* (Routledge, 2018), *Race and the Orgins of American Neoliberalism* (Routledge, 2015), and co-authored the 6th edition of the *New Urban Sociology* (Routledge, 2019).