

Sowing a Sense of Place: An in-depth case study
of changing youths' sense of places

by

Lianne Fisman

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

June 2007

© Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2007. All rights reserved.

Author 

Department of Urban Studies and Planning

May 25, 2007

Certified by 

Lawrence J. Vale

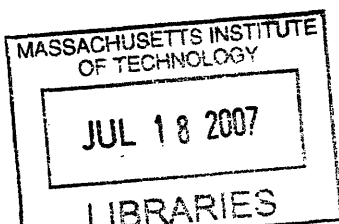
Professor of Urban Design and Planning

Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by 

Frank Levy

Chair, PhD Committee



ARCHIVES

Sowing a Sense of Place: An in-depth case study of changing youths' sense of places

by

Lianne Fisman

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
on May 25, 2007, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Abstract

In this dissertation I examine the change in youths' sense of urban and non-urban places brought about by involvement in a multi-site agriculture program. The concept of 'Place' is more than the biophysical and built settings in a defined space; it also includes the human meanings and values associated with these locations. How a place is experienced is often referred to as sense of place, which may be defined broadly as the collection of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values, and feelings that individuals or groups associate with a particular locality. The literature in this area comes from a broad range of disciplines, including geography, environmental psychology, sociology and anthropology. It has also entered the lexicon of a diversity of practitioners, including environmental educators, urban planners, architects, and real estate developers. Its broad use suggests that these concepts resonate with a wide spectrum of scholars and practitioners.

Surprisingly, little has been written about the sense of place among youth (either with reference to their home environment or in relation to other places that they may or may not have directly experienced). Similarly, little is known about the processes by which a sense of place develops. My research begins to fill these gaps through an in-depth, multi-year case study of youth who participated in a two-month agriculture program with The Food Project (together with a control group of non-participating youth). The Food Project is a Boston-based organization that brings together non-urban and inner city youth to work together on organic farms located in Lincoln (a wealthy, predominantly White town outside of Boston) and Roxbury (a predominantly Black and Hispanic, low-income inner city neighborhood of Boston). Unlike many racial integration programs that bring youth of color from the city out to the suburbs where they have contact with White, suburban peers (such as school busing programs), all participants in The Food Project experience intense contact with peers from different backgrounds in both familiar and unfamiliar environments. The Food Project program can be thought of as an accelerated version of more mundane place experience; without the focused intervention that this program provided, repeated exposures to new, non-residential places tend to occur over a longer period

of time than the two months spent with The Project. Studying an accelerated place experience such as that enabled by The Food Project's Summer Program provides a window into how youth develop relationships to places over longer periods of time.

I draw upon a mixed method design to examine the question: How do non-urban and urban youth sense places and how is this changed through a place-based integration program? The data that I utilize comes from semi-structured interviews, surveys, cognitive mapping exercises and participant observation. The final method was particularly useful in garnering an understanding of the development of the youths' place perceptions. Embedded as a fellow 'crew worker' for a two-month period, I observed and recorded the youths' actions and attitudes toward places. My intense daily contact with the young people provided insights into the factors that impacted the way in which they sensed Lincoln, Roxbury and their home environments that cannot be captured through standardized measures, such as surveys and questionnaires. My mixed methods approach provided a rich data set that affords an opportunity to compare the sense of places of urban and non-urban youth as well as the changes produced by this program.

Although the sense of places of the youth in this study reflected their individually unique identities, values and social skills, the results of my research led to the development of a general framework that has utility to guide future research questions in this area. This framework includes the mediating variable I call place repertoires and two moderating variables, environmental fit, and cross place friendships. A place repertoire refers to an individual's lived and virtual experiences in a set of places. In making assessments or discussing places, all of the youth drew on their repertoires, mentally comparing and contrasting features of places with one another. The expansion of a youth's repertoire resulted in sharper images and the ability to see subtle variations across places. The effect of an increased repertoire was moderated by the youth's environmental fit, which refers to the alignment of their personal identity with their local environs. The strength of the relationships that they formed with their peers who resided in places different from their own also moderated the impact of an expanded repertoire on their sense of a given environment.

Outcomes of particular interest included the association between the non-urban youths' expanded repertoires and their increased use of racial indicators in place discussions. This shift in language represented a convergence in the urban and non-urban youths' place talk. Another notable observation was the variation in the youths' tendency to reimage Roxbury through the historical interpretive frame that was presented to them by The Food Project. Youth who started the program with broader place repertoires consistently reframed their image through a historical lens, while their peers with narrower repertoires did not. I hypothesize that the former group's larger initial place literacy facilitated the development of a more complex image and understanding of Roxbury. Both of these results highlight the important role that planning practitioners can play in fostering a shared understanding and vision of places amongst their constituents.

This dissertation moves the sense of place literature beyond a vague description of what is being sensed (and what goes unsensed) by youth from different backgrounds, and provides a greater understanding of the similarities and differences in how youth

sense these places. This information is of great importance to urban planners, community organizers and environmental educators with interests in developing strategies for engaging youth in the stewardship of their environments. The results are also relevant for scholars, planners and decision makers interested in how people in a diverse and segregated society develop a *racialized* sense of places. My hope is that this work will encourage planners to look beyond the traditional sense of place literature that emphasizes 'natural' environments, home, and what I argue is a romanticized notion of the positive relationship between time spent in a place and one's sense of that place. The results of my research indicate that there is a need to consider an individual's attributes, such as race, class, biases and stereotypes, in understanding how people develop their sense of a given place. These variables are traditionally the domain of sociologists who often deal in placeless units, such as census tracts. As planners we should 'emplace' these variables in order to unveil their meaning for the way in which people experience their environments.

Acknowledgments

Although it is cliched, it truly took 'a village' to complete this dissertation. Acknowledging everyone who contributed would add an extra chapter to this document. Please excuse any omissions.

First and foremost, I want to thank The Food Project staff and the youth who participated in this project. Without the support of Greg Gale and Pertula George, this dissertation could not have happened. I am grateful to all of the youth who participated in the 2004 and 2005 Summer Youth Program. Thank you for letting me share your summer experiences. In particular I would like to thank my crew, who let me into their homes and lives, and spent many hours talking with me about their images of different places. I learned a great deal from each and every one of you.

I would like to thank my advisor, Larry Vale for his generous time and commitment. He continually stimulated my analytical thinking and greatly assisted me with my writing. I am not sure how he balances being a stellar advisor, department chair, teacher, and many other roles, but he does it all with grace. I am also very grateful for having an exceptional doctoral committee and wish to thank Anne Whiston Spirn and Xavier de Souza Briggs for their continual support and encouragement. I am especially thankful to have had the guidance of Sam Bass Warner. Our weekly meetings in his 'office' provided me with the ideas, energy and drive to move forward. I value his friendship and advice tremendously.

I extend many thanks to all of my colleagues and friends, especially Erin Graves and Elizabeth Beck Reynolds for their comments and feedback on my writing, as well as many great cups of coffee; Nonie Lesaux for her endless encouragement and important friendship; Lang Keyes for help on the proposal and being enthusiastic about parenthood; and Shirley Brice Heath for her comments on my first draft and her optimistic assessment of my early progress.

Finally, I'd like to thank my family. My mother and father for instilling in me a belief in social and environmental justice; not to mention their willingness to proof-read this document. My 'elder' brother Raymond was an invaluable sounding board

for all of my ideas and provided invaluable comments and critiques. My husband and best friend, Todd, deserves special thanks for his patience and for helping me to keep perspective and balance throughout the doctoral process, listening to me articulate (and re-articulate) my thoughts and ideas, his computer expertise and most importantly, his love. Finally, thank-you to my daughter Rivka for providing a continual reminder of why I care so deeply about the future of our cities and planet. My hope is that she will inherit a more just and sustainable world than the one she came into.

Contents

1	Introduction	25
1.1	Problem Statement	25
1.2	Literature Review	28
1.2.1	Sense of place	28
1.2.2	Analyzing Sense of place: A Comprehensive Framework	30
1.2.3	Gaps in the Literature	32
1.2.4	The Link between Sense of place, Stereotypes, and The Contact Hypothesis	39
1.3	An overview of The Food Project	40
1.3.1	The Sites	44
1.3.2	Getting There as Place Experience	48
1.3.3	A typical Day at the Food Project	55
1.4	Methods	60
1.4.1	Sample	61
1.4.2	A Grounded Theory Approach	61
2	Non-Urban Youth:	
	Steve, Julie and Pete	69
2.1	Steve: The Sociable Nerd	70
2.1.1	Steve's Sense of Places: Pre-Program	73
2.1.2	Steve's new sense of places: Post Program	78
2.1.3	Conclusions	84
2.2	Julie: Rebel without a cause	84

2.2.1	Julie’s Sense of Places: Pre-program	88
2.2.2	Julie’s new sense of places: Post Program	93
2.2.3	Conclusions	100
2.3	Pete: Tightly Wound	101
2.3.1	Pete’s Sense of Places: Pre-Program	103
2.3.2	Pete’s new sense of places: Post Program	107
2.3.3	Conclusions	113
2.4	Non-Urban Youth: Discussion	114
2.4.1	Place Repertoires	118
2.4.2	Environmental Fit	122
2.4.3	Cross-Place Friendships	125
2.4.4	Race as a descriptor of place	127
2.4.5	Conclusion	130

3 Urban Youth:

	Paul, Emmanuelle and Justin	135
3.1	Paul	137
3.1.1	Paul’s Sense of Places: Pre-Program	141
3.1.2	Paul’s new sense of places: Post Program	147
3.1.3	Conclusions	155
3.2	Emmanuelle	156
3.2.1	Emmanuelle’s Sense of Places: Pre-Program	158
3.2.2	Emmanuelle’s Sense of Places: Post-Program	164
3.2.3	Conclusions	169
3.3	Justin	170
3.3.1	Justin’s Sense of Places: Pre-Program	173
3.3.2	Justin’s Sense of Places: Post-Program	177
3.3.3	The Firing	180
3.3.4	Conclusions	185
3.4	Urban Youth: Discussion	186

3.4.1	Place Repertoires	188
3.4.2	Racialized Repertoires	199
3.4.3	Environmental Fit	202
3.4.4	Increased Urban Pride	204
3.4.5	Cross Place Friendships	206
3.4.6	Testing The Boundaries: A Comment	208
3.4.7	Conclusions	209

4 ‘Cross-Over’ Youth:

	Kiara, Nicole and Emily	213
4.1	Kiara: An Urbanite in the Suburbs	215
4.1.1	Kiara’s Sense of Places: Pre Program	217
4.1.2	Kiara’s Sense of Places: Post Program	226
4.1.3	Conclusions	231
4.2	Nicole: a Multi-Ethnic White Girl	233
4.2.1	Nicole’s Sense of Places: Pre-Program	236
4.2.2	Nicole’s Sense of Places: Post Program	244
4.2.3	Conclusions	250
4.3	Emily: The Sophisticate	251
4.3.1	Emily’s sense of places: Pre-Program	254
4.3.2	Emily’s Sense of Places: Post-Program	262
4.3.3	Conclusions	268
4.4	Crossover Youth: Discussion	269
4.4.1	Place Repertoires	272
4.4.2	Cross Place Friendships	280
4.4.3	Racialized Repertoires	282
4.4.4	Environmental Fit	284
4.4.5	Increased Urban Pride	287
4.4.6	Conclusions	288

5	Conclusions	291
5.1	An Analytic Framework	291
5.1.1	Place Repertoires	293
5.1.2	Environmental Fit	297
5.1.3	Place Idealization	299
5.1.4	Cross Place Friendships	301
5.1.5	An Alternative Theory: Confirmatory Bias	304
5.2	Program Recommendations:	
	Enhancing the youths' experience of place	305
5.2.1	Interpretive Frames	306
5.2.2	Place Stereotypes	307
5.3	Closing Comments	309
6	Epilogue	311
A	Food Project Standards Sheet	315
B	Violations Chart	319
C	Consent Forms	321
D	Visioning Exercises	327
E	Mapping Protocol	331
F	Interview Guides	333
G	Bibliography	339

Prologue

Bill's Story

It was a warm summer morning and Bill, a fourteen-year-old black male resident of Roxbury, arrived at the commuter rail station in downtown Boston. Standing on the platform, he was surrounded by a group of mostly black and Hispanic youth. Some of them seemed to know each other and were talking and laughing with one another. But most were like Bill, standing alone, stealing anxious glances at their peers.

It was the first day of The Food Project's Summer Youth Program. Bill felt uneasy. He was about to embark on a journey of firsts; the train ride, farm work and interaction with youth from the wealthy, white suburbs were all going to be new experiences. Being a shy person, he worried about making friends with his coworkers. He was also unsure about spending time out in the suburbs, where he imagined that the residents were not used to seeing black people. Being a male youth of color made him a target for harassment in the city and he suspected that things were even worse in the suburbs. As he left his house that morning his mother had warned him to keep out of trouble in Lincoln, where "a lot of the residents are racists." All that Bill felt sure about that morning was that he was going to get a free commuter rail pass and a daily wage for his work with The Food Project; something that is hard to come by for a fourteen year old in the city of Boston.

Upon arriving in Lincoln, the youth flooded off the train and were immediately guided by a Food Project staff member to an adjacent parking lot where another group of youth, all of who were white, were already waiting. A school bus pulled up and the youth all piled in. The bus drove the youth from the train station to the

Lincoln farm, about one mile. This farm was where they would spend much of the rest of the summer. Stepping off the bus at the farm, Bill was struck by the farm's size and silence. It was different from any place he had ever been before. He looked out to the rows of crops and wondered what working in the field would be like and whether he could ever feel comfortable in this wide open space. A black female who he had seen on the train ride from the city leaned over and said to him: "This place looks like a prison."

After playing a few 'get to know you games' with the 60 or so other youth in the program, one of the staff people stood up and announced that the young people were going to be divided into 6 crews, each of which was to be headed by a crew leader and an assistant crew leader. The youth were informed that they would work in these small groups throughout the summer. Bill was assigned to a crew that was comprised of four white kids from non-urban towns around Lincoln and five black and Hispanic kids who lived in the city of Boston. His crew leader was a black student who grew up in Roxbury and was going into his sophomore year at a small liberal arts college in the Northeast. His assistant crew leader had been a crew worker the previous summer. She was from the town of Lincoln and was going into her senior year at the local high school. Bill looked around at this diverse group of youth and wondered whether or not they would get along; they were all so different.

Over the summer, Bill worked harder than he ever had in his life. The farm work was physically taxing, even for a strong young man who played football for his school. At first, Bill had trouble knowing which plants were weeds and which were crops. Like the other youth in his crew, he often pulled out the wrong thing. As the weeks passed however, Bill's competence and confidence grew and he discovered that he enjoyed working on the land. He had a strong sense of accomplishment when he finished weeding a bed and he looked forward to harvest days, knowing that much of the food was going to the homeless shelter in the city of Boston, where he volunteered each week with his crew.

The Food Project staff encouraged Bill to speak out and express his opinions during group workshops on issues such as race, identity and social justice. This was

particularly challenging given that Bill hated speaking in public. Much to his surprise, as the summer progressed he began to enjoy sharing his opinion with his peers. Unlike school, The Food Project felt like a safe space where he could speak without being laughed at or told that his opinion was wrong.

Each week during ‘straight talk’, Bill received blunt feedback (‘positives’ and ‘deltas’) on what he was doing well and what he might improve on. For example, after the first week he was told that there were days when he had a negative attitude in the field, which affected the entire crew’s morale. His crew leader encouraged him to ask for help when he felt overwhelmed or confused in the fields rather than to act out. At first Bill found it difficult to receive this constructive criticism, but as the summer progressed he learned to listen to, and then act on the deltas. The fact that his peers and the staff acknowledged the work he did to improve himself felt great and motivated Bill to work harder each day. For example, a few weeks into the program Bill started to receive weekly positives, rather than deltas, for his fieldwork.

The more Bill cultivated the land, the more he enjoyed being at the farm. He no longer felt overwhelmed by its vastness. In fact, when he looked out at the rows of crops and dug his hands into the earth, he felt connected to the land. These feelings were reinforced as he learned more about the links among sustainable agriculture, environmental quality and food security.

Fieldwork also provided time to bond with his nine fellow crew workers, all youth aged fourteen to sixteen. There were always lively conversations going on amongst the youth as they worked. Topics of conversation ranged from serious discussions related to race and inequality to talk about their favorite music and TV shows. By the end of the summer Bill formed close friendships with his entire crew. He no longer assumed that white youth residing in the suburbs were spoiled or racist. Bill felt certain that some of the friendships he forged with kids from Lincoln and the nearby towns of Sudbury and Carlisle would last well beyond the summer.

Halfway through the summer, Bill and his crew did a two-week stint at the Food Project’s ‘farm’ in Roxbury, right in the city of Boston. Although he had lived less than a mile from this growing site for his entire life, Bill was previously unaware of its

existence. He was ambivalent about living in Roxbury; his friends and family lived nearby and so there were always things to do and people to visit, but the buildings looked run down, especially compared to Lincoln. He felt nervous about having his new white friends from outside of the city see his neighborhood; he was sure they would think it was 'ghetto'.

Bill's experiences with The Summer Program in Roxbury changed his feelings about his neighborhood. During workshops he learned about the social and environmental history of Roxbury. He was both surprised and proud to hear about how the community fought the city's plans for urban renewal in the area and how they successfully chased out illegal trash transfer facilities. He felt good about being a member of a community that survived the city's wrecking ball. For the first time in his life, when Bill walked around his neighborhood, he noticed the many front and backyard gardens. They were mostly filled with vegetables, such as beans and tomatoes. Each day after work, he shared what he learned with his grandmother. Through these conversations he discovered that she grew up gardening in Cape Verde and the two of them worked together to plant some beans in the front yard of their triple-decker.

By the end of the summer, Bill looked forward to each day of hard work with his new friends. He decided to apply to the academic year program so that he could keep learning about sustainable agriculture and maintain contact with his new friends who lived out in the suburbs. Unlike the young man who felt shy and intimidated that first day on the train to Lincoln, Bill finished the summer confident and proud of who he is and where he comes from. He enjoyed working on the land in Lincoln, where it was relatively quiet and there was so much open space, but he particularly liked farming in Roxbury, where the residents often came by and said hello to him as he worked and he felt he was giving back to his own community. The last day of the Summer Program, Bill told his crew leader that: "The Food Project has made me see my community in a totally different light. I feel proud of where I live and want to help to make it even better for the next generation."

Lisa's Story

On a warm July morning, a big white SUV pulled up to the parking lot of the Lincoln commuter rail station. Lisa, a tall, blond youth hopped out of the car and waved good-bye to her mother, who was heading back to their house in the neighboring town of Sudbury. Lisa looked around anxiously at the group of about 25 other youth, most of who were white, standing near the train tracks. It was her first day of work with The Food Project and she was relieved to recognize a couple of kids from her school amongst the crowd. She walked over and started chatting with them. A few minutes later, the commuter train pulled up and 35 youth came streaming off of the railcar. Lisa was a bit taken aback by the racial composition of the group; they were almost all black or Hispanic. Her school hosted a bussing program that brought in youth of color from the city, but there she was a part of the racial majority. Looking at the youth coming off of the train it dawned on her that she was going to be part of the minority at The Food Project. She took a deep breath and got on the school bus that was waiting to drive them to the farm.

When Lisa got off the bus she looked out at the huge field and smiled at the familiar landscape. She often drove past farms in her town, but had never worked on one. She felt a bit intimidated about her lack of experience growing food, but was certain that it couldn't be that hard and that she was going to love it. The beauty of the farm impressed her. She imagined that the town's residents were friendly and conservation minded, like herself. She could see why someone would want to live in Lincoln, it was a lot like Sudbury, only there were more farms and fewer houses. The town also had a great little 'mall' near the commuter rail station, with a cool coffee shop. Sometimes she and her mother went to the café for lunch. The staff people were really friendly and seemed to know all of the Lincoln residents by name. Lisa thought that was a great feature of the town.

During her interview for entry into The Food Project, Lisa emphasized her desire to be exposed to new people and places, but in reality she was terrified of going to work in Roxbury. Up until now, her Boston experiences were limited to attending Red

Sox games with her family and shopping on Newbury Street with her older sister. She had never used public transportation before and was not too sure about employing it to get to an area known for its high levels of crime and violence. The first week of the program, she tried not to think about the two weeks that her crew would spend on The Food Project's Roxbury land. Instead, Lisa focused her energy on learning how to complete the tasks assigned to her crew at the Lincoln farm.

Lisa quickly discovered that farming is hard work. The days were long and sweaty and the work was much less intuitive than she had expected. At the end of each workday she was emotionally and physically drained. Like the other youth on her crew, Lisa had trouble telling the difference between the bed of crops and the walking path that ran alongside it; as a result, Lisa's crew leader, who managed the crew of ten youth that she was assigned to work with, often admonished her for trampling plants. There was also the challenge of figuring out which of the green leafy things was the carrot top and which was the weed. All too often Lisa was informed that what she just pulled out was a crop. Fieldwork was a lot less fun than she had imagined. Luckily, most of her crewmates had the same problems, and they worked together to help each other avoid mistakes. As the summer progressed, Lisa learned to pace herself and found being out in the field more and more enjoyable.

Part of the reason that the work felt easier over time was that Lisa became close friends with the other youth on her crew. While she spent much of the first week talking to the other suburbanites in her group, by the end of the second week, she had bonded with the entire crew. In fact, Lisa's closest friend was Jasmine, a young African American female from Roxbury. The two of them discussed school, boys, and issues relating to race and diversity. Conversations on the latter topics were often sparked by material covered during the daily workshops that were run by The Food Project staff.

Lisa loved the workshops. Some dealt with agriculture and some covered social issues, such as those linked to race and diversity. Through these sessions, Lisa discovered that she enjoyed talking about race. Until then, she believed that acknowledging that she noticed peoples' races made her seem racist and so she avoided using racial

terms in conversations. Through the workshops she learned that seeing color did not make her a racist, and that the only way to overcome racial stereotypes was to learn to acknowledge and talk about them. It was particularly meaningful to her to have conversations about these issues with her new friends of color.

One of the most powerful workshops for Lisa was called 'Level the Playing field'. At the beginning of this activity, all of the youth in the program stood in a straight line, facing the farm. The crew leaders read a series of statements. Depending on whether the statement applied to you, you were told to step forward or backward. Lisa rarely stepped backward. For example, when they read the statement: 'if you have ever felt discriminated against because of your race or religion, take a step back', Lisa stayed still. When they said: 'step forward if your family speaks English at home', she moved forward. At the end of the game, Lisa was near the front of the group (behind some white, male youth), along with most of her suburban peers. Her best friend from her crew, Jasmine, was near the back with some other black girls from the city. For the first time in her life Lisa considered the fact that being white and wealthy placed her in a very privileged position in society.

Despite her new friendships with youth from the city, half-way through the Summer Program, when Lisa's crew went to The Food Project site in Roxbury, she was completely overwhelmed. Taking the commuter rail into the city was confusing. She had to push her way through a crowd of commuters to make it off the train at Porter Square. From there she transferred to the subway and made her way to the Andrew T Station. She felt like it was pure luck that she got on the train going in the right direction. When she finally got off of the subway at Andrew Station, she could hardly believe her eyes. The sidewalks around the station were worn and strewn with litter from the nearby Dunkin Donuts. Every surface seemed to be paved and there were no trees in sight. She and the other Food Project kids from outside of the city were the only white faces in the station and she felt sure that the other patrons were all staring at her. She was relieved when The Food Project van pulled up to drive the youth to the Roxbury lot.

When the van arrived at the growing area in Roxbury, Lisa was reassured to see so

many familiar faces. Jasmine and the other urban youth were already sitting under the shelter talking and laughing. Seeing how comfortable they were in this environment put Lisa at ease. When they were sent out to do fieldwork, she realized that although the area was smaller, the farming techniques that she learned in Lincoln applied here. The main difference was that rather than being in a quiet bucolic setting, the land was surrounded by triple decker houses with rap and Latino rhythms drifting out of the windows. Cars cruised by with their windows open, and the passengers often shouted out greetings to the youth. There was a community garden in the corner of The Food Project lot, which meant there was constant flow of residents onto the land tending to their small plots.

While in Roxbury, the youth did several workshops on the history of the Dudley Street Neighborhood. Lisa was amazed to hear that this area used to be white and fairly wealthy. She was also impressed by the activism of the residents who worked together to save the area from urban renewal. She soon started to notice the many gardens that were located in the neighborhood and began waving at the residents who passed the growing lot. She assumed that what occurred in Dudley was characteristic of the history of all of Roxbury.

At the end of her second week in Roxbury, Lisa felt completely confident navigating her way from Lincoln to Roxbury. When she got off the subway, she still noticed the litter and pavement, but she also saw a vibrant, bustling area full of people on their way to work. She increasingly enjoyed working on the urban land. She appreciated the warm greetings that she got from local residents and felt her work made the neighborhood a better place to live by providing access to local produce through the Roxbury Farmer's Market that the youth put on each week. She imagined that the residents whose properties abutted the lot must have appreciated looking out on such a lush, vibrant space rather than the dull vacant lot that existed prior to the creation of the farm. Contributing to the beauty of the local landscape was a source of pride for Lisa.

As the summer drew to a close, Lisa decided to apply to stay on with The Food Project for their academic year program. She hoped to maintain her connection to her

city friends and to the land in Roxbury, and to improve her knowledge and expertise as a farmer. She felt that the Summer Program had given her a new set of skills and knowledge, which she wanted to continue to apply. In particular, she told the staff at The Food Project that she hoped: “to focus my energy on being a part of the creation and maintenance of vibrant and sustainable communities and food systems that are accessible to all”.

Discussion: Bill and Lisa

Bill and Lisa are not real people. They are fictional characters based on the many youth that I encountered during my fieldwork at The Food Project. Their stories of personal transformation depict what the organization and myself consider the *ideal* Food Project experience. They are the types of narratives that youth development organizations like to share with funders: ‘Through their work with The Food Project, youth gain new skills and competencies, make friends with people with different backgrounds, and develop a positive sense of Lincoln and Roxbury’.

After spending two summers doing research with The Food Project, I know that ideal types, such as Bill and Lisa, do not exist. Each youth who moves through the program brings particular values and skill sets with them, which influence their experiences. Some youth leave the program with a more positive sense of Roxbury and Lincoln. Others have their existing negative stereotypes of these places reinforced. Between five and ten percent of the youth don’t make it through the program as they are unable to meet the standards outlined in their contracts or they simply decide that working on a farm is not for them. Each story is different, yet provides useful information for understanding how young people experience both familiar and unfamiliar places. Extracting the commonalities and differences in the place narratives of youth from this program can teach us something about the way that youth from different backgrounds *sense* places, and how this shifts through intimate experiences with new people and places.

By telling the story of nine *real* youth, this dissertation explores the following

questions: How do youth from different residential backgrounds sense places? How is this changed through the participation in The Food Project's Summer Youth Program, the place-based integration program that serves as the empirical basis for my dissertation? In order to systematically explore the effect of place of residence on the youths' sense of places, I grouped them into three categories: 'non-urban', 'urban' and 'crossovers'. The 'non-urban' youth have all of their lived experiences outside of the city and have spent little time in urban areas. The 'urban' youth have lived all of their life in Boston and have spent little time outside of the city. The crossover youth have substantial lived experience in both urban and non-urban places and may also live in an environment that is not readily classified as one or the other.

Each of the nine narratives of the youth is divided into two main sections. The first outlines the youths' sense of Lincoln and Roxbury prior to working with The Food Project. I also consider their perceptions of what they define as their neighborhood and their 'home environment'. For Boston youth the latter refers to the official planning district where their house is located, and in the case of youth from outside of Boston it refers to their home town. Much of this data comes from the pre-program interviews that were conducted during the first two days of the program and the visioning and mapping exercises, which were conducted on the first day of the Summer Program (see Methods section for details). The second section focuses on some of the shifts that occurred in the youths' sense of these places due to their summer experiences with The Food Project.

The goal of this work is to use the stories of the nine youth as well as data from approximately 50 other youth participants and a control group (composed of 13 non-participants) to move beyond a general description of *what* is being sensed, and what goes unsensed, by youth from different backgrounds to garner a greater understanding of the similarities and differences in *how* they sense these places. Specifically I examine the meanings, beliefs, symbols, values, and feelings that the youth associated with Lincoln, Roxbury, their own neighborhoods and home environments and how these senses developed over the course of The Food Project. I identify variables that *mediate* and *moderate* the development of their sense of places and propose a

framework for analyzing this process.

The remainder of the dissertation is divided into five chapters: 1) Introduction; 2) Non-Urban Youth; 3) Urban Youth; 4) Crossover Youth and 5) Conclusions. The Introduction includes a problem statement, review of the literature relevant to my research question, description of The Food Project Summer Program, and explanation of the methods that I employed during the research process. Each of the next three chapters use in-depth stories of three youth to explore the Food Project's impact on the sense of places of youth from different backgrounds. At the end of each of these chapters, there is a discussion of the emerging themes and patterns. The third and final section of the dissertation, the Conclusions, summarizes the overall themes and theoretical framework that emerged from this work. It also considers the implications of the findings for the field of planning and presents future areas for research.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

The Food Project brings together youth who live in the city of Boston and those who reside outside of its borders to work together on organic farms located in Lincoln (a wealthy, predominantly white town outside of Boston) and Roxbury (a predominantly Black and Hispanic, low-income inner city neighborhood of Boston). Unlike many racial integration programs that bring youth of color from the city out to the suburbs where they have contact with white, suburban peers (such as school bussing programs), all participants in The Food Project experience intense contact with peers from different backgrounds in both *familiar* and *unfamiliar environments*. This affords an opportunity to compare the *sense of places* of urban and non-urban youth as well as the changes produced by this program.

This dissertation positions itself within the literature that deals with the individual's sense of a given place, with an emphasis on unveiling its meaning for planning practice. *Sense of place* can be broadly defined as “the collection of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values, and feelings that individuals or groups associate with a particular locality” (Williams and Stewart, 1998, p. 18). I suggest that it is experienced through image and perceptions, and speak of the three terms—image, perception and sense of place—interchangeably throughout this dissertation¹. The literature in this area has

¹That being said, my preference is for the term sense of place as I would argue that this term

its disciplinary roots in human geography, but is also addressed in environmental psychology, and to a lesser extent sociology and anthropology. It has also entered the lexicon of a variety of practitioners including environmental educators (Derr, 2002), urban planners, architects, and real estate developers (Jackson, 1994). Because of the multi-disciplinary use of this term, its exact definition is fuzzy; yet this broad usage makes it very useful within the field of Urban Planning, an area of study that is inherently interdisciplinary and tends to emphasize the bridging of theory and practice. The literature review below provides a brief overview of the sense of place literature and suggests that the concept provides a useful tool for gaining a holistic understanding of human-environment relationships. It also integrates literature from disciplines such as urban sociology and psychology that deal with the way individuals develop their perceptions of people and places. These studies provide findings that suggest new hypotheses and theories that may enrich and extend the notion of sense of place.

My dissertation research contributes to the sense of place literature in a variety of ways. Surprisingly little has been written about youths' sense of place (either with reference to their home environment or other places that they may or may not have directly experienced). In addition, little is known about the developmental *process* of learning 'to make sense of places'. My work begins to fill this gap by looking at youths' sense of different places as well how The Food Project, a place based youth initiative, impacts this relationship. Finally, despite its broad definition and usage across disciplines, the influence of the types of people who are associated with a particular place has not, to the best of my knowledge, been explicitly addressed in this literature. In particular, the role that race and stereotyping plays in influencing this construct is almost entirely absent from this body of writing. My research begins to fill this gap, indicating that for many youth, their race and class identities and stereotypes are linked to their perceptions of places.

Sense of place is closely linked to the notion of environmental sustainability. While deconstructing the complexities and inadequacies of this term is well beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is useful to revisit the most widely used definition, which

captures an emotive element that many people overlook in discussions of images and perceptions.

comes from The Bruntland Commission's report from 1983 to the World Commission on Environment and Development. This report defined sustainable development as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Wheeler, 1998). Urban planner Tim Beatley (2002) argues that if people do not have a positive sense of places: "there is little chance that the loss of environments and the practice of unsustainable patterns of consumption and resource exploitation will be reversed (p. 3). As such, sense of place provides one way to further our understanding of how to encourage or strengthen individuals commitments and stewardship of a given place, which is necessary for the creation and maintenance of sustainable places. My hope is that by enhancing the understanding of the pathways that lead people to have positive relationships to place, my work can inform planning policy, including the development of effective public education projects (both for schools, non-profits and communities) that promote an attachment to a range of places and the creation of "livable" communities.

While I am interested in how my work might enhance practice, it is important to be clear from the outset that the research presented here is not a program evaluation. The questions that I addressed were grounded in my observations of how the Food Project youth interacted with place. They were not what Weiss (1998) refers to as 'program derived questions', which directly reflect matters of administrative and programmatic interest that are identified by the policy and program communities. That being said, my deep immersion in The Food Project's Summer Youth Program over a two-year period provided me with some important insights into its strengths and weaknesses. While recommendations for the development and implementation of the program are not the focus of this dissertation, my final discussion considers ways that this place-based organization might deepen participants' understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of places, particularly those that they encountered during their time with The Food Project. My hope is to provide a theoretical contribution to the Urban Planning literature as well as useful, actionable information for practitioners, particularly those working with youth in programs that are explicitly connected to particular locales.

1.2 Literature Review

This review draws on work from a range of disciplines in an attempt to illustrate gaps in the sense of place literature that considers the way that individuals, particularly youth, sense or perceive particular places. It begins with a brief history of the term *sense of place*, emphasizing its disciplinary roots in geography. I point out some of the limitations in this literature, including: its narrow focus on non-urban environments that are well known to a particular population, the dearth of information on the process by which sense of place develops, the fact that the term is often assumed to imply positive perceptions of a given environ and the lack of consideration of the role that people (and their varying characteristics) play in shaping sense of place. I also consider work dealing with the concept of *place attachment*, which is most commonly used to refer to the emotional bonds that people hold for a place (Altman and Low, 1992). It is often characterized as a subset of *sense of place*, although some scholars argue that it actually *subsumes* it. (Altman and Low, 1992; Relph, 1976). I find no systematic differences between these two concepts and treat them as synonymous in this review. Drawing on psychological and sociological theories of race, place, and stereotypes I suggest a framework for taking into account how the human component of place may impact youths' sense of place.

1.2.1 Sense of place

As noted in the introduction, sense of place is used by academics from a variety of disciplines, ranging from highly theoretical writings in geography to more applied fields, such as urban planning. Sense of place attempts to capture how and why humans feel connected or “rooted” to a place. According to landscape historian, J.B. Jackson (1994), the term sense of place is the “awkward and ambiguous” modern translation of the term, *genius loci*. In classical times it did not refer as much to place as it did to the presence or guardianship of a supernatural spirit. Because modern western society does not tend to embrace the notion of a divine or supernatural presence, sense of place has come to characterize the way in which people tie together

places, experiences, and the meanings that they derive from or ascribe to these. Jackson refers to this as the “atmosphere” of an environment.

While it is beyond the scope of this review to trace this discourse, it is important to note that the architectural literature continues to employ and debate the meaning of the term “genius loci”. Most widely cited is the seminal work of Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (1980). Here the term is understood as the sum of the physical and symbolic values of the physical environment. As architects, Schulz and his colleagues tend to focus on the physical realm as the source of meaning of a locale. This differentiates this literature from the work on sense of place, which tends to focus its analysis on the role that human values, beliefs and culture play in creating the meanings, symbols and values that are attached to a particular place.

Much of the early writing that deals explicitly with *sense of place* comes from the work of human geographers such as Edward Relph (1976) and Yi-Fu Tuan (1974; 1977). Because their studies leaned heavily on phenomenology, their understanding of people’s relationship to place emphasizes the role of experiences and meanings (or social factors), rather than the physical environment. According to their theories, emotional attachments to places are grounded in the intimate knowledge of a place that one develops through direct presence and activity in a particular locale. The more time spent in a place, the stronger their sense of place: “Awareness of the past is an important element in the love of place” (Tuan, 1974, p. 99).

In Place and Placelessness, Relph (1976) notes that a sense of place “may be authentic or genuine, or it can be inauthentic and contrived or artificial”(p. 61). Authentic experiences of place comes from an acute awareness and understanding of a place and intimate experiences in a place (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977). Conversely, an inauthentic sense of place implies a lack of understanding of the meaning and purposes of a place and may be associated with ‘existential outsidership’, or alienation from a place (Relph, 1976). Thus, visitors to a place cannot have experience an “authentic” sense of place or “existential insidership” (Relph, 1976). Despite Relph’s acknowledgement of the potential ‘dark side’ of sense of place, it is widely accepted to

have positive connotations—both by academics and those involved in practice (such as planners and architects). For example, in his recent book Native to Nowhere (2005), the urban planner Timothy Beatley notes “Protecting sense of place is often about protecting the special or unique historic qualities of the community, as well as preserving the natural landscapes of such communities.” (p. 35). The implication is that sense of place connotes positive emotions. As discussed below, this narrow definition limits the utility of this construct.

1.2.2 Analyzing Sense of place: A Comprehensive Framework

The phenomenological approach to analyzing sense of place resulted in a body of literature that emphasizes individual perceptions of a place, rather than a consideration of how the physical realm might influence this outcome. An exception to this emphasis has been in the field of urban design, where there is an emphasis on how to use the physical realm to ‘create’ a sense of place. (For a recent example of this see Ouf (2001)). This (over) emphasis on physical form is reflected in planner Kevin Lynch’s (1981) warning against relying *too* heavily on field description alone for an analysis of the ‘sense’ of a given place. A similar critique comes from Jiven and Larkham (2003) who urge urban designers to recognize that good design still requires “people—individuals and society—that integrate these features, through their value systems, to form a sense of place” (p. 78).

These cautions about considering both the physical and social construction of sense of place have gone largely unheeded. In general, the literature provides a dichotomous approach to analyzing sense of place. Designers emphasize the physical form and social scientists individual and group perceptions. Jackson (1994, p. 151), who leans toward social constructivism, summarizes the debate between the social and physical camps as follows:

It is my own belief that a sense of place is something that we ourselves create in the course of time. It is the result of habit or custom. But others

disagree. They believe that a sense of place comes from our response to the features that are *already* there—either a beautiful natural setting or well-designed architecture. They believe that a sense of place comes from being in an unusual composition of spaces and forms—natural or man-made. (Emphasis in original)

Recently, a group of natural resource scientists/rural sociologists have argued for a more comprehensive assessment of the factors that lead people to have a strong sense of place. In a study of people's sense of place with respect to public lands, they found that physical features and social ties had equal influence on the participants' sense of place (Eisenhauer et al. 2000). Stedman (2003) describes similar results in a study conducted with residents of a lake resort region of northern Wisconsin. He argues that characteristics of the environment affected the symbolic meanings of place, which in turn influenced individual's sense of place. These two studies underscore the importance of including both the human and physical elements in defining and studying a particular environment.

The sociologist Gieryn (2000) provides a useful framework for studying human environment relationships that can be applied to research on sense of place. He proposes an approach that balances the extreme social constructivism of the phenomenologists and designers' tendency toward environmental determinism. He argues that sociological studies become "place sensitive" when they include information about the relative location of a census tract in a metropolitan area, the street patterns or significant built structures and the perceptions and understanding of people of that locale along with more 'traditional' forms of data such as the demographics of a city or nation state. Gieryn proposes that a sociology that is informed by place should include consideration of: 1) geographic location; 2) material form; and 3) meaningfulness. This is aligned with Michelson and VanVliet's (2002) proposition that environments are more typically necessary but not sufficient conditions for outcomes, and a model that aims to link human behaviors to place must consider multiple factors. Kevin Lynch (1981 pp. 134) made an eloquent call to urban planners to consider both people's experiences in a place and field description when analyzing sense of place:

But to rely on field description alone, as many designers are wont to do, is to neglect one major element of the interaction which gives rise to sensibility. It is a substitution of the analyst's perceptions for those of the people who actually live there. It is equally incorrect, of course, to rely solely on how people respond, without studying the locale which is the subject of their responses.

This dissertation draws on these holistic paradigms for studying human environment relations through its consideration of the *locations* of two very different environments (urban versus non-urban), the physical and social *form* or *environments* of these places, and the *meaningfulness* of these environments to the youth.

Understanding how people sense places represents an important contribution to the field of urban planning for a number of reasons. First of all, planners are interested in how to create and manage places that are appealing to people. This requires a broad understanding of the way that different stakeholders, including young people of different backgrounds, experience place. Sense of place is also closely linked to the notion of environmental sustainability. As such, it provides a framework for considering how to encourage or strengthen individuals' commitments and stewardship of a given place, which is necessary for the creation and maintenance of sustainable places.

1.2.3 Gaps in the Literature

There are several weaknesses in the existing sense of place literature that my work addresses. Little has been written about the process by which sense of place develops. Studies of this phenomenon tend to be snapshots of people's relationships to particular places at given moments in time. This may stem from the literature's emphasis on home and natural environments as places most likely to elicit strong emotional ties. Because of this local focus, little consideration is given to how people sense environments that they have not directly experienced. A related inadequacy in this work is the fact that sense of place is assumed to connote positive perceptions. Finally, there is a lack of discussion about the link between the role that residents of a place might play in influencing perceptions of that locale (for example, are white folks

more likely to have a positive sense of neighborhoods that are predominantly white, regardless of the quality of the built environment?).

The lack of empirical research on the *process* by which sense of place develops is a major gap in this literature. While it is useful to understand people's associations with particular places at given moments in time, it is equally important to know how these relationships are formed and possible shifts over time. Anthropologist Keith Basso's (1996) ethnography of the Apache people in New Mexico is an attempt to understand this process. He suggests that "place making" (the *cultural* process by which meanings are attached to places) fosters sense of place. He emphasizes the role of stories and place names as a means of endowing place with meaning and building affective connection. While this is intuitively persuasive, because he does not include concrete examples of conditions causing changes in outcomes, it is difficult to judge the validity of his arguments. Urban historian and architect Dolores Hayden also highlights the role of narratives in the formation of a sense of a given place. She asserts that the development of shared place narratives are an essential part of establishing a positive sense of a place. Writing about a multi-year collaborative public history project that she led in Los Angeles, Hayden argues that her work uncovered "the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizens' public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory" (p. 9). She describes the process by which a series of "counter-spaces", the unrecognized sites excluded from previous preservation efforts, were collaboratively researched and in some cases memorialized. While the cases she presents are compelling examples of collaborative planning, the evidence of the impact that these projects had on individual stakeholders is limited.

While not writing specifically about sense of place, there are examples from urban ethnographic research that provide some plausible theories regarding factors that may affect perceptions. Gans' (1962) study of the community of Boston's West End suggests that one's perceptions of a place may shift when that environment comes under threat. He suggests that the West End as a *neighborhood* did not seem to be very important to the West Enders (they did not have a strong positive sense or attachment to this place) until the advent of redevelopment. Early in the study, when

he asked folks about what they liked about the area, they focused on its convenient location. He suggests: "there was relatively little interest in the West End as a physical or social unit" (p. 105). Only when the outside world began making plans to tear down the West End did its residents begin to speak about it as a neighborhood and "realize that they did have some feelings about the entire area" (p. 105).

Mario Luis Small (2002, 2004), a sociologist, conducted a study of Villa Victoria, a subsidized housing project in Boston's South End, which also suggests that political and neighborhood contexts (which shift over time) explain residents' perceptions of where they live. He argues that these perceptions have consequences for the level of engagement and investment in the community. He identifies two cohorts who currently reside at the Villa and suggest that they have very different ways of seeing (or in his words, 'framing') the development. The first cohort sees it as a "beautiful" place, while the second perceives it as "undesirable." He suggests that these differences in perceptions are the product of the first cohort's efforts to save the area from urban renewal and then improve upon deplorable housing conditions, while the second's negative perceptions are shaped by their comparison of their housing to the neighborhood that surrounds it (an area that has gentrified since the first cohort 'saved' the Villa). A related concept is Harvey's (1973) notion of 'geographic imagination', which extends Mill's classic conception of the 'sociological imagination' to include consideration of the way in which the individual's understanding of the social, political and physical context of different places allow them to see connections between their own identity and place, and how the situation in one place (e.g. the ethnic composition of the inner city) is related to one's experience of another place (e.g. the quality of suburban schools). That is, narratives are reframed as people come to understand the history, politics and connections between places.

These sociological and geographic theories are relevant to my work on sense of place. Specifically, by comparing the sense of place of youth who reside in different neighborhoods (some more stable than others), and whether this changes as they are put in a position to compare their neighborhoods to others, provides more insights into the forces that shape neighborhood perceptions. In addition, looking at an

intervention (participation in The Food Project) that educates youth about the social and natural history of particular environments may provide new insights about the link between knowledge and their overall sense of places, what Small would refer to as the ‘reframing’ of their neighborhood narratives and Harvey as the expansion of their ‘geographic imaginations’.

The notion that intimate experiences with a place are a necessary precursor to a sense of place is a theme that runs throughout much of this literature. This explains the fact that much of this literature emphasizes relationships to one’s home environment. While it is plausible that people garner a ‘stronger’ or ‘more accurate’ sense of place through intimate experiences, it seems simplistic to suggest that without these experiences they have no sense of a given place. Clearly people have perceptions of places beyond those with which they are intimately familiar; that is, a clear set of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values, and feelings that they associate with locales they have never directly experienced. For example, Krysan’s (2002) study of residential preferences in the United States suggests that whites tend to have a negative sense of mixed race communities, (specifically, they have an inflated *perception* of crime in these areas). This perception is not based on direct experiences in these neighborhoods, but is likely a reflection of the neighborhoods ‘reputation’ (as a result of images from the media, the neighborhoods history, or stereotypes about the types of people who reside in these places). As Krysan (2002) points out, these perceptions provide a partial explanation for white avoidance of mixed areas, which has been shown to contribute powerfully to racially segregated housing patterns in the United States. This finding underscores the importance of trying to understand how people develop their perceptions of places beyond their home environments as they carry important implications for the nature of people’s interactions with (or avoidance of) particular locales.

A related issue is the tendency for much of the sense of place writing to idealize the capacity of rural environments to elicit meaning. This is rooted in the anti-urban biases of early work in this area. Tuan (1977) notes: “In our contemporary urban world one effect is the dilution of spatial meanings” (p. 112). Relph uses

derogatory terms such as 'kitsch' and 'subtopia' to describe suburban environments. These characterizations do not ring true, particularly given writings from outside of the sense of place literature. For example, ethnographies of urban neighborhoods (for example, Whyte 1943, Gans, 1962 and more recently Small 2002, 2004 and Vale 2002) suggest strong emotional connections to places amongst some urban residents.

Writing about place attachment, Riley (1992) makes a call to avoid privileging the categories of 'nature' and 'home' in research on this topic. Despite this plea, there is still a predominantly local, non-urban emphasis that runs through both this and the sense of place literatures (see for example, Low, 1992; Derr, 2003; Vaske and Kobrin 2001). My study begins to address this gap by seriously considering how youth from different types of environments perceive their own place and that of the 'Other'.

The lack of widespread acknowledgement or empirical investigation into the possibility that one may simultaneously have a deep understanding of a place and a negative (or ambivalent) sense of it is another weakness in this literature. The assumption that intimate engagement leads to a positive sense of place prevails. One exception to this is Chawla's (1992) suggestion that there are four forms of *place attachment* (Affection, Transcendence, Ambivalence and Idealization). This typology emerged from the analysis of 38 randomly selected twentieth century autobiographies. The inclusion of Ambivalence as a type of place relationship, implies that analysts give serious consideration to potential negative relationships to place. Unfortunately, empirical work testing this typology has not been forthcoming. One exception to this, again outside of the sense of place literature, is urban planner and historian Larry Vale's (1997) study of public housing residents which found residents had an ambivalent, or what he refers to as an 'empathological' relationship to their residential environment. In the context of the sense of place literature, this indicates that a person can simultaneously have a positively and negatively valenced sense of a given environment.

Place identity, conceptualized as the "cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives" (Proshansky, 1989, p.59) is a result of a strong *place attachment* and/or *sense of place*. In their seminal article, environmental psychologists Proshan-

sky et al. (1983) conceptualize *place identity* as a “cluster of positively and *negatively* valenced cognitions of physical settings” [emphasis added] (p. 62). Like Chawla’s (1992) ambivalence, the negative “charges” have been neglected in research on place identity. I suggest that the assumption of positive connotations, both by academics and those involved in practice (such as planners and architects), limits the utility of this construct. Expanding its definition to include a range of affective relationships to place may allow for an enhanced understanding of the way that people sense places.

Although they are often treated as separate entities, perceptions of people and the physical environment they inhabit are inextricably linked to one another. How the race and ethnicity of local residents influence the way a place is perceived is not addressed in the literature on sense of place, but suggestions of its importance can be gleaned from research in urban sociology. A recent example of the extent to which the social and physical realms are bundled in people’s images of place comes from a recent study by Sampson and Raudenbush (2004). This study explores the factors that lead individuals to form their perceptions of disorder. The authors find that while ‘actual’ disorder is predictive of perceptions, racial and economic context are even stronger predictors. That is, the more people of color and poverty in a given location, the more disordered it appears to individuals of all races. This finding suggests that an individual’s sense of a given environment may be influenced by their racial stereotypes. That is, ‘race is a signal’ that influences the way people perceive a given environment, not just levels of disorder.

While not dealing explicitly with neighborhood perceptions, the literature on neighborhood satisfaction and preference suggests that while people may perceive neighborhoods of color as more disordered, their preference to live with co-ethnics trumps this when it comes to housing choice. This suggests that individuals may have a more positively valenced sense of places where they are racially ‘like’ their neighbors. For example, urban planner Sidney Brower’s (1996) review of the literature on neighborhood satisfaction indicates that many individuals value “ethnic, religious and income homogeneity”, although urban respondents appeared to place a greater value on diversity. Similarly, Camille Zubrinsky Charles (2005) review of

the literature indicates that although whites are willing to live with small numbers of blacks, Hispanics and Asians, they prefer neighborhoods that are predominantly Caucasian. While these minority groups show a greater preference for more integrated neighborhoods, they too prefer to be amongst co-ethnics.

Another human aspect of place that is not given a lot of attention in this literature is the role that an individual's social networks in a given locale play in shaping their place perceptions. Beatley (2005) writes that: "It is sometimes difficult to disentangle our affection for the city or region from the social and personal connections we have there" (p. 33). While he does not provide empirical data to support this supposition, it represents an important area for exploration. It is easy to imagine a scenario whereby a person who has many friendships with neighbors has a different relationship to their neighborhood than someone who is socially isolated. Mesch and Manor's (1998) work provides support for this link. These sociologists surveyed adults in Haifa, the third largest city in Israel, and found the larger the number of friends an individual had in their neighborhood, the greater their attachment to that place. These sociologists measured attachment using three indicators: 1) whether the residents were proud to live in their neighborhood; 2) would be sorry to move out; and 3) had plans to move out in the next year. Clearly, this is a much more narrow construction of attachment than put forth by other scholars, particularly environmental psychologists, who tend to define it in a way that more closely mirrors sense of place, emphasizing the emotional bond that develops between individuals or groups and an environment (Altman and Low, 1992). That being said, the Israeli findings are certainly relevant to my own research, particularly given the prominent role that peer influences have on adolescents' psychosocial development (Kaplan and Kaplan, 2002).

Derr's (2002) study of young children in New Mexico also provides some support for the supposition that the social is an important consideration in mediating an individual's sense of place; she finds a close association between the existence of strong social relationships in young children's network and their sense of place. My dissertation work considers how local friendships and kinship networks influence youths'

perceptions of their own neighborhoods, and how gaining ties to neighborhoods of the ‘Other’ impacts their sense of those places. I also consider the impact of cross place friendships, which in the context of The Food Project tends to imply cross racial friendships, on the youths’ sense of places.

1.2.4 The Link between Sense of place, Stereotypes, and The Contact Hypothesis

Sampson and Raudenbush’s (2004) findings about the link between the racial makeup of a neighborhood and perceived disorder make sense when placed in the context of research on stereotyping. Sociologists have found that Americans hold persistent beliefs that link blacks and disadvantaged minority groups to a host of neighborhood social images, including crime, violence, disorder, welfare and undesirability as neighbors (Bobo, 2001; Bobo and Kluegel, 1997). It is important to keep in mind that a shift in the way an individual perceives a given place may be related to cultural or racial stereotypes. As noted above, the physical realm seems to be bundled into an individual’s overall perception of a given place. Thus, it makes sense to consider both people and the physical environment when considering environmental perceptions.

Since the 1960s, the US has implemented various policy initiatives that aim to increase interracial contact, including school busing programs, equal employment opportunity laws, fair housing legislation, and affirmative action. The underlying logic of these programs is summed up by the *contact hypothesis*, which suggests that exposure to and interaction with other racial groups results in the modification of exaggerated or broad stereotypes² and undermines justifications for racism and prejudice. Specifically, this hypothesis states that interracial contact has the effect of reducing racial prejudice under the following conditions: 1) equal status; 2) non-competitive; 3) approved by relevant authorities; and 4) sustained and one-to one as opposed to a brief

²While some may make the argument that certain stereotypes are accurate i.e. crime is higher in poor black neighborhoods than in wealthy white suburbs, a stereotype is an exaggerated belief directed toward a particular group. The implication is that all members of a given group or community are imbued with a particular characteristic. As Wood and Sonleitner, (1996) point out, while some blacks may be more involved than some whites in criminal activity, a stereotype carries with it the false implication that all blacks are criminals—clearly, this is simply inaccurate.

transient duration (Allport, 1954; Wood and Sonleitner, 1996).

The Food Project is an integration effort that meets these criteria (youth of a broad range of ethnic and racial backgrounds are placed in a work environment where they must work cooperatively as members of the same team). Thus one would expect this program to diminish racial stereotypes. Given the finding discussed above with respect to the link among people, places and perceptions, it is reasonable to hypothesize that if The Food Project is successful in breaking down racial stereotypes amongst youth, this shift may translate into changes in their perceptions, images and ultimately, sense of different neighborhoods. It is also possible that this process may work in reverse, or even in a reciprocal manner. That is, the development of a more positive sense of the place of the 'Other' may lead to a diminution of negative racial stereotyping.

1.3 An overview of The Food Project

This study draws its sample from youth, aged 14-16, who participated in the 2004 and 2005 Summer Youth Program with The Food Project along with a control group of youth who applied to the program in 2005, but did not take part. This Boston-based program brings together urban and non-urban youth to farm on a 33 acre site in Lincoln, Massachusetts and on three small parcels of urban land in Roxbury (Fig. 1-1). The Food Project engages the youth participants in most components of farming, as well as job training, community service and leadership training³.

The organization's mission emphasizes bringing together folks with a range of life experiences to develop an understanding and appreciation of sustainable food systems:

³The Food Project offers a variety of programs, which are structured in a stairstep manner. The Summer Youth Program, which is examined in this dissertation, is the portal into the program. Youth cannot engage in the next 'levels' without completing this two month job. The other programs include an academic year program, a wide range of summer internship programs and a yearlong fellowship program. The only youth position that can be garnered without having been through the Summer Youth Program is that of a crew leader. There are six crew leaders each summer, each of who leads a crew of 8-10 youth in the Summer Program. These leadership positions are generally given to college students, many of whom have no prior experience with the organization.

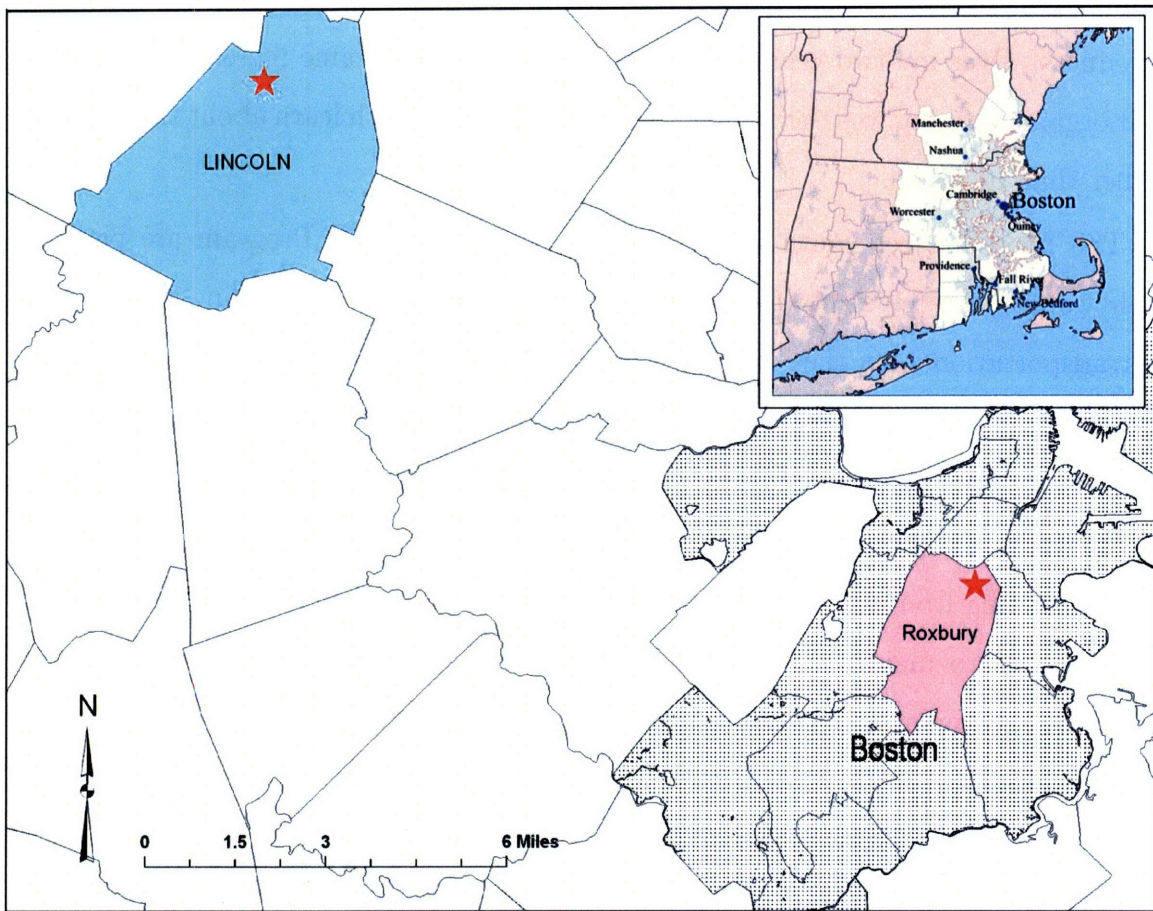


Figure 1-1: Locations of the Food Project sites in Roxbury and Lincoln.

To create a thoughtful and productive community of youth and adults from diverse backgrounds who work together to build a sustainable food system. This community produces healthy food for residents of the city and suburbs, provides youth leadership opportunities, and inspires and supports others to create change in their own communities (The Food Project, 2006).

In practice, the organization emphasizes educating the youth in the Summer Program about diversity, social justice, community building, and job training/work preparedness. Over my two years with this organization it became increasingly evident that organic farming was the *vehicle* through which the youth learn about these issues, rather than its focus.

The Food Project youth who participate in the Summer Program are paid for their work and receive subway, commuter rail or bus passes, depending on the form of transportation that they used to get to the sites. Traveling between an urban and non-urban environment via public transportation provides the participants with important opportunities for observing and learning about places beyond the time spent on the various growing sites.

In selecting from the many applicants to the Summer Youth Program, The Food Project tries to maintain: 1) Racial/ethnic diversity (as diverse as possible, with no single race or ethnic group dominating); 2) Equal numbers of male and female participants; 3) A 60/40 split between 'City of Boston' and 'Outside City of Boston' youth; and 4) A balance between "leaders" (20 percent); "at risk" (20 percent); and "middle of the road youth" (60 percent) . Approximately 60 youth are chosen to participate in the Summer Program from a pool of over 150. There tend to be far fewer applicants for the 24 non-Boston slots (approximately 2 applicants per slot) than the 36 Boston slots (which have between 3 and 4 applicants per slot). This reflects the relative lack of opportunities for summer activities for the urban youth e.g. summer camps and family trips, and their greater need for paid employment to supplement their family's incomes. This socioeconomic gap emerged as an important factor in shaping the urban and non-urban interactions over the course of the Summer Program.

The youths' risk designation is determined based upon their two reference letters for the program, which tend to be from their teachers, guidance counselors or other youth group leaders as well as the impression the staff get during the group and individual interview process. Given the relatively small amount of data that the organization utilizes to categorize each youth, the designations are not necessarily accurate. That being said, these efforts ensure that youth who have varying levels of social skills and academic prowess are admitted.

Along with growing and harvesting 50 000 pounds⁴ of food over the summer for homeless shelters, farmers markets and a Community Supported Agriculture program, the youth also volunteer at a Boston shelter once a week and take a turn running two different farmer's markets. They perform this work in what is referred to as a crew, which is comprised of between eight and ten youth that are demographically representative of the entire pool of youth participants i.e. approximately 60% are from the city, two are leaders, one or two are at risk and six are middle of the road. This ensures that all of the youth have consistent contact with people who are unlike themselves along a variety of dimensions. The youth work with this group for the entire summer. A college aged 'crew leader' supervises the crew along with a teenaged 'assistant crew leader', who generally completed the Summer Program a year or two before.

From a research standpoint, the selection process is of great value as it produces a pool of participants from a wide range of socioeconomic, racial and academic backgrounds. While it is impossible to control for all of the potentially confounding factors that influence the way youth sense places, the diversity of participants does facilitate the consideration of the role of many third variables, such as home environment, academic achievement, class and racial identity, on the way that youth perceive different environments.

It is also important to note that while there is a lot of variation in the characteristics of the youth participants, there are also striking similarities. They are all

⁴The farms actually produces over 250, 000 pounds of food over the entire growing season, which extends several months beyond the end of the Summer Program.

experiencing the trials and tribulations of adolescence, a key developmental stage in the life cycle⁵. Central to adolescent development is the establishment of identity (Erikson, 1950). Identity formation is initiated with the individuation of the early adolescent from family and neighborhood influence. It is further shaped through mid-adolescence by efforts at separation from these early experiences and simultaneous integration of ideas and opinions of influential others (peers, teachers, and other prominent adults). These mid-adolescent phenomena are often referred to colloquially as ‘adolescent rebellion.’ A composite identity shaped by these experiences, family, neighborhood, peer and other influences, emerges in late adolescence. Thus, the youth with whom I worked during my time with The Food Project were all ‘works in progress’ in terms of figuring out who they were and their understanding of place.

This program is rare in that it offers an opportunity to understand the effects of a program that exposes youth to people from backgrounds different to their own as well as to unfamiliar *environments* (e.g., urban kids work with their non-urban peers both in the city and in the suburbs). Each crew farms in Lincoln for six weeks and in Roxbury for two weeks. The landscapes in these two locales are strikingly different, ensuring a qualitatively different place experience in the city than in Lincoln.

1.3.1 The Sites

Lincoln

Although Lincoln is only about 15 miles from Boston, it has a distinctly rural feel. Forests, farms and homes on large parcels of land dot the landscape. There is a small commercial center near the commuter rail station that houses a grocery store, café and a few other small shops. Other than that, there is almost no commercial landuse in the town. The majority of dwellings are single family homes, many of which are set on large parcels of land. Over the past 50 years, the town has acquired about one third of the town’s area (1600 acres), which is managed by its Conservation Commission. The Commission’s responsibilities include the administration of more

⁵Traditionally, early adolescence is defined as 12 to 15 years, mid adolescence as 14 to 16 years and late adolescence 16 to 19 years indicating developmental overlap (Erikson, 1950).



Figure 1-2: The Food Project Farm in Lincoln. (Photo: <http://www.thefoodproject.org>.)

than 170 acres of town farmland, including the thirty-one acres that is leased by the Food Project (Fig. 1-2) (Town of Lincoln, 2007). The farm is called ‘Bakers Bridge Farm’, although it is referred to as the ‘Lincoln Land’ by the summer staff and the youth. Forest and a secondary road border the farm. Very occasionally a resident walks or bikes by on one of the trails that borders the site, but in general, the only sounds that are heard are those associated with the farm and the singing of the birds.

Lincoln’s population of almost 8000 residents is approximately 87% White, 5% Black and 4% Asian. The majority of the town’s residents, about 61%, live in homes that they own (United States Census, 2000). The median household income is close to 80, 000 dollars per year, more than double the average of Boston (United States Census, 2000). Approximately 0.8 percent of individuals in Lincoln are living below the poverty line, versus about 20% in the city of Boston (United States Census, 2000). To summarize, the town’s population is predominantly (although not exclusively) Caucasian and relatively wealthy.⁶

⁶As was pointed out by a reviewer, the town ‘feels’ whiter and less dense than the census data suggests. This is because of the inclusion of Hanscom Air Force Base, which houses close to 4000 people, in this data. Given that the United States Air Force is approximately 15% black (United States Air Force, 2006), it is likely that the Base contributes significantly to the black population of Lincoln reported by the U.S. Census. The Hanscom base provides housing as well as a library, chapel, clinic, post office, 2 schools and a number of national fast food chains (Hanscom Airforce Base, 2007) to its residents. This means that they have little need to leave the base and mingle

Roxbury

Roxbury's physical form and demographics offer a sharp contrast to Lincoln. The density, 14, 380 persons/square mile is close to thirty times that of Lincoln (City of Boston, 2007; Town of Lincoln Website, 2007). The area is mixed use, primarily residential and commercial. Businesses tend to be clustered on main streets and in 'squares'. Most of the dwelling units are multi-family, with a preponderance of 'triple deckers', which have one apartment on each of their three floors. The Dudley Street neighborhood, where The Food Project office and growing sites are located, conforms to this description. Small convenience stores, clothing shops, various restaurants (including the locally renowned Ideal Sub Shop⁷), and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative office are clustered on Dudley Street and Blue Hill Avenue, the neighborhood's two main thoroughfares.

The Food Project has three growing areas in this neighborhood, each of which are located several city blocks away from each other. The largest site is on West Cottage Street (it is referred to as 'The West Cottage Lot/Land' by the staff and youth). This 1.4-acre parcel was once the site of 16 houses located around a cul-de-sac, all of which burned down in the mid-1960s (Fig. 1-3). The Langdon Street lot is a half-acre parcel of land, where 3 houses once stood. In the summer of 2001, The Food Project began working on a third site, The Albion Street lot. This single-house lot is owned by a local resident who lives adjacent to the site. She offered The Food Project use of her land in exchange for helping her with her own garden.

with Lincolnites. Thus, the presence of military personnel of color on the base does not contribute to interracial contact amongst town residents. It is also likely that the income and homeownership numbers reported by the census for the town of Lincoln are driven down by the economic status and housing tenure of the Hanscom residents.

⁷I was recently reminded the extent to which this tiny sub shops serves as a neighborhood landmark. Taking a wrong turn on my way to The Food Project Roxbury office I got completely lost and pulled over at a strip mall, a few miles south of the office. I asked an employee of a Home Depot if he could tell me how to get to Dudley Street. He provided me with directions to the bus station, which is about one mile from the Food Project office. As I was leaving I mentioned that I was actually headed to "Ideals" for a meeting. When I said this he and his colleague both laughed and asked why I hadn't said so sooner: "Everyone knows Ideals." They revised their directions and sent me off with a breakfast recommendation, "If you're go'in to Ideals, you gotta get you a steak and cheese... yummmmm." I forwent the steak and cheese sub, but their directions were excellent; they had an excellent 'image' of the path from work to Ideals.



Figure 1-3: The West Cottage Lot. (Photo: <http://www.thefoodproject.org>.)

The Dudley Street Neighborhood's residents are predominantly people of color; approximately 65% identify as Black or African American and 25 % as Latino or Hispanic. The majority of residents, about 77%, rent their residences. Many folks in the neighborhood face economic challenges. The household income is about \$26 000, more than \$13 000 *below* the median for the city of Boston. Close to 25% of families live below the poverty line, 5% more than the city's median (U.S. Census, 2000). This is quite a contrast to the demographics of Lincoln.

The soundscape in Roxbury also differs markedly from Lincoln. During the summer months there are often hip-hop beats and Latin music drifting from the single and multi-family homes that border all three of the growing sites as well as from the cars that cruise past with their windows open. Residents, predominantly African American, Hispanic and Cape Verdean, wander past and say hello to youth. Some residents work adjacent to the youth, maintaining small plots that are located in a community garden that The Food Project set up on one side of their West Cottage lot.

While the Dudley Street neighborhood is located within Roxbury, it has a distinct history, which is a focus of the program. The area is home to The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, a nationally acclaimed organization. It created the Community Land Trust, Dudley Neighbors Incorporated, which was the first and only

neighborhood-based organization to receive eminent domain over vacant lots within the neighborhood. The Trust is responsible for building 155 new homes on much of this land, many of which were developed as part of a first time home ownership initiative (Medoff and Sklar, 1994; Dudley Neighbors Inc., 2007). It is a well-studied organization and as a result there are a plethora of resources for The Food Project to use to teach youth participants about the neighborhood, including a documentary film that they watch during their first week of work in Roxbury. Interestingly, during my two summers at The Food Project, there was little distinction made by the staff at The Food Project between Roxbury and the much smaller Dudley Street area; in fact, other than when the youth watched and discussed the film, it was always referred to the Roxbury site. To maintain consistency with Food Project language, throughout my work with the youth I referred to the location of the city sites as Roxbury, rather than the Dudley Street neighborhood.

1.3.2 Getting There as Place Experience

Travel to and from the Food Project sites is an important part of the Summer Program. For many youth it is the first time they have left their home environment without adult accompaniment. Movement between sites affords an opportunity for youth to observe non-Food Project components of Roxbury and Lincoln as well as the urban spectrum that lies between the two sites. The city youth and the suburban youth seldom travel together, other than a daily walk between the Lincoln farm and the commuter rail station, moving between sites in Roxbury and one time in the summer when they travel from Roxbury to the Children's Museum in downtown Boston, where they run a farmers' market⁸.

The city youth travel to Lincoln via the commuter rail; most take the subway or bus to get to one of two rail stations. In the morning, a school bus shuttles them between the Lincoln rail station and the farm and in the afternoon they make the approximately one mile walk between the farm and the rail station (Fig. 1-4).

⁸The year after I finished working with The Food Project, they discontinued their stand at The Children's Museum.

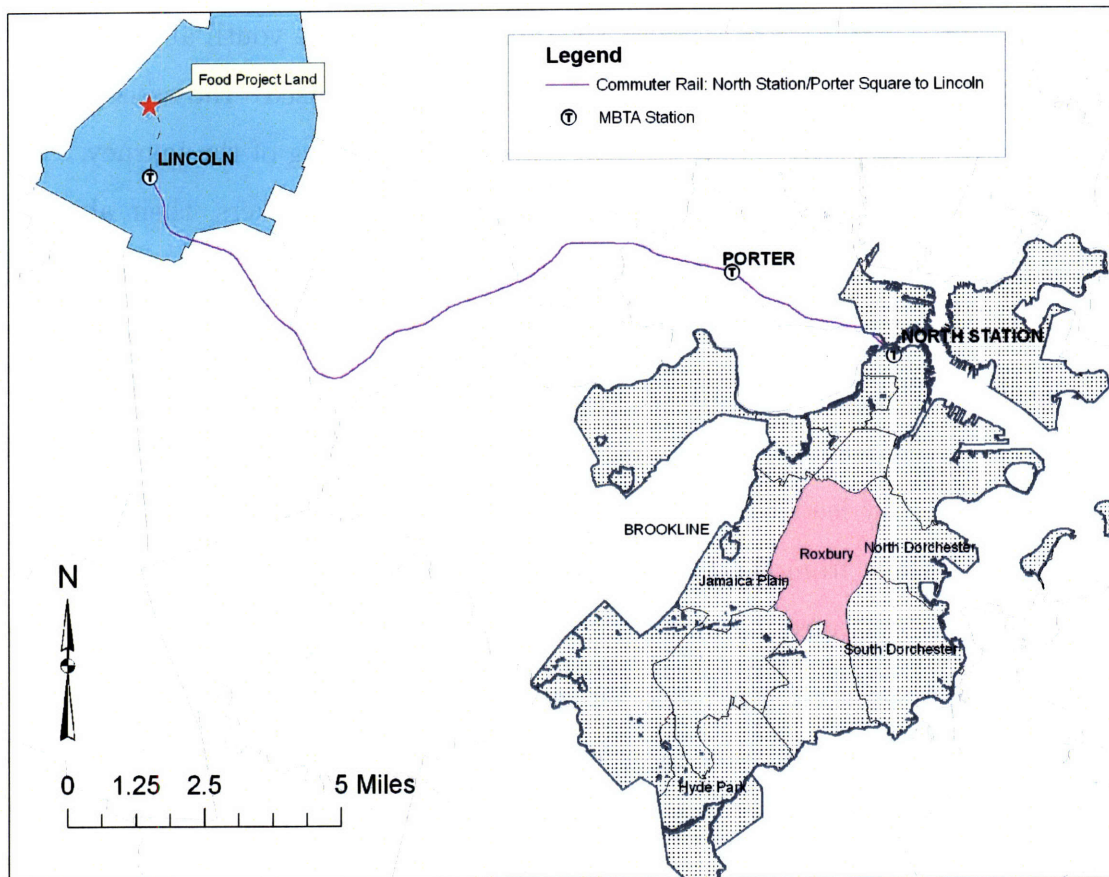


Figure 1-4: Map showing the urban youths' routes between Boston and the farm in Lincoln.

Many of the non-urban youth are driven to the Lincoln station to get on the school bus, although some take the commuter rail from nearby towns, such as Concord and Belmont.

The youths' transportation routes provide an opportunity for informal learning about place. Riding the commuter rail from the city to Lincoln allows the urban youth to observe an urban to rural continuum as the train passes through less and less developed landscapes. Walking from the farm to the train station at the end of each workday exposes these youth to a rural landscape beyond the farm. They walk along a country road, through a forest and finally along the train tracks to the rail station, which includes the one commercial development in Lincoln (Fig. 1-5). This 'Mall' houses a post office, bank, grocery store (Donelan's), a café and a couple of

other shops and services. The train rides are an important social time for the youth as there is a designated Food Project car on the train, so the youth all sit together. The ride out to Lincoln in the morning is largely unsupervised—the assistant crew leaders are responsible for monitoring behavior during this leg of the journey. Given that they are only one or two years older than the crew workers, their ability to moderate behavior is fairly limited. On the way back to the city, the crew leaders usually ride with the youth, although one day per week they remain late at the farm for a meeting. The responsibility for managing the crew workers then falls to two of the assistant crew leaders, the rest of them also attend the staff meeting. Even on days when the crew leaders ride the train back to the city with the youth, they do not walk with them from the farm to the station, they are driven there following a brief end of day staff meeting on the farm.

The non-urban youth travel into the city on the commuter rail at least one time per week for the entire summer in order to serve at a Boston shelter. For example, my crew worked at The Pine Street Inn, which is located in the center of the city. In addition to this weekly city experience, for two weeks during the summer the non-urban youth commute to Roxbury. They transfer from the commuter rail to the subway, disembarking at the Andrew station, which is located in the neighborhood of Dorchester although the youth referred to it as being in Roxbury (Fig. 1-6). Most of the urban youth (except those who live near the Dudley neighborhood who walk directly to the site or those who live on a bus route that gets them directly to the site) also meet at Andrew, accessing it by foot, bus or subway. This station is located in a bustling, semi-industrial area, and many of the commuters are people of color. The youth are picked up from the station by a Food Project van and dropped at the West Cottage lot. After work the van takes the youth back to the Andrew station and they return home via public transportation. For most of these young people, this means making their way back to their home town on the commuter rail where their parents pick them up.

Due to the constraints of the train schedule, the non-urban youth often arrive early at the Andrew Street station. This affords them the opportunity to observe the



Figure 1-5: Aerial photo showing the youths' route between the Lincoln farm and the commuter rail station.

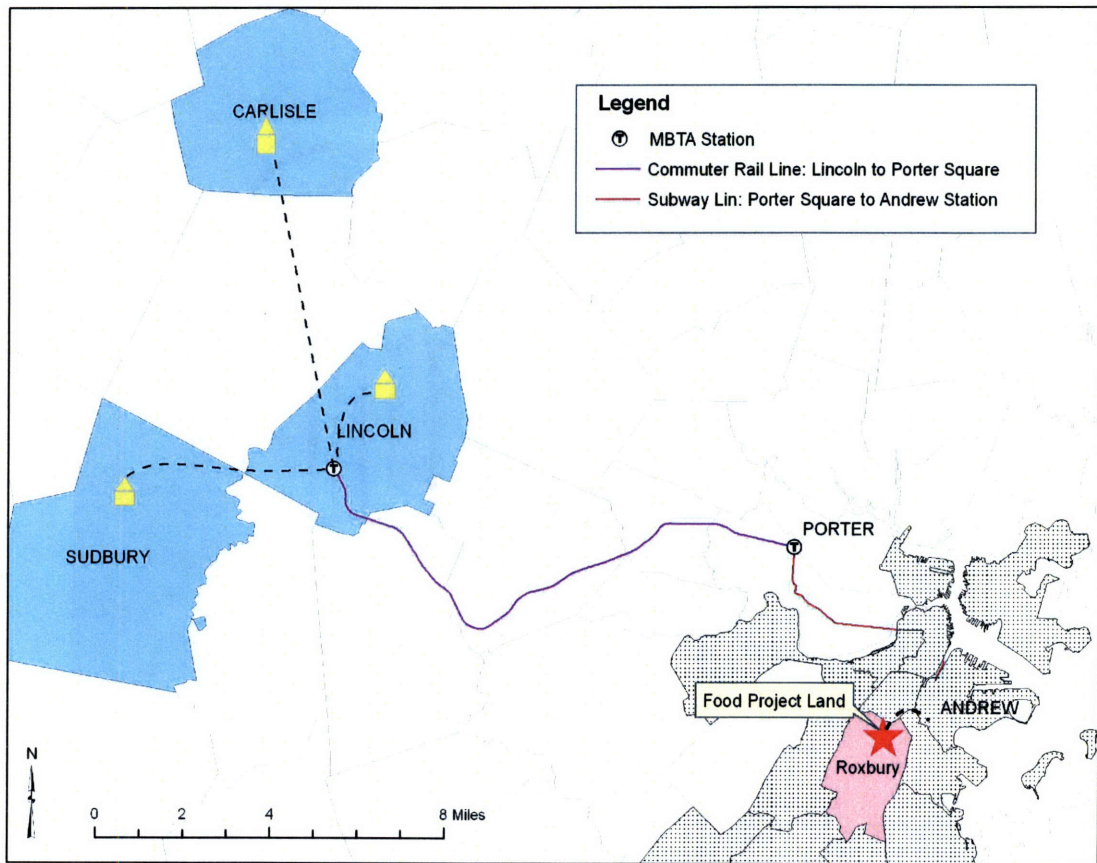


Figure 1-6: Map showing the non-urban youths' routes between Lincoln and surrounding towns and the Food Project's Roxbury site.

city folks who are using this station and to venture around the corner for a morning treat from the nearby Dunkin Donuts. During my two summers with the program, I found that this trip was the first time that many of the non-urban youth had traveled into the city of Boston without adult accompaniment, and for the majority it was their first trip to Roxbury. While working in the Dudley Street neighborhood, the youth walk between the three growing areas, go on a two hour walking tour of the area and make the quarter mile journey down Dudley street to the Town Common, where they run a weekly farmers market (Fig. 1-7).

While all of the youth are exposed to the train/subway stations and do some walking in Lincoln and Roxbury, the different levels of freedom that the youth are given in each place is striking. For example, the youth walk independently from the Lincoln farm to the train station. There is little concern about traffic or criminal elements. In contrast, when the youth move between growing areas in Roxbury or go to the town common to run the farmer's market, a staff member must accompany them. In addition, there is a strict prohibition against entering the stores that are located near the Lincoln commuter rail, either before or after work (except for the non-urban youth who may frequent the shops with their parents who dropped them off and picked them up from the station). In contrast, in the two summers I worked with this organization I did not hear any mention of restricting youths' access to the Dunkin Donuts located near the Andrew T Station. The youth often made trips there prior to the van pick up in the morning or for an afternoon snack before starting their journey home after work.

The fact that this program utilizes two places that have distinctly different landscapes to educate youth about ecological issues (with a focus on organic agriculture and building sustainable food systems), social justice and racial diversity provides the opportunity to explore myriad ways in which different youth might develop their perceptions and connections to places. Exposure to the 'Other' through the experience of farming is a notable aspect of the program. The act of farming is something that is unfamiliar and at times overwhelming to most of the youth participants, regardless of their backgrounds. This, plus the fact that all the youth have the chance to function

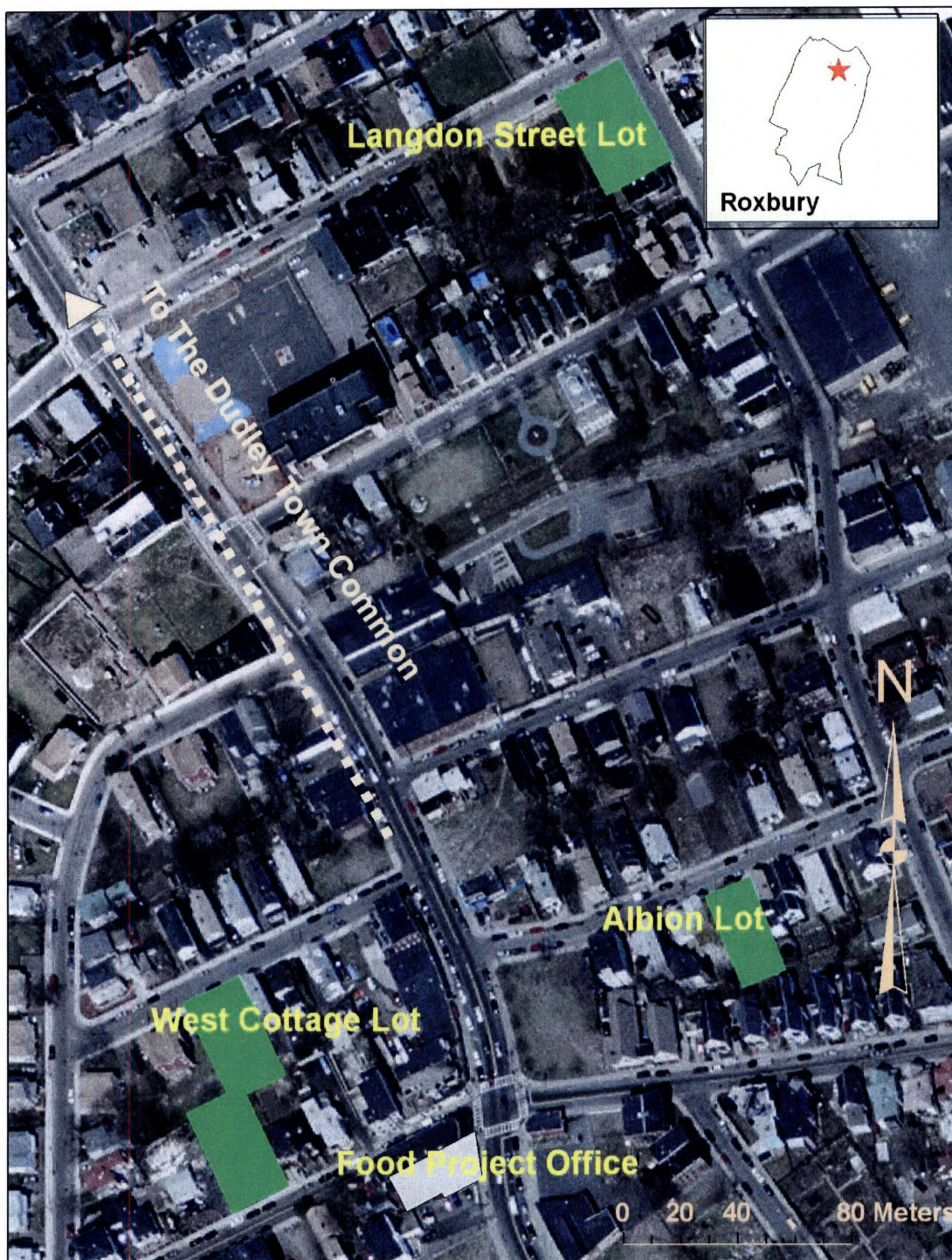


Figure 1-7: Aerial photo showing the Food Project's urban office and three urban growing sites. The youth walk between the sites (and to the Dudley Town Common to run the weekly farmer's market) accompanied by at least one staff member.

in an environment that is somewhat ‘familiar’ to them distinguishes this integration effort from programs such as school bussing, which tend to place the ‘receiving’ youth in a position of power. I refer to this balancing of power as the ‘leveling’ effect of farming and differential place familiarity. As discussed in the literature review (Sect. 1.2, page 28), the contact hypothesis suggests that this equalization of power should create conditions whereby negative stereotypes about people and places may shift. Whether or not this is the case and if there is ‘spill over’ into their perceptions of places is an issue that is explored in the dissertation.

It is important to note that the youths’ intimate experiences were with *particular* places, most significantly with the *growing* sites. One of the goals of this study was to understand whether experiences in these sites affected their broader images of places, including the entire neighborhood of Roxbury, the town of Lincoln, and even more broadly, ‘the city’ and ‘non-urban environments.’ I was also interested in whether the program influenced their sense of their own neighborhoods or towns. That is, I tried to tease out how, or if, a change in the ‘sensing’ of one place spills over to others, as well as identify strategies to promote this type of transfer.

1.3.3 A typical Day at the Food Project

Other than the one-day per week when the youth serve at a shelter, their days at The Food Project follow a similar rhythm. Once they arrived at the farm site, be it in Roxbury or in Lincoln, they gather together for a morning check-in. At the Lincoln farm, this takes place under a large tent where there are picnic tables, in Roxbury under a large wooden shelter. Generally the check in revolves around a quote or a question posed by the site director. If a quote, the staff asks the youth to comment on what they think that it means or how it related to the week’s theme⁹. They often encourage youth to express their feelings or reveal something new about themselves i.e., “If your weekend was the weather, how would you describe it?” or

⁹A theme was identified for each week of the program. The themes were: service, responsibility, initiative, commitment, hope, courage and community. As a participant observer, my feeling was that these themes were rarely addressed other than in the occasional check-in. For example, my crew leader never engaged our crew in discussions explicitly related to the week’s theme.

“Share something ‘risky’ about yourself with your crew.”

From there the youth usually head out for fieldwork, although there is occasionally a workshop for a single crew. The time out in the field is referred to as a ‘block’ of fieldwork. Most ‘blocks’ require youth to weed beds, although once a week they spend the morning harvesting food for the shelters, the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program and bi-weekly farmers markets. Lunch is at noon and the youth usually have to sit at a picnic table, under the tent or shelter, with their crew, although occasionally exceptions are made and they get to choose their own seating arrangements. This offer of free seating choice tends to result in tables segregated by race and place of residence (city versus non-city). Following lunch there is often a game involving the entire group and then the youth are sent back to the fields or to a workshop—the order varies by the day. There is almost always at least one block of fieldwork in the afternoon and often one workshop. Workshop topics range from diversity to agriculture. Generally, the agriculture workshops include one crew at a time, while the diversity workshops tend to involve all crews at once.

Given the number of workshops that the youth take part in over the summer, it is unwieldy to describe them all in this document. There are, however three workshops that elicit a great deal of conversation by the youth both during the actual event and after it was over, Community Build, Level Playing Field, and Identity Charts. A brief description of each of these workshops is provided below.

- **Community Build.** In this workshop, the youth are divided into four imaginary communities: Chocolate, Mint Chocolate, Vanilla and Strawberry. Each group is given a designated amount of resources i.e. tape, paper, play money etc. and instruction sheets. They are then told to work together as a team to build their ideal community. Unknown to the participants, each group starts with unequal resources. Similarly, each group receives different treatment from the various municipal offices, such as Housing Authority officials and the police force (all role played by Food Project staff) that they encounter while trying to develop their community. For example, Chocolate starts with the most resources and is given preferential treatment in their negotiations with city officials. After

completing the activity (which took about 2 hours), the youth debrief in two smaller groups for another hour.

The desired impact of this workshop is to place the youth in a simulated community experience where they had to respond to the limitations set out by “the system.” The Food Project program manual (Gale, 2004), *Growing Together*, lists this activity as ‘high risk.’ This designation is due to the nature of the post-workshop discussion, which includes asking the youth to share personal information with one another. For example, the youth are asked: If you had to pick a group that most represents where you live, which group would it be? They are also asked to share what they learned about themselves through participation in this activity. For the typically self-conscious adolescent, this is not the type of information that they are used to discussing, let alone being asked to share it with a large group of peers.

- **Level Playing Field.** This workshop takes about two hours. Twenty minutes are spent on the actual activity and the rest of the time is spent debriefing the youths’ experiences. To begin the activity, all of the youth are asked to line up, shoulder to shoulder, facing toward the farm. The facilitator asks the youth to take one step forward if they were male and one backward if they were female. He or she then reads off a series of about 30 other statements, such as “Take one step forward if you are white” or “Take one step backward if you are Latino, Chicano, Hispanic or Mexican.” After reading all of the statements, the youth are spread apart; most of the white males in the program are near the front and the majority of women of color near the back. The activity is followed by a discussion. The workshop facilitator begins by asking the youth a series of questions about how they felt as they moved either forward or backward and how accurately their final position reflected their true place in society. They then discuss whether or not the class structure of American society is the result of structure i.e., poverty and systematic discrimination or agency i.e., how hard people work. There tends to be some debate about each of the questions and

the youth are fairly emotional when they describe the challenges faced by their families and friends. Because the youth are asked to share personal stories this activity is also listed as high risk by the program manual.

- **Identity Charts.** This identity workshop is not included in the Food Project manual, which indicates it is a newer addition to the program. The youth do this workshop as a crew rather than with the whole group of participants. The activity starts off with the facilitator asking the youth to define identity and why it was important. They are then asked to brainstorm words that they associated with identity. When I participated in this activity, it included words such as: musical tastes, religion, culture, sexual orientation and identity, place of being, and spirituality. After the brainstorm, the youth are given large pieces of construction paper, and markers and asked to make charts that represented their multiple identities. At the end of the workshop, the youth take turns presenting their charts to the rest of their crew, explaining the words, symbols and pictures they chose to put on their charts.

Standards, Violations and Straight Talk

A central component of The Food Project program is the notion of standards. On the second day of the Summer Program, the youth are asked to help set personal and community goals. From this list the staff leads the youth toward the question of what to do should someone in their 'community' fail to behave in a way that advanced these shared goals. The youth are then introduced to the Standards Sheet and go over it line by line (Appendix 1). In order to remain in the program, the youth must sign the Standards Sheet, which serves as their job contract. The Food Project literature makes it clear that no one is ever forced to sign the Standards Sheet, but in the two years that I observed, no one ever refused.

Associated with the standards chart is the violations chart, which outlines the consequences should a youth violate a standard (Appendix 2)¹⁰. In general, youth

¹⁰Since the completion of my research, The Food Project has simplified this chart, but the basic idea remains in place.

are given a pre-warning, warning, and then an actual violation for a given item on the chart. For example, they might receive a pre-warning for being unmotivated out in the field, and then move to a warning due to lack of motivation in a workshop. Should they be unmotivated a third time, they move to step 1 on the chart, which means a loss of a day's pay. They can move incrementally through step 2 (losing 2 days of pay) and then to step 3 (losing 3 days of pay), for most violations before being fired. Some violations however, result in automatic dismissal, including fighting or having drugs, alcohol, a knife or any other weapon while on the job.

Violations are given out during something called 'straight talk', which is essentially the format in which the youth are given job feedback on their work. The term 'positive' is used for affirmations and 'delta' for constructive criticism. The youth receive this feedback from their crew leader once per week during the Summer Program, always at the end of the workday at the homeless shelter. It is given out in front of the entire crew. The youth also engage in two 'all to all' or 'intensive' straight talk sessions over the summer where every member of the crew gives and receives feedback, including giving it to their crew leader and assistant crew leader. At the end of straight talk, the crew leader hands out any violations that were 'earned' during the previous week¹¹. In general, the youth do not know they were receiving a violation until this time.

The Food Project has an unusual set of guidelines around the termination of youths' contracts. In most cases, if a youth is fired, he or she can apply to be rehired. This process includes three steps: 1) working as a volunteer for two days without getting any violations; 2) writing a statement about why he or she wants to rejoin; and 3) reading the statement to a rehiring committee comprised of selected Food Project youth and staff. The rehiring committee decides whether to accept or decline the reapplication. If a youth is given the opportunity to be rehired he or she *must* return to work the following day or else forfeit this opportunity.

As this brief description of the Summer Program conveys, this is an impressive

¹¹This process was quite stressful for many of the youth and there was often a lot of complaining about the injustices of the system on our walk from the shelter to the subway station.

multi-service youth organization. The stated goals of the Summer Program include learning about sustainable food systems and social diversity as well as promoting community service and job skills. The tangible outputs of this program are impressive: over 2000 hours of service to homeless shelters, the cultivation and harvest of over 50 000 pounds of food for homeless shelters, a Community Supported Agriculture program and two weekly farmers' markets. This dissertation does not question the efficacy of this organization in any of these realms. In fact, it was its impressive nature that initially attracted me to study it. Instead this work explores the way in which the Food Project's Summer Program impacts youths' sense of places and how it breaks down, reinforces or even amplifies youths' existing images of places.

1.4 Methods

My dissertation research utilized a variety of methods to gain a better understanding of youths' sense of places. The use of a mixed method design allowed me to draw on different types of data that bear on the same phenomena in order to triangulate my research findings. Because each research method has particular strengths and weaknesses, there is always the concern that the research findings will be biased by the method of inquiry (Babbie, 1992). Triangulation provides a cross-check on the data through different modes of inquiry; agreement from each source provides greater confidence that the information is correct. Weiss (1998) asserts that a thoughtful combination of these sources "will lead to a more authentic story (264)."

I spent two summers collecting data on the Summer Program, although the majority of data used to craft this dissertation is drawn from the second year. The first summer involved bi-weekly observations of different crews. The data from my observations were recorded in the form of fieldnotes. Although this information is not included in the analysis presented here, it was important as it informed the research protocol that I undertook during my second season with the organization, particularly the importance of developing intimate relationships with a smaller number of youth.

During my second season of data collection, I employed semi-structured interviews, cognitive mapping, participant observation and what I call a 'visioning exercise' to gain an understanding of the way that youth sensed particular places and how (or whether) The Food Project influenced this. The sample for this portion of the study was comprised of 60 youth who participated in the 2005 Summer Program at the Food Project as well as a 'control' group (youth that applied, were waitlisted but never entered the 2005 Summer Youth Program). Prior to commencing the study, consent forms were collected from all participants and the control group and their guardians (Appendix 3).

1.4.1 Sample

The main sample for this study was drawn from youth who participated in the Food Project's Summer Youth Program in 2005. The bulk of the control group (11 of 14) are youth who were waitlisted for this program. In order to answer what I see as some emerging themes about the relationship between racial identity and place, after the program had ended I used purposeful sampling to locate two Lincoln based youth of color. The sample size for each component of the study varies with the method that was employed. These numbers are summarized in Table 1.1.

1.4.2 A Grounded Theory Approach

Prior to commencing this study I laid out a series of hypotheses regarding the specific effects of The Food Project on youths' sense of places. While these hypotheses guided my initial research, as my fieldwork progressed, I realized that a grounded theory approach to collecting data and analyzing my field notes and interviews was more appropriate than hypothesis testing. This approach leads to the development of theories that emerge from or are "grounded" in the data. This tends to result in 'substantive' rather than formal or 'grand' theories (Merriam, 1998). This inductive rather than deductive process of data analysis is well suited to disciplines such as Urban Planning, that emphasize building theories through the study of practice. In

Table 1.1: Sample Size (n) for each Component of the Study.

Method	Number of Food Project Youth		Control Group	
	Pre (n)	Post (n)	Pre (n)	Post (n)
Cognitive Mapping	60	58	11	13
Semi-structured Interviews	9	8	11	13
Visioning Exercise	60	58	11	13
Participant Observation*	60		N/A	

*As discussed below, participant observation occurred throughout the summer of 2005 with youth participants of The Food Project. There was no 'control' group or pre and post testing.

the context of my dissertation, it means that the theories I put forth about the way youth relate to place emerged from, or was 'grounded' in the empirical data that I gathered through visioning and cognitive mapping exercises, participant observation, and interviews.

Visioning Exercise

This exercise was created to try to get at the youth's image of a particular environment. I asked the youth to close their eyes and picture a particular place (their neighborhood, Lincoln and Roxbury). Once their eyes were closed I asked them to list the words that best describe their image under three headings: 1) people; 2) buildings; and 3) nature (See Appendix 4 for sample worksheets). This exercise was conducted twice, before and after the Summer Youth Program. One month prior to using this exercise with my sample, I piloted it with a group of fifteen youth who participated in the Summer Youth Program in 2004 and were involved in The Food Project's school year program.

Cognitive Mapping

Kevin Lynch's (1960) seminal work, The Image of the City, popularized cognitive mapping as a research tool to assess people's relationship to place. This method has been employed in a range of disciplines including planning, education, geography and psychology (Milgram, 1976; Kitchin, 1997; Tversky et al; 1999; and Blaut, 1999). Cognitive maps are used to assess how individuals acquire, store, recall, and decode spatial and environmental information (Downs and Stea, 1973), as well as to gain information about people's attitudes toward different places (Kitchin, 1997). In my past work, I have used cognitive maps to assess changes in environmental awareness and perceptions resulting from participation in environmental education programs (Fisman, 2005).

In this study, I asked the youth participants and my control group to draw their neighborhoods, using a combination of methods outlined by Sobel (1998) and those currently being employed in the Moving to Opportunity Study (3cMTO Ethnography,

2006). (See Appendix 5 for the mapping protocol). The same fifteen minute exercise was performed in the spring and fall (pre- and post-program for the Food Project participants). During the mapping exercise the youth were given a red pencil, an orange pencil and a purple pencil. Every five minutes they were asked to switch colors. The result was that the red features on their maps were drawn in the first five minutes, the orange features in the next five minutes and the purple features in the last five minutes. This method allowed me to see the order in which they put specific features onto their maps. My interpretation was that the elements that were most prominent in their mental image were drawn first.

While cognitive maps can be used to help to understand the way an individual perceives a particular place, they do not provide a complete picture of the experience of a given place. As Warner and Vale (2001) point out, mental maps miss “the multiple other ways that citizens learn about places, especially-though not exclusively-about places that are more distant from the precincts of their own direct experience” (xvi). Similarly, Milgram (1976) suggested that the map that a person draws of the city is not his or her mental map but rather *a clue* to what it really is. Thus, the sketches were interpreted as a hint as to the participant’s conception of their place, rather than a complete image. In order to supplement the information from the cognitive mapping activities, I conducted interviews to draw out the youth’s perceptions and their stories about their neighborhoods, Roxbury and Lincoln. Specifically, I interviewed the eight members of my crew and my control group about their maps.

My discussions with the youth about their maps confirmed Milgram’s (1976) suggestion that these maps are incomplete representations. The youth consistently modified their maps during their interviews, either extending or truncating the boundaries as they spoke about their experiences there. Several youth noted that they did not draw all of what they considered to be their neighborhood as they had trouble converting their mental image to a rendering or simply “did not feel like” completing the exercise. These comments brought the validity of some of these drawings into question. That being said, some maps are included in the text. I was careful to select maps from cases where the youth indicated that their maps accurately depicted elements

of their mental model of their neighborhoods. In these cases the maps augmented my understanding of the youths' perceptions of their neighborhoods.

Youth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the control group during the first three weeks of June 2005. Interviews with 'my crew' occurred the first two days of the Summer Program¹², on June 29th and 30th. The questions listed in Appendix 6 guided the interview process. There are four broad sets of questions: 1) background information; 2) perceptions of their neighborhood; 3) comparison of their neighborhood to other neighborhoods; and 4) perceptions of their neighborhood in comparison to the rest of the city. An additional series of questions were added onto the post program interview for Food Project participants to supplement my understanding of their summer experiences. As I transcribed the interviews I engaged in preliminary coding. This process was inductive in that I did not have a prefabricated list of codes. Sample interviews were shared with two members of my doctoral committee. At the end of the summer, the interviews were recoded using the software package ATLAS.ti version 5. The forty final code 'families' were based upon the themes that consistently emerged from my interviews, fieldnotes, and memos that I wrote during the summer (see the discussion of participant observation for details on the latter sources).

Participant Observation

Participant observation requires the analyst to enter into a social situation and build relationships with the people in it by participating in the daily routines of the setting (Loftland and Lofland, 1995). I conducted participant observation by embedding myself in one crew at The Food Project in the summer of 2005. This required that I engage in all aspects of the Summer Youth Program, including riding the commuter rail to the farm in Lincoln and the subway to the site in Roxbury, working in the fields,

¹²From a methodological perspective, it was unfortunate that the staff of The Food Project did not want me to contact participants about the study in advance. The result was that their pre-program interviews were completed during the first two days of the program, which meant they had some exposure to The Food Project land.

participating in the workshops, and responding to my 18 year old crew leader/boss. In order to fully integrate myself into the program, I wore The Food Project 'uniform' (a forest green t-shirt supplied by the organization) and attended extra events, such as the overnight in Lincoln.

I was introduced to my crew on the first day of the program as a fellow crew worker who was also interested in understanding more about The Food Project. My crew leader, Mark was explicit that I was subject to all of the same rules as the other youth. Despite this, there was at least one instance when a youth voiced confusion about my role. During our first 'intensive straight talk session (two weeks into the summer) Justin, one of the males on our crew, said that he felt unsure about whether I was really a crew worker or a staff person. The response from Kiara, one of the girls on the crew, who said "Justin, she is one of us," provided me with some confidence that I was seen as a crew worker by many of the youth. I used this incident to reiterate the fact that I was there as a worker who was interested in learning about The Food Project and was not there to supervise them, or tell on them, in any way. Getting deltas each week (for behaviors such as chatting too much out in the field with my peers and asking for extra water breaks) from my crew leader helped the youth accept me as a fellow worker. They would often engage me in their group gripe sessions about the 'unfairness' of the deltas that we got from our crew leader each week.

As the summer progressed, I increasingly gained the confidence of the youth and was treated more as a peer than a researcher. For example, the female crew workers all included me in their conversations about their Food Project 'crushes' and two of the male youth confided in me about the social dysfunction of their families. My sense that the youth treated me as a friend and a confidant was reinforced by the fact that my most common 'positive' during both intensive straight talk sessions was that I was "easy to talk to."

In addition to full participation in the Summer Youth Program, I attended and participated in all aspects of the week long staff training of the crew leaders and assistant crew leaders. This occurred the week prior to the start of the Summer

Program. Attending the training session provided me with a deeper understanding of the organizations structure and of the personalities and leadership styles of the youth leadership.

While participating in the Summer Youth Program and the staff training I made 'jottings' throughout the day (during 'bathroom breaks'), which I converted to field-notes each evening. As I transcribed my fieldnotes, I engaged in preliminary coding. The process was inductive in that I did not use an existing list of codes to organize the data. The codes that I used were 'grounded' in my observations. As Miles and Huberman (1984) point out, this method of coding is well suited to the grounded theory approach in that: "Data get well molded to the codes that represent them" (p. 57). Throughout the summer, I wrote short memos (ranging from single sentences to short paragraphs) about the themes that I felt were emerging from the data, such as the city youths' tendency to link descriptions of place with those of race. I shared and discussed these memos and samples of my fieldnotes (and interview transcripts) with members of my doctoral committee. At the end of the summer, all of my fieldnotes (over 400 pages) from the staff training and Summer Youth Program were put into the qualitative software program ATLAS.ti version 5 and recoded based upon the forty 'code families' that emerged from my memos and conversations with my committee.

Other Sources of Data

After the summer ended, The Food Project granted me access to the application packages that my crew submitted when they applied to work for the Summer Program, including their essays, and reference letters from their teachers, guidance counselors, etc. I used the information contained in these documents to cross check the data that I gathered through my interviews and observations of the youth. For example, the reference letters consistently highlighted the personality traits that I had taken note of during the summer, indicating that over the course of two months I was able to get a good 'sense' of the youth I was in contact with.

Chapter 2

Non-Urban Youth: Steve, Julie and Pete

My crew included three youth, Steve, Pete and Julie, who all resided in the Western suburbs of Massachusetts, near The Food Project site. The Food Project classified these three youth as being from ‘outside of the city of Boston.’ I grouped them together in my analysis because of the similarities in their living environments, which were distinctly ‘non-urban’¹. Steve lived right in the town of Lincoln. Pete resided in Carlisle, which is located several miles from Lincoln but has a similar landscape (a large number of farms, conservation land and homes built on several acres characterize the landscape). Julie lived in Sudbury, which has a less rural ‘feel’ than the other two towns; likely due to the presence of denser residential development, more commercial development, and a few strip malls on the edge of town. However, like Lincoln and Carlisle, there are large tracts of conservation land in the town. All three towns are wealthy (with median household incomes above 75, 000 dollars), have a limited number of poor households (families living below the poverty line comprise between 0 and 5 percent of each of the towns’ populations), and their residents are

¹There were youth on the crew who The Food Project considered as ‘outside of the city of Boston’ who I did classify as ‘non-urban.’ These youth resided in towns that were relatively urban in character compared to the non-urban youths’ towns and/or had intense lived experiences in both urban and non-urban environments. These young people are discussed in the section of the dissertation that deals with ‘cross-over’ youth.

essentially white (the populations are between 0 and 2 percent Black and Hispanic) (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2007).

The fact that these youth were all from wealthy families, white and growing up in similar environments did not mean that they were alike or that they shared a common sense of place. In fact, on many dimensions one could not have imagined three more different young people. Even if these if these three youth were to attend the same school they would not be in the same clique. Steve was a self-identified ‘nerd’, Pete an overachiever and Julie a rebel. These youths’ identities and personalities informed the way that they perceived their own neighborhoods and the city, as well as how their experiences at The Food Project affected their sense of the various places they were exposed to throughout the summer.

I tell the individual stories of Steve, Julie and Pete’s summer experiences with The Food Project in order to provide insights into their identities, values and sense of places and how the program impacted them. Each of the three narratives is broken into two parts. The first focuses on the individual youth’s sense of Lincoln, his or her neighborhood and Roxbury prior to working for The Food Project. The second part highlights some of the changes in their senses and identifies the programmatic features that afforded these shifts. By teasing out the similarities and differences in the way these young people spoke about places prior to and after their time at The Food Project, I develop broader inferences about the way that youth who are raised in non-urban environments think, learn and relate to different environments. A discussion of the theoretical framework that emerged from these findings follows the three narratives.

2.1 Steve: The Sociable Nerd

Since he was two years old, Steve had lived in Lincoln in a small single family home with his mother and father. His mother worked for a non-profit and his father managed a computer network for a company. They were solidly middle class, but throughout the summer, Steve commented about his family’s relative lack of wealth compared

to most Lincoln residents. This sentiment, along with Steve's feeling that there was a dearth of activities that fit with his interests led him to express a negative outlook toward his hometown.

My field notes from the first day at The Food Project described my initial impressions of Steve as "tall, and a bit socially awkward." Later in the week, I recorded his difficulty making eye contact when speaking with others. I was also struck by his intellectual capacity. For example, on the fifth day of the program, the Lincoln site director tried unsuccessfully to engage the youth in a discussion of a recent terrorist attack on the public buses in London, England. Most of the youth seemed unaware of what had happened and those that did know about it had little to say. Steve was one of the few who contributed to the discussion, showing a tremendous amount of insight and maturity with his comment: "I don't exactly believe there is a good or evil, there just is...the danger is extremism. They cause the most damage." This comment illustrated Steve's political awareness and his left-leaning worldview, which influenced the way that he sensed and experienced places.

My initial sentiments about Steve's personal characteristics were borne out by his Food Project application. He was identified as 'at risk' during his interview for admittance to The Food Project's Summer Program. This designation was due to a combination of the fact that he had an unusual affect (for example, he did not make eye contact when speaking to you), and dyslexia, which affected his performance in school. Despite these challenges, Steve had considerable confidence in his own intellect. He was a self described "computer geek", and "nerd." The reference letters that he submitted with his application, from a school social worker and tutor, further reinforced this image: both highlighted his challenges with school work due to his disability, as well as the fact that he was a very bright and politically aware young man.

Steve's anxiety about balancing his identity as a nerdy kid and his dyslexia were most visible when the crew was asked to complete tasks that involved reading, drawing or writing. At these times, Steve hesitated to participate in the activity and drew attention to his poor spelling or artistic abilities. For example, half way through the

summer we were asked to make *identity charts*, a visual illustration of our multiple identities. Although Steve did not hesitate to verbally share what he planned to draw, a laptop as a way of representing his identity as a ‘computer geek’, he had trouble putting pen to paper. Instead, he repeatedly announced that he was not good at drawing. Halfway through the time allotted for the activity Steve still had a blank paper in front of him. At this point he asked how to spell Thomas, his middle name. Steve emphasized the fact that needing to ask illustrated “how bad of a speller I really am.” It also highlighted some of the challenges that Steve faced in terms of expressing his ideas in a written format².

Along with labeling himself as a ‘nerd’, Steve saw himself as a social liberal. In her reference letter his tutor emphasized his “strong social and political consciousness.” This identity was evident during a workshop early in the summer. The workshop required that each youth select one identity (from a list that they had generated during a brainstorming session) and form a group with other folks who shared that identity. Steve opted to be in the ‘liberal’ group. Interestingly, this group was comprised entirely of white non-urban youth.

Part of Steve’s ‘liberal identity’ was the view that the root causes of social inequality were structural in nature. For example, during a workshop on communities, the youth were asked: “How much of people’s place in life is based on circumstance and how much is based on attitude?” Steve quickly raised his hand and replied that although the American Dream states that if you work hard you will get ahead, “I do not believe that because there are other things that stand in people’s way.” This attitude influenced Steve’s experiences over the summer, enabling him to see places as a product of socio-political forces.

²This comment highlights a potential difficulty faced by researchers and program evaluators who wish to collect data from programs that target youth from a broad range of backgrounds, including academic prowess. Any survey or questionnaire responses must be interpreted with an awareness of the extreme variation in reading and writing abilities of these youth. This was evident at the end of the summer when the youth were asked to fill out program evaluation forms. The academically inclined youth on my crew spent the allotted time responding to the questions, literally filling the pages with text. Other youth, some of who likely struggled to read the questions, provided one-word answers. Clearly, a multi-method approach, which allows for triangulation across data sources, is optimal when designing a study that aims to assess the outcomes of youth who possess such variation in their levels of language and literacy. This type of multi-pronged approach

As well as being politically aware and interested, Steve showed a genuine interest in getting to know youth from outside of Lincoln. In his application to The Food Project, the first goal that he listed was to “meet new people this summer from outside of my small community.” This expressed desire was borne out by his actions throughout the summer, which included making explicit efforts to connect with his peers from the city. Despite attending a school with a bussing program that brought youth of color to his school, Steve noted that he lacked friendships with people from the city.

Steve’s experiences with The Food Project program resulted in changes in the way that he sensed places. This was partly due to his liberal social values and willingness to see things in a new light. As the summer progressed, his openness allowed him to garner a broader *place repertoire*, observe things that countered his preliminary perceptions and stereotypes and to learn from his urban peers. These factors worked in concert to shift his sense of his home environment and Roxbury.

2.1.1 Steve’s Sense of Places: Pre-Program

Home Environment

Steve entered the program with the sense that he did not belong in his hometown of Lincoln; he “should live in like, a bigger town.” During his initial interview, he distinguished between two levels of neighborhood, his *neighborhood* (which he mapped) and his town. The smaller geographic unit was defined by social networks and time spent there:

It’s just like my immediate, small, little side of town. . . I’ve been there a lot and like... And see over here, you’ll notice I know the people that live around here. But if you start heading out here, there are still houses but I just don’t know them, so I don’t draw them.

At the same time, Steve felt that “Lincoln’s really small so I guess Lincoln is the neighborhood just like, in and of itself.” In the discussion that follows, I am careful to distinguish between instances where Steve was using the term *neighborhood* in

reference to his *micro-neighborhood* versus the entire town of Lincoln. There were, however instances where he used *neighborhood* to describe both scales simultaneously. In these cases, or when it was not clear, I employ the broader term, *home environment*.

When I met Steve, he had been living in the same house since he was four years old. He did not remember his former residential environment and had very limited travel experience. Other than his interview for The Food Project, Steve had never been to Roxbury. His lack of experiences living and traveling to other places meant that he had a small *place repertoire* from which he could make informed comparisons about the quality of different living environments. Despite this, he consistently expressed a negative view of the social environment of his town, particularly the dearth of ‘action’. Steve lacked a strong connection to Lincoln due to his sense that he was a poor fit with his environment.

At the beginning of the summer, Steve described the social environment of the town of Lincoln and his neighborhood as “boring.” He believed that there was a dearth of face-to-face interaction both in his town and his neighborhood. Steve described the population of Lincoln as “hermits” and noted that there were “hardly any [people]” in his neighborhood. The prominent role that this negative element played in his overall sense of these environments was evidenced by its recurrence as a central theme in his discussion of these places, both in his pre-program interview and conversations with his peers during the summer. During our interview, Steve described his town as follows:

I would describe it as a very woodsy town. There’s not that much going on, usually. Sometimes, you got a parade. Sometimes, you got just some little, random things happening. And like it’s kind of—it’s—I think it’s a bit *boring* but that’s just me.

This same sense was captured repeatedly in my field notes from the first three weeks of the Summer Program. For example, during our first block of fieldwork Steve informed our crew how much he hated living in Lincoln because it is “so boring.” The following week during a workshop that dealt with the topic of community, Steve commented that he knows everyone [in Lincoln] and finds it “really boring.”

Steve's feeling that his hometown and neighborhood were boring was linked to their physical form, specifically the prevalence of forests and the lack of density of housing and people. During the visioning exercise at the beginning of the summer, Steve described the built environment of Lincoln as: "not much." His immediate neighborhood was comprised of "my house... a road... school." The inclusion of his school was notable as it was several miles from his home. Although Steve did not include this institution on his cognitive map, he was explicit that he considered it a part of his neighborhood simply because he spent so much time there. This reinforced the importance of time spent in a place as a determinant of the boundaries of Steve's "immediate" neighborhood.

Steve's description of the natural environment of the town of Lincoln and his neighborhood were basically identical, reflecting a very traditional definition of nature: "lots of trees" and "plants." He did not view this abundance as a positive attribute. In fact, it contributed to his feeling that he did not fit in his home environment. Neither the physical or social realms afforded Steve the opportunities that he felt were necessary to make a good place.

Steve's sense of the abundance of nature in the town included the physical *and* social environs. He used this feature as a way of indicating the lack of *fit* between himself and the town:

Most of the people that live here are, like, are pretty, woodsy people. They like nature. They're into all that stuff. I'm not exactly into that so I'm kind of a misfit in this town. I should live in like, a bigger town. But the people—what I would think the people that live here are very 'natyry'.

The built, natural and social environments were not compelling to Steve. His feeling that his town was a boring place to live stemmed from a lack of activities, people, and a physical environment that met his social needs. He sensed what his neighborhood lacked, rather than many of its attributes. In Lynchian terms, Steve started the program with a weak image of his town—it was not a place that has landmarks, nodes, paths or edges that he found 'imageable'(Lynch, 1960). Prior

to participating in the Summer Program, he had trouble articulating how someone would know that they were in Lincoln, other than the profusion of ‘nature’:

Um, that’s a hard one because um, a lot of the towns at least the suburbs, they kind of just go into each other. . . and they’re kind of similar. But like again, if you see a lot of woods, nature and just pretty much a lots of trees around. . . the roads and kind of little, windy roads are very. . . how would you describe that? Um, they’re suburban.

Although Steve expressed a negative sense of his home environment, he felt it was a safe place. Interviewing him at the beginning of the summer I asked him where danger resided in his town and neighborhood. Steve responded that there were no danger zones in either place. Although he did not express an appreciation of this place attribute, his statements later in the interview about the violence that he believed existed in Roxbury suggested that on some level he was aware of its value. Interestingly, after participating in The Food Project program, he explicitly noted Lincoln’s security as a positive place attribute.

Roxbury/The Inner City

Steve entered The Food Project program with a strong image of what Roxbury was like, despite his dearth of prior exposure to this, or any other, area of the city of Boston. His lack of experience in urban environments was manifested in his descriptions of Roxbury in terms of lacking things that were present in Lincoln; he did not have the *place repertoire* to provide a richer description. The tendency to describe the city in opposition to one’s home environment was common amongst the non-urban youth who shared Steve’s lack of urban place experiences.

Steve’s image of Roxbury centered on the notion that it was nothing like his home environment. His sense of the built form was that it was dense, “lots of buildings” and “huge buildings”; as opposed to the “lack of” built form in Lincoln. He emphasized the lack of nature in Roxbury versus the abundance in Lincoln:

Well, Lincoln is—there’s so many forests, so many trees, just kind of like this ‘nature’, not that many buildings, nothing like that. Uh, yet in

Roxbury, it's almost the complete opposite where you can like, you barely find any trees anywhere. Pretty much the whole thing is cement.

When asked to compare the residents of Lincoln and Roxbury, Steve emphasized the formers' affinity for country life. He acknowledged his lack of hard data on Roxbury residents, returning to his contrasting imagery to characterize them:

The people, um, well, here in Lincoln, um, they're—the people here are into living out in the country, nature and stuff. And I guess that I don't know the people in Roxbury but they're probably more city people that they might have lived in the city their entire life.

This tendency to use contrasting imagery to describe Roxbury spilled over into the social relations. In Steve's mind, Roxbury was “not boring” but “cool”, while Lincoln was “boring.” He noted: “If you do find nature [in Roxbury], it's probably... like a tree that was in memory of somebody or something like that”, indicating that violence was a part of his sense of Roxbury, unlike Lincoln where danger zones did not exist. On one hand, Steve imagined Roxbury had some of the features he felt were most lacking in Lincoln, but his sense was colored by his image of social disorder.

Throughout his pre-program interview Steve did not use any racial descriptors when discussing Roxbury or Lincoln. Whether or not he lacked knowledge of the racial differences across these places or if he was avoiding the use of racial terms in order to appear ‘color blind’ was impossible to know. Steve's school hosted METCO, a school-busing program that brings youth of color from inner-city Boston to his school, suggesting that he had at least some knowledge of the ethnic and racial composition of Boston. At the same time, he noted on several occasions during the summer that he did not tend to hang out with the METCO youth at his school, indicating his prior interracial contacts and friendships were limited. His *nonracialized* description was even more striking when placed in the context of the other non-urban youths' descriptions of the social realms of Roxbury—the tendency to avoid speaking explicitly about race was almost universal amongst this group.

Steve's liberal attitudes and openness to learning about the other allowed him to ‘connect’ with the urban youth in the Summer Program. This, combined with a new

place repertoire due to his work in the city changed his sense of his own neighborhood, Lincoln and the city. The section that follows highlights some of these shifts.

2.1.2 Steve's new sense of places: Post Program

Home Environment

Steve's experiences at The Food Project positively impacted his image of Lincoln. After participating in the Summer Program his sense of the social environment included an appreciation of the town's green space and its high quality housing structures. This is not to suggest that his work on the farm completely transformed his feelings toward Lincoln, simply that he was better able to appreciate its amenities, particularly in comparison to Roxbury. For example, after completing the Summer Program he described the social environment of Lincoln as including "friends" and the built environment as "nice" rather than his pre-program characterization of "boring" and "what buildings?" When asked to describe where he lives to someone who had never been there before he responded:

It's like - it's a town, kind of nice. I mean, we've got a lotta trees, and there's NOT that many people, which would probably be like how I would improve the town.

This was a more complimentary view than he expressed in his initial interview, where he repeatedly described Lincoln as boring. His desire for more people reflected the fact that he wanted more action in his neighborhood, a feature of Roxbury that he greatly appreciated.

Steve's new positive sense of his hometown of Lincoln and neighborhood stemmed from at least three sources: 1) positive experiences on the Lincoln site with his peers and the land through the act of farming; 2) the opportunity to compare Lincoln to Roxbury; and 3) learning about pride of place from his urban peers.

For Steve, working on the farm and participating in the Food Project program changed, in a positive direction, his sense of his home environment. The most striking shift was a change in his boundaries of his *neighborhood*. During his second interview

he noted that although he did not include the Food Project farm in his drawing, he considered it a part of his *neighborhood*, “because I go there a lot, and like that’s, I guess, one of the places that I hang out.” The farm, a wide-open space that prior to the summer was part of his image of an unexciting environment, was now an important “hang out” for Steve. It indicated that his sense that Lincoln was “boring” due to its complete and total lack of places to accommodate youth with his interests had changed due to his Food Project experiences. He felt connected to the land and to the community of youth and staff that he associated with this place.

The Food Project expanded Steve’s place repertoires, providing him with a broader menu of places to compare Lincoln against. This contributed to a change in his sense of his hometown. In particular, his exposure to Roxbury highlighted some of the positive attributes of his hometown that Steve previously took for granted. For example, the safety of Lincoln became a principal component of his sense of the town:

It’s peaceful. There’s like no violence. At all. And if there was, it would be like front page news for a really long time. But, it’s - I guess that’s what I would say. It’s peaceful, it’s calm. There’s not like guns and things like that anywhere. No crime... And calm.

This description was in sharp contrast to his image of security in Roxbury:

And what I’ve HEARD about Roxbury, I haven’t actually SEEN this, like from Joey [a Food Project youth who resides in Roxbury], he says that he can hear guns and things like that, down his street. I definitely can’t hear that. So, I would assume that’s a difference.

Steve’s heightened awareness of the security of Lincoln after the Summer Program underscores the important role that *place repertoires* play in shaping sense of places. Learning about the dangers in Roxbury heightened his sense that Lincoln was a safe place.

Steve’s expanded *place repertoire* also afforded the opportunity to compare the physical form of Lincoln with an urban environment environment. This heightened his sense that the homes in Lincoln were of relatively high quality. He noted that

most of the housing in Roxbury looked like the affordable housing development in Lincoln, although Roxbury's was "a little bit more run down." He also had a new awareness of the *lack of* abandonment in his town, particularly the dearth of vacant lots, "which you do see in Roxbury." His experiences with The Food Project taught him that vacant lots were an indicator of a troubled environment; sparking a new awareness of the dearth of these spaces in his home environment.

Another factor that contributed to the positive shift in Steve's sense of Lincoln was his contact with kids from the city. The urban youth at The Food Project entered the program with a sense of pride about their neighborhoods, and Steve learned this attitude from them; they admonished Steve for "dissing" his own neighborhood. For example, one day while we were working in the field Justin asked Steve about a party that he attended in Lincoln, where there were 60 girls and 4 guys. Justin asked: 'so was it fun?' Steve did not answer the question directly. Rather he said, "it was in Sudbury, not Lincoln." Justin responded that if it was fun, it must not have been in Lincoln. Emmanuelle quickly admonished Justin: "Hey, don't diss his neighborhood." Although Steve then said "He is right, Lincoln is boring", as the summer went on, Steve stopped "dissing" Lincoln. He even expressed some pride about the beauty of his home environment. This came out when I interviewed him after completing the program:

Like if you remember at the beginning of the summer, I said, 'Oh, Lincoln's boring. There's not much here.' Now, I see a little bit more of like the - the suburban beauty, if you will. . . Like the trees, and stuff, like during the fall.

While Steve's sense that his neighborhood was boring and his lack of fit were not eliminated by his summer experiences, he did gain an appreciation of certain attributes of Lincoln, including its safety, amenities and built form. The key mechanisms that facilitated these changes were the contact with the Food Project land, an expansion of his place repertoire due to his experiences in Roxbury and his relationships with the youth from the city.

Roxbury

More striking than Steve's new attachment to Lincoln were the changes in the way that he viewed Roxbury. Steve's friendships with youth from the city created a strong admiration for certain aspects of what he viewed as urban life, particularly its vibrant social realm. He saw this as having some positive qualities that were absent in his home environment. Working in Roxbury led Steve to have a heightened sense of the dynamic nature of this place. By the end of the summer, he imaged it as a place of growth and renewal; he was particularly aware of the abundance of gardens, which became a strong component of his sense of Roxbury.

Steve's admiration for the city youth was evident throughout the summer. For example, on the first day that our crew went to work in Roxbury, Steve lost his commuter rail tickets. This meant that rather than traveling to and from the city on the train with Pete and Julie, Steve had to take the subway. His parents had to drop him off and pick him up at the end of the subway line, a good seven miles outside of Lincoln. Steve's pleasure with this new arrangement was evidenced by his huge smile and comment that "I feel like a city kid now that I am taking the T" the first time that he traveled home with me and the urban youth.

Steve's efforts to bond with the city youth were obvious from the first day of work. He often asked Justin and Paul about their musical preferences while we were out in the fields so that he could download them to his computer at home. When we ran the Farmer's Market in downtown Boston, Steve teamed up with Emmanuelle and Kiara to develop the "customer appreciation dance and rap", which they performed for two patrons of our stand. Steve was not a skilled rapper or dancer, but joined in with the girls as a way of bonding with them. Partaking in this performance, Steve took a 'risk' in terms of embarrassing himself in front of his peers, his 'moves' looked particularly awkward beside Emmanuelle and Kiara, both of whom were very graceful. These efforts however, paid off in terms of creating cross-place friendships and opportunities to learn about the urban environment. During our final straight talk session, Steve absolutely beamed when Paul told him "me and you were like mad

cool [this summer].” There is some evidence that Steve’s interest in getting to know youth from the city remained after finishing the summer youth program. During his post-program interview, he commented on the fact that he had started to hangout with one of the METCO kids at his school. Steve was not friendly with that kid prior to being at Thee Food Project, and he reflected that he thought that his ability to connect with the kid was at least partly due to his summer experiences.

Having friendships with the urban youth in our crew gave Steve an additional information source about urban life, beyond the formal learning that took place during Food Project workshops. By the end of the summer he articulated a strong positive sense of the social realm of Roxbury, specifically its cohesion. Steve recognized the change in his sense of Roxbury, noting in his second interview:

I used to think of Roxbury as a place where there’s nothing. Now, I see it as a place where there’s life and movement and things like that. . . I mean, as I walk down the street in Roxbury, there was like - you could turn around, everyone was out.

This imagery was reflective of the stories of cookouts and informal socializing that Kiara and Justin, two youth on our crew who lived in Roxbury, shared with our crew throughout the summer.

At the end of the program, Steve also articulated a *racialized* image of Roxbury. This was a striking change from the beginning of the summer when he did not even mention race in discussions of these places. When asked how Roxbury differed from Lincoln, he responded that “It seems like here it’s a majority WHITE community, and there, it’s a majority BLACK community.” Whether this change was due to a new awareness of the racial composition of Lincoln and Roxbury or simply an increased comfort in speaking about race is difficult to know.

Another trigger for Steve’s shifting sense of Roxbury came from his newfound understanding of the link between its history and physical form; he now saw Roxbury as a dynamic environment that was the result of social and political forces:

Well, I think city - I learned a lot about it. I learned a lot about the

history. Like I never knew Roxbury used to be a suburb, or I never used to know that it was a RICH place. But, now I do...

The narrative that Steve told about Roxbury shifted from being framed as a story of an exciting yet unfamiliar place to one told partly through the lens of the history that they youth were taught at The Project. That he understood how this area went from a wealthy suburb to a poor inner city neighborhood came out on our last day of work in the city. While we were weeding a bed, Steve and his crew mate Emily discussed how “Roxbury went down” due to redlining and arson.

Prior to the summer, Steve was unable to identify any greenery in Roxbury other than “grass growing out of cracks in the sidewalks.” After the program backyard gardens dominated Steve’s image of its physical environs. While an awareness of the lots where he worked during the summer might be expected, the extent to which the small home gardens were part of his image of Roxbury was striking. Describing how someone would know that they were in Roxbury, he commented:

Oh, well, one thing that I would tell you to look for is there’s a lot of - there’s a lot of back - backyard . . . I DO see a lot of backyard gardens . . . it’s a different kind of garden [than in Lincoln]... Like, here [in Lincoln], you would get like a flower garden, or something like that. And in Roxbury, you would get like flowers on the edge, and then like you’d get - you’d get like tomatoes, corn, or just food in the - in the garden. So, look for the gardens.

Steve’s *place repertoire* influenced his image of Roxbury’s gardens; he understood them in the context of those he had experienced in Lincoln. His cognitive image of the urban gardens highlighted their role in providing residents with food and beautifying the neighborhood. This represented a striking positive change in Steve’s overall sense of Roxbury.

This is not to suggest that Steve finished the summer with the sense that Roxbury was an urban utopia. At the end of the summer, Steve expressed a desire to live in the denser more developed town of Arlington, which is nearby Boston and on the subway line. This was in contrast to the beginning of the summer when Steve articulated his desire to move to Sudbury, a town adjacent to Lincoln. It was notable that he did not

want to “make the big jump” and move right into the city. Steve did not indicate the reason for his lack of desire to move to Boston, but his expressed residential preference reflected his new appreciation of the social cohesion of the city that developed over the summer. He wanted to be in a place where there were “people hanging out, and people walking down the street, and there’s like more places to hang out.” But he was not drawn to Roxbury. This may have been due, at least in part, to his belief that it was a dangerous environment.

Steve’s openness and ability to connect with his urban peers influenced his image of Roxbury, heightening his sense of its social cohesion, and reinforcing his image of danger zones. His direct experiences there and the Food Project curriculum also facilitated a change in his sense of Roxbury; they caused him to see the landscape in the context of its history and gave him a strong appreciation of the area’s gardens.

2.1.3 Conclusions

The Food Project impacted Steve’s appreciation of his neighborhood, the town of Lincoln and Roxbury. That he described the social realms of these environments in racial terms after the program was notable, although the mechanism was difficult to pin down. I explore this issue in greater depth in the final discussion of the non-urban youth (Sect. 3.4.2, page 199).

Other shifts in Steve’s sense of these places were facilitated by his expanded *place repertoire*, direct experiences on the land and friendships with the urban youth. Due to these factors Steve finished the program with an appreciation of Roxbury’s social cohesion and gardens as well as a more positive sense of the built and social environs of his home environment.

2.2 Julie: Rebel without a cause

Since Julie was born, her primary residence had been in Sudbury, a town adjacent to Lincoln. She had lived in two different houses in this town, the first with her mother, father and younger sister. The move to the second house came five years before I

met Julie, when her mother remarried. Her parents' divorce meant Julie spent many weekends with her biological father and her stepmothers³. When I met Julie, her father's place of residence had changed at least three times. He had lived in a coastal town on the north shore of Massachusetts, and in two different towns located near Sudbury. Regular visits with her father provided Julie with a rich set of non-urban place experiences, which strongly influenced her sense of places; those with which she was intimately familiar and those she had never visited.

Julie's appearance on the first day of The Food Project Summer Program—very short shorts, a fitted tank top and bright red (almost fluorescent) streaks through her hair—suggested that she identified as a rebel. Julie's behavior was aligned with her dress code. One of the first activities that we did as a crew was a name game, which entailed calling out a person's name and then tossing a tennis ball to them. As the game progressed, more balls were added making it harder to find a person who was ready to receive a pass. The goal was to keep the balls off the ground and try to learn the names of everyone in your group. Rather than waiting to find an able catcher, Julie continually threw balls to Emily when it was clear that she would be unable to catch them, as her hands were full with other balls. The result was that Emily was continually pelted in the chest and arms by Julie's pitches. Rather than apologizing, Julie smirked each time her ball hit her crewmate. After this activity I jotted in my fieldnotes that I suspected that Julie “has the potential to be mean.”

My observation that Julie was hostile was borne out during the crew's final straight talk session when she stated that during her first days at TFP she was really “angry...I hope you all didn't realize how much I hated The Food Project and all of you guys.” This captured Julie's generally oppositional attitude; despite choosing to apply to the program, being there enraged her.

Being a rebel was a part of Julie's modus operandi. She identified herself as a member of a clique at school that was defined by their use of drugs and alcohol:

I hang out with the stoner crowd. I definitely don't hang out with the

³When I met Julie, her father had recently divorced from her second step-mother.

prep kids and I don't hang out with the kids who do good in school. Yeah, the stoners.

Most of Julie's free time was spent with these friends, planning and executing get-togethers at their houses:

We just throw the craziest parties... we just had like keggers, like huge keggers ... Like on post-prom, we went and we had like, we had a kegger and we just put out tents and slept in the tents. It was so much fun.

She felt that this was the only social activity available to youth in Sudbury, particularly those looking for excitement: "There's no good places where people just hang." This was reflected on her cognitive map of her neighborhood, which centered on her home; the place that she stated she spent most of her time when she was in her neighborhood (Fig. 2-1).

Julie's sense of privilege was evident from her words and her actions. For example, a few days into the Summer Program, she confided that she had been caught with marijuana during her first year of high school. She was immediately suspended from school and faced charges for possession in a school zone. Her family managed to get the charges dropped. Retelling the events, Julie expressed no appreciation for her light sentence; rather she emphasized: "it was crazy that we had to pay all that money [to a lawyer] to get me out of trouble."

Julie's sense of entitlement impacted the way that she responded to others, particularly those whose opinions differed from her own. She was used to getting her own way and not used to constructive criticism. This was illustrated by her explanation for why she was fired from her previous job in retail:

"Cause they said I wasn't like committed enough, which was boloney. But, screw them. I didn't need to work there anyway."

Initially, this negative attitude hindered Julie's ability to relate to other members of our crew. For example, on the train ride back from Lincoln early in the summer, Joy, a black young woman from Roxbury commented that she thought Julie seemed

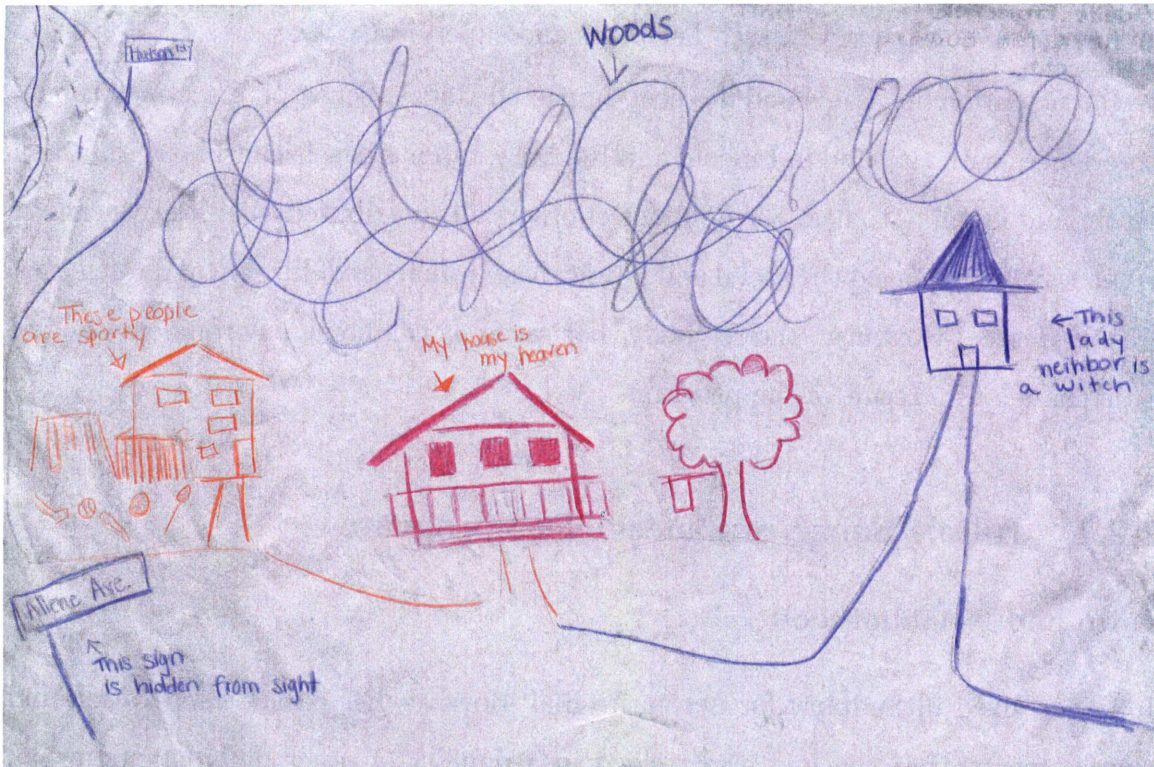


Figure 2-1: Julie's cognitive map that she created on the first day of The Food Project Summer Program. This rendering reflects the fact that she spends most of her time in her neighborhood at her house. Her house is the central feature of her image (it is drawn in red, indicating it was one of the first features that she drew). That she labels her neighbor as a 'witch' reflects her perception that the area lacks social cohesion.

“opinionated” and that she was taken aback when she saw Julie’s big silver SUV. Julie drove to the farm for the first half of the summer despite the rule that all of the youth, regardless of residence, were supposed to meet at the Lincoln commuter rail station each morning and ride the bus to the farm. At the end of the workday they were meant to walk back to the station as a group. Joy’s interpretation was that Julie was flaunting her car and that she seemed “very spoiled.” As the summer progressed, Julie’s sense of entitlement dissipated, and she demonstrated an increasing ability to communicate constructively with her peers and supervisors.

Participation in The Food Project impacted Julie’s sense of places. Intimate experiences with the land in Lincoln and Roxbury, forging new friendships with urban youth, and learning to hear the opinions of others all contributed to a positive change in the way Julie imaged the social and physical environments of Lincoln and to an even greater degree, Roxbury. Interestingly, her sense of her home environment showed little change as a result of the program.

2.2.1 Julie’s Sense of Places: Pre-program

Town and Neighborhood

Julie had lived in Sudbury for her entire life. However her parent’s separation and divorce meant that she had also resided in a number of other different non-urban locales (on a part-time basis) with her father. This broad residential *place repertoire* meant that she sensed her neighborhood in relative terms prior starting work with The Food Project. It is notable that despite Julie’s articulation that her neighborhood (or non-neighborhood as it were) was an area within Sudbury, during both of her interviews she occasionally answered certain questions about her neighborhood by referencing her town. This narrative reflects Julie’s language.

Discussing her cognitive map on the first day of the Summer Program, Julie readily defined a finite geographic area as her neighborhood for the mapping exercise, but was explicit that she did not see this as a “real neighborhood”, which she defined as a “community who works and lives together”:

My neighborhood would be considered Hudson road and Atkinson Poorl, which is just a local pool and basketball court where people hang out. It's like right down my street [Hudson Road]. So, that's where like most people hang out. *I really don't have a neighborhood.* [Emphasis added]

For Julie, strong social networks were a key component of the creation of a neighborhood. Although she did possess some knowledge of the people who lived around her house, she was able to name various homeowners; she fostered negative feelings toward them. She described her next-door neighbor as “the lady with puke colored car”, who was “so mean.”

Julie's feeling that she lacked a true neighborhood was rooted in her prior place experiences, specifically living in Maynard, a small town located near Sudbury, with her father and stepmother:

It was like a real neighborhood. Every Christmas time, since my step mom was Christian, we would bake cookies and decorate them and hand them out to the neighbors and like they really like that. And like the neighbors would always help us out. It was pretty cool. The next-door girl, she was my age and we became like best of friends. It was awesome.

This was not her only positive neighborhood experience; she and her mother previously lived on the other side of Sudbury. She stated: “We had a neighborhood there” due to the presence of “more houses and more people.”

During her first interview, Julie noted that her neighborhood felt very safe. In fact she could not think of an area where she did not feel completely secure. Interestingly, this was not articulated as a positive attribute. In fact, her comments about the lack of danger in her neighborhood was followed by a monologue on how annoying the police were:

The only thing that I worry about in Sudbury are cops. Because there's like so many cops because like we pay so many taxes to like have a really good police system and cops are such mean, like idiots. They'll like pull over people for speeding because like they have nothing better to do. And they just like harass kids. They're so annoying.

Julie felt that the town was so lacking in excitement that the police resorted to hassling ‘innocent’ residents. It was no wonder Julie, a rebel, found the town boring and law enforcement officers mean.

Although Julie’s school was several miles from her house and she did not include it on her cognitive map, she stated that she considered it part of her neighborhood. It was one of the few components of this environment that she sensed in a positive manner. Working out in the fields in the first week of the program she described it to me as “democratic. . . a good school and nothing bad ever happens there-except for drugs and drinking.” When I asked her how she would describe the social environment of her *neighborhood* during her first interview, her answer dealt exclusively with her school: “And like everybody’s friends and like everybody will hang out, but then there are like definitely defined groups. . .” suggesting that this institution was the one part of her neighborhood that she perceived as socially cohesive.

Julie’s positive sense of her school reflected its fit with her identity as a rebel. This came out in her talk about the abundance of drugs and alcohol there; something she portrayed that she was proud of. One morning when we were weeding out in the field our crew leader mentioned that he had heard that her high school was nicknamed “Drink’n and Drugsbury.” In response Julie laughed: “I can’t believe you have heard that. . . it makes me happy that he has heard of that name.” While the school and Julie’s peers likely influenced her rebellious nature, the relationship between her positive sense of this place and its fit with her identity were notable. It underscores the important role that personal identity plays in the way individuals’ sense places.

Despite her connectedness to school, Julie felt it was competitive and academically oriented. These pressures colored her sense of her town. This was illustrated by her response to my inquiry about where she would live if she were to win the lottery:

The Cape because it is so chill. And like nothing really bad happens there and like there’s no pressure to do anything. You can just like sit if you want. . . there is tons of pressure [in Sudbury] to get good grades.

This statement suggested that Julie’s relationship to her town included a sense of

stress related to navigating her way through an achievement-oriented environment.

Prior to entering The Food Project, Julie had a negative sense of her neighborhood and her town due to her feeling that it lacked the sense of community and social cohesion she had experienced living in other non-urban locales. Her image centered on the lack of amenities for a person with her interests and attitude; there was nothing good to do other than throw big parties. It was a poor fit with her rebel identity. Her experiences at The Food Project reinforced many of these negative perceptions as she contrasted her home environment with what she sensed was the vibrancy of Roxbury.

Lincoln

Prior to participating in The Food Project, Julie had spent time in Lincoln, visiting the sculpture museum and attending events at the local park. Despite having utilized these amenities, her sense of Lincoln was there was even less to do than in Sudbury. This was due to the lack of any significant commercial space: “Like Lincoln doesn’t have *any* restaurants.” From the perspective of a partier like Julie, the residents, “old hippies” and “quiet [people]”, were as unexciting as the physical environment.

Other than being even less exciting than Sudbury, Julie felt that Lincoln was a similar sort of environment. She expressed a belief that the landscapes of the two towns were similar. Both were characterized as having an abundance of “hiking paths and conservation land” and high quality built form. The term “beautiful houses” came up in her description of both places. Essentially they were boring, bucolic landscapes.

Roxbury

Despite a lack of experience in Roxbury, Julie had a sense of what it was like prior to starting the Summer Program. That image was based upon the notion that it was unlike Sudbury in its physical, social and natural realms. Specifically, she believed it was a dense, poor and socially dysfunctional environment. Julie also noted the lack of ‘nature’ in Roxbury relative to her hometown. While Julie did not explicitly articulate a *racialized* view of Roxbury, her comments about her own neighborhoods’

whiteness in comparison to Roxbury suggested that her image included race.

Julie came to The Food Project with the perception that Roxbury's built environment was dense, and comprised largely of "housing complexes." This image was framed in opposition to Sudbury's built realm:

There's like only one family lives in each house [in Sudbury]. And there are no buildings, like no [apartment] buildings at all.

Later in the interview, Julie revised her statement, noting that there was one apartment building in Sudbury: "Like, ah, oh there's an *apartment complex*, but that's the low-income housing. Nobody even goes to that part of Sudbury." While not a major part of the image of the built realm of her town, this dense residential form dominated her sense of Roxbury's.

Julie imagined that the main form of housing in Roxbury was apartment buildings. This came through in her interactions with her peers who lived in the city. For example, weeding alongside Emily I overheard Julie ask what Dorchester, an urban neighborhood adjacent to Roxbury, was like. Emily explained that where she lives most of the houses are big, older homes and most of them have been fixed up, although some of them are still sort of "crappy." Julie was obviously surprised that Emily resided in a house: "So your family lives in a house... *Just* your family?... In the *whole* house?" The next week she and Justin sat together at lunch comparing their homes. Julie counted off the number of rooms in her house and then asked Justin: "How many rooms do you have in your house... Do you even *have* a house?... I don't know... do you live in a house or an apartment?" Justin explained to her that he lived in a triple decker, a three story house with an apartment on each floor. These conversations represented important informal learning events; Julie discovered that the residential environment of the city was comprised of more than row upon row of "apartment complexes."

In her interview at the start of the program, Julie did not mention the race of Roxbury residents. That being said, she had a *racialized* image of this place. This came out when I asked her to compare the residents of Roxbury and Sudbury:

“Sudbury has less people, more white people, like about one hundred percent.” This statement implied that she believed people in Roxbury were *not* white, although at no point during this interview, or for the first half of the program, did Julie speak explicitly about the fact that people of color populated Roxbury.

Prior to the program, Julie’s description of nature in Roxbury was framed as the opposite of what she had experienced in Sudbury, reflecting her lack of prior urban place experiences. In the case of nature, it was abundant in Sudbury and non-existent in Roxbury. This came through during the visioning exercise that she completed on the first day of work. Julie left the nature category blank. During her interview she emphasized its presence in Sudbury, never directly addressing its form in Roxbury: “Um, it’s not as crowded [in Sudbury as in Roxbury]. There’s a lot of open space in Sudbury. Sudbury has more trees.” That she imagined a *complete* dearth of nature in Roxbury came through during a conversation with her crewmates about the upcoming Lincoln overnight, which was held halfway through the summer, prior to our work in the city. The youth all slept in tents on The Food Project land for this event. Our assistant crew leader warned us to bring bug spray as she was eaten alive by bugs the previous year. In response, Julie looked up and asked Kiara: “Are there bugs in the city?” Kiara looked startled by the question, but answered that there were plenty of mosquitoes in Roxbury.

2.2.2 Julie’s new sense of places: Post Program

Neighborhood/Town

Prior to entering the program, Julie felt that her neighborhood was not “really a neighborhood’ as it lacked a sense of community. This sense was amplified by her expanded *place repertoire*, particularly her Roxbury experiences. In the city she witnessed the openness and friendliness of residents, which underscored the dearth of social cohesion in her own town and neighborhood:

It’s quiet. Everybody keeps to themselves. It’s not really connected, I’d say. . . .Like, socially AND like physically, where everybody’s staying. Like

everybody is like divided by a fence. Like there's a house THAT way, and they have a fence, and we have a fence, and - and we have a neighbor over there, and we just like never go over and see those people. And like the basic neighborhood doesn't need any upkeep, so there's really no reason for us to get together.

This linking of the built form of her neighborhood to the characteristics of its social environment was not something Julie did prior to her participation in The Food Project. This connection reflected her experiences in Roxbury, where she observed residents' on the streets greeting each other and folks hard at work in the community garden attached to The West Cottage lot. During her interview after the program she noted how impressed she was that "random people from the neighborhood would come and help farm" and engaged in conversation on the Roxbury land. These experiences, combined with her new knowledge of the community based revitalization that had occurred in this inner city neighborhood, underscored the relative lack of social interaction and shared purpose in her own neighborhood.

The Food Project Summer Program included a series of Diversity Workshops. Staff and Diversity Interns ran these workshops, which dealt with racial, sexual and economic diversity. Youth were encouraged to share their racial and economic backgrounds and their views on stereotypes and discrimination. There was an implicit message that diversity was an asset. This sentiment is reflected in the organizations document, Commitment to Diversity, which includes the statement: "We believe diversity strengthens agricultural systems and human communities," (The Food Project, 2007). This was a value that Julie internalized and after the program articulated as positive feature of place. One that she felt was lacking in her neighborhood:

Another difference [between her neighborhood and Roxbury] would probably be the lack of culture in my neighborhood. I don't think - I know there's an Asian family, like on Allen Road...But, there - there are no black people, no Indian people... there's like no like flavor. I live in such a bland neighborhood, compared to Roxbury.

Julie's Food Project experiences broadened her *place repertoire*. Experiencing Roxbury and Lincoln heightened her sense of what her neighborhood *lacked*, social

cohesion and racial diversity. While her experiences in Roxbury had the strongest impacts on her sense of her neighborhood and town, working in Lincoln also caused her to see differences between it and Sudbury that impacted her sense of these environments.

Lincoln

Julie's image of Lincoln changed as a result of her experiences at The Food Project. She finished the program with a sense that while the town was similar to Sudbury in its wealth, the residents were less materialistic: "In Lincoln, NO DOUBT everyone is a multimillionaire, but they are a lot more secretive about their money [than in Sudbury], and rather than display money, there are a lot more farms. . . it's a lot more simple, and quiet." In fact, Julie felt that Lincoln possessed some of the qualities that made it a 'real community':

Lincoln is SO small. EVERYBODY knows each other. They're in stores, everybody's like having conversations with each other, and I just think that like everybody knows each other. And that brings them together as a community. Everybody knows what everybody else is kind of doing, but not in an impolite way.

Working in Lincoln expanded Julie's *place repertoire*. The town was no longer simply a close cousin of Sudbury. She could see differences in the physical and social realms that led to an increased positive attachment to Lincoln. This bond was the product of her intimate experiences with the land through the act of farming. Like all of the youth in our crew, Julie initially found fieldwork extremely challenging and at times frustrating. For example, one afternoon she confused a bed with a walking path. When our assistant crew leader pointed out that she was standing on the onions and not in the path, she got very defensive and snapped back: "Where do you want me to step?" She received a violation for this outburst.

By the end of the summer, however Julie thrived in the field. Her enjoyment of fieldwork was demonstrated by the fact that she was looking for work on other farms in Lincoln. She stated that The Food Project: "opened my eyes to - to farming, and

how intensive THAT is. I've been trying to get into farming, and learning more about that. 'Cause it interests me." She also expressed a weak desire to return to The Food Project the following summer to be an Agricultural Intern, although she was hesitant as she felt that the standards were oppressive⁴.

The extent of Julie's new attachment came out during her post program interview when she noted that one of the places that she would want to live if she won the lottery was Lincoln because "it's like really old, and I like that." Rather than seeing it as lacking in things to do, her image focused on its open space, there is "acorage. . . and they have Pierce Park, which is like just an open field, and we don't have a - a park at all. They have no Sudbury Park. . . They have nice trees."

Julie's Food Project experiences engendered a more positive sense of Lincoln. Much of this was rooted in her affinity for agriculture, which created an emotional connection to the land. The other important factor in this shift was the broadening of her *place repertoire*. That is, her acquaintance with a variety of non-urban environments facilitated a more sophisticated understanding of the landscape of Lincoln than some of her peers. Julie was aware that there were few towns west of Boston with the extensive farmland and well tended homes that she observed and experienced in Lincoln and she valued this as a positive place attribute.

Roxbury

As discussed above, Julie entered the program with little direct contact with the city or its residents. Her general sense was that it was dense and socially dysfunctional. Her discomfort in this environment emerged during the second week of the program, when the youth had to travel to the homeless shelter in downtown Boston. Navigating this new environment was a stressful experience for Julie. As we walked from the subway station to the shelter I overheard Julie telling Emmanuelle how overwhelming her trip into Boston had been for her. She confided "I have already cried once

⁴Her resentment of the rules remained even two months after the program ended.: "All the rules [at The Food Project] ARE stupid. The only reason I thought they were stupid was because they were SO obvious, to me. Like they were just things that I thought didn't even HAVE to be rules. And kind of making them rules was sort of making me feel like somebody stupider than I was? Like I KNOW not - I know to like my - or. . . I don't know. I just felt like their rules were very obvious."

today,” noting that she had no idea where she was, as she did not know her way around Boston. As the summer progressed, Julie gained competence navigating the city and was increasingly comfortable in this environment. By the time the crew went to work on the land in Roxbury: “I was so confident, in fact, that I could comfortably walk down the streets with ease. I even made friends with a little 7-year-old Roxbury resident riding his bicycle.”

Along with an increased comfort in the city came a more *racialized* articulation of Roxbury’s environment. At the end of the summer Julie’s used the terms “black and Spanish” to describe the Roxbury residents. Her new willingness to name the races of the residents stemmed from her new sense, discussed above, that racial diversity was a valuable place attribute.

When Julie spoke about Roxbury after the summer, she emphasized its social cohesion rather than its density or the neighborhood “gangs”:

People are really, really friendly there. Like one time I was working on one of the gardens, and I struck up a conversation with like a little kid, and even though I was scared, because I’m not really that like social girl that can just talk to anybody on the street, he was like really social, and it didn’t even seem like anything to him. And I realize now that maybe that’s because I, like my neighborhood, I don’t talk to like anyone that I don’t know. And he, obviously, did.

The street life seemed to be a particularly salient aspect of Julie’s new image of Roxbury. This was rooted in her observations while working in the city and from the information that was conveyed to her by her peers at The Food Project, who emphasized the abundance of cookouts and impromptu neighborhood parties in Roxbury. Her explanation of how someone might know they were in Roxbury emphasized strong interpersonal relationships:

I would say that people who live in Roxbury, they’re all like - all the kids were all hanging out together on the streets, and it seemed like people who lived close to each other were - KNEW each other, at LEAST, and were friends. But, the social relations in my neighborhood are barren, any social relations.

Re-imagining Roxbury was not just the result of direct experiences. Julie's new friendships, particularly her relationship with Kiara played a major role. Out in the fields and over lunch the girls often conversed about their home environments, values and stereotypes of each other. Julie summed up her relationship with Kiara and how it affected her perceptions of, and experiences in Roxbury in a speech that she made on the last day of the Summer Program:

She [Kiara] told me that growing up in her neighborhood taught her that white people are "ditsy," or lame. I confided in her that I was told that black people are "gangsta," or tough...I am grateful that I had those discussions, because without them I may have struggled when I went to work on the West Cottage Farm in Roxbury.

This is not to imply that learning about new people and places was a cakewalk for Julie. There were times when her new knowledge threatened her sense of self, such as during workshops that dealt with issues of equality. After completing the Cultural Sharing workshop, Julie was working and talking with our crew leader. As she weeded, Julie got more and more agitated until she was shouting at him. She stated that the workshop made her feel "like a bad person" for being wealthy and white. The source of this emotion was, in her opinion, the program: "I feel like The Food Project does that." It was evident that hearing about the struggles of her urban peers, particularly those who spoke about living in the projects and their family's financial woes, was difficult for Julie. Learning that social inequalities existed across place and race was an uncomfortable experience.

Although Julie struggled to manage her emotions around the inequities between her and her peers, as the summer progressed there was a definite shift in her understanding of her relatively privileged lifestyle. Specifically, she exhibited a greater understanding of how social and economic inequality were organized along spatial and racial dimensions. In the last week of the program I overheard her telling Kiara about being busted for selling drugs at school. Rather than emphasizing the burden that the incident had placed on her family (as she had done the first day of the program), she reflected that: "if any of the METCO kids [city youth of color] got

caught with drugs, they would be expelled for sure”, whereas she had access to a lawyer who got her off, virtually scot-free. This was a major change in the way that Julie understood the experiences of those who reside in the city, particularly people of color. Her Food Project experiences had given her a new understanding that these folks faced discriminatory forces in their home environment *and* beyond.

While the Food Project program had the most obvious impacts on Julie’s image of Roxbury’s social environment, her direct experiences with, and conversations about this place led to a shift in her sense of its physical realm as well. Rather than continuing to image it as Sudbury’s opposite, as she had prior to the program, by the end of the summer Julie had a more nuanced sense of this environment. Her image balanced a renewal and decay, indicating an appreciation of the presence of both place assets and deficits. For example, her image of nature in Roxbury included “many gardens” along with less desirable elements such as “crab grass and vacant lots.” Her image of the built environment included a variety of housing types, including “town houses and apartments.” Her notation of the abundance of “ethnic restaurants”, likely reflected the constant banter amongst her urban crewmates about which Roxbury restaurant made the best jerk chicken, and coco cheese bread. While the built form was no longer comprised of “complexes”, there was no mention made of the quality of the Victorian housing stock or the restored triple deckers that are part of this neighborhood’s built form.

Julie’s new appreciation of urban places came out in her response to a question about where she would move should she win the lottery. Her first response was “I probably would move maybe closer to the city... just because it’s so convenient, and there’s a lot that I could do in the city, I think.” Yet Julie was clear that she would not want to move within the city limits, just near the highway so that she could get in and out more easily. After a few minutes of reflection she added that Lincoln would also be nice places to live: “[Lincoln is] SO pretty. And it’s got really old houses - I like that.” These residential preferences reflected her newfound appreciation of urban amenities (at a distance) and Lincoln’s landscape.

2.2.3 Conclusions

Julie's summer experiences with The Food Project impacted her sense of her neighborhood, home environment, Lincoln and Roxbury. Many of these shifts were due to her new *place repertoire*, which expanded through direct contact with Roxbury and relationships with her Food Project peers. The importance and value of racial minorities in American society was a message that Julie received from the Food Project program as well as from her peers who spoke of the whiteness of the suburbs with disdain. She finished the program with a belief that residents of color are place assets; they add culture and vibrancy to a neighborhood. This new set of beliefs heightened her comfort articulating her *racialized* image of the city.

The expansion of her *place repertoire* heightened some of her pre-existing sense of places, and diminished others. Julie's new knowledge of Roxbury afforded her the ability to make comparisons between its interpersonal relations and those of her home environment. This heightened her belief that her own neighborhood lacked social cohesion. Her experiences led to her discovery of farming, which she greatly enjoyed. This resulted in a greater awareness of the lack of agricultural land in Sudbury, which she added to her mental list of the town's deficits.

The program also positively influenced Julie's image of Lincoln. Connecting to the landscape through the act of farming caused Julie to reframe her image of Lincoln from a wealthy, boring town to one that was rich in natural and social capital. At the end of the season, Lincoln was no longer just a quieter version of Sudbury. It was a place where residents took pride in conserving and cultivating the land. She finished the program with a heightened awareness of the relative abundance of farmland in Lincoln compared to her home town.

Julie's sense of Roxbury was distinctly more positive at the end of the summer, particularly the social realm. This was the result of a variety of factors, including direct contact with this place, the Food Project's workshops and the place narratives of her peers, particularly Kiara. There were aspects of urban living, particularly the social cohesion, that she felt were superior to her home environment. She was also able

to image “nature” in Roxbury in the form of gardens. But the most striking change in Julie’s sense of places was the emerging value that she placed on its racial composition. This became a primary aspect of the way that she assessed and sensed places. The Food Project’s emphasis on diversity combined with her positive experiences with the residents of Roxbury gave her the sense that having people of color in a place was an asset. This was reflected in her increased use of racial labels when discussing the positive social attributes of the city.

2.3 Pete: Tightly Wound

Since his birth, Pete had lived in the same house in the town of Carlisle. He lived there with his parents, both MIT trained engineers, and his younger sister. This cozy single-family residence was set on a large piece of private land adjacent to a large conservation area. This environment accommodated Pete’s love of sports and the outdoors, which contributed to his very positive sense of it.

Pete was an achiever. He excelled academically, in sports and was active in his community. He carried himself with a quiet sense of self-confidence. After the first day of the Summer Program, I recorded my impression of Pete as “Athletic looking—bet he is a leader who gets no violations as he seems the type who follows rules well.” In some senses this prediction turned out to be true. That is, Pete’s performance in fieldwork was exceptional and he was a diligent participant in all of the workshops and morning discussions, particularly those related to agriculture and environmental stewardship. He was one of the seven youth from the Summer Program who did not receive any violations all summer, thereby earning a bonus of fifty dollars⁵. However,

⁵Interestingly, five of the seven youth who got the bonus were non-urban. The two urban youth who received the extra money were what I would consider ‘cross-over’ youth in that they had experiences in multiple social environments. My field notes read: “although two youth from Roxbury got the bonus, it is notable that one is a METCO kid who goes to school in Lincoln. The other attends a very elite private school and I suspect she comes from a relatively wealthy family given that she is going to “our house on the Cape” on Thursday.” This brings up some interesting questions about the implicit goals of the program that are beyond the scope of this thesis. For example, do The Food Project standards reinforce cultural norms that are biased against urban culture? Does the program implicitly teach the youth that white, mainstream values are ‘better’ or ‘right’ by rewarding conformation to these norms? Or do the standards simply help the organization meet one

his ability to connect with people who were different from himself was limited and as a result, his peers failed to see him as a leader; some even referred to him sarcastically as “Mr. Perfect” behind his back.

Academic achievement and athletics were central to Pete’s identity. The first day at The Food Project, Pete told me that both of his parents were graduates of MIT and that he planned to apply there “as well as some west coast schools, like Berkeley.” His athletic prowess was evident from his summer schedule, which included early morning runs on the trails through the forest near his house and after work soccer games.

Pete identified himself as an outdoors person. During a workshop near the beginning of the summer the youth were asked to group themselves by a common identity, Pete formed the Boy Scout cluster with one other male youth. He readily expressed pride in his wilderness experiences; often returning to work on Monday mornings with stories about having climbed a mountain in Vermont over the weekend with his dad.

As his schedule, athleticism and academic aspirations suggest, Pete was a driven young man who embraced competition with his peers. While this trait fostered success at fieldwork, it inhibited his ability to have meaningful relationships with many of his crewmates, particularly those who he saw as having interests that were unlike his own. On some level Pete recognized this barrier. During a Cultural Sharing workshop he noted that his main exposure to black people was through METCO, a school bussing program at his high school and that he was not actually friends with any of these students: “I am friends with all white people.” He added that he found The Food Project a challenging work environment, as he was not used to working with black or city people. Pete felt that he did not have a lot to talk about with urbanites, citing the example that he was one of the few people on our crew who really enjoys school. This was an interesting example given Kiara, Justin and Emmanuelle all expressed a strong interest and desire to excel in academics, indicating the ‘stickiness’ of Pete’s belief.

Pete entered the program with a very strong connection and positive sense of his home environment and of Lincoln; they were a good fit with his identity as an athlete

of its goals of teaching kids the “rules” that they will need to secure and keep jobs in the future?

and outdoors person. This was in stark contrast to his image of Roxbury, which he imaged as a pathological environment. Pete's Food Project experiences expanded his image of Roxbury to include positive aspects of its social and 'natural' realms, but his overall sense remained distinctly negative. The persistence of his sense that Roxbury was a dysfunctional environment was heightened when he compared it to his own neighborhood and community.

2.3.1 Pete's Sense of Places: Pre-Program

Neighborhood and Town

Pete's map of his neighborhood consisted of a few blocks, although during the interview he initially described his neighborhood as his entire town. When I asked him how he decided what to draw on his map, he made a distinction between his neighborhood and his community:

Well, normally I'd think of my neighborhood as kind of – well, my community is my whole town. . . My neighborhood is just – just these couple of roads that come off E Street because that's who I have, like, the most contact with. . . Like those are the people I'll see walking around or whatever.

This response underscored the ambiguity of the term 'neighborhood'. For Pete, it referenced both his entire town and a much smaller area, his *micro-neighborhood*, immediately around his house. This was the part of town where he was most familiar with the residents. In the discussion that follows, I am careful to distinguish between instances where Pete used neighborhood in reference to his micro-neighborhood versus the entire town of Carlisle. His sense of these two scales was quite similar; both were defined by the abundant nature and dearth of unsightly development.

Pete had a strong, positive sense of his town and his neighborhood. A self-described out-doors-person and an athlete, the local environment was a good fit with Pete's identity. He lived on a large piece of property that was largely forested and had easy access to the town's conservation land. He used and appreciated these environs.

For example, as an avid runner and cross-country skier (he was on his school's teams for these sports), he was out exercising on the trails in the town's conservation area on a regular basis. His response to an interview question that asked him to describe his town to someone who had never been there before demonstrated that the 'nature' areas in his town contributed to his strong, positive sense of place:

Like, just on my property I mean we've got tons of trees and we've got like hemlocks and a lot of pines, a couple of oaks and – in the back. And I just know a lot about nature because I've grown up with – a lot of birds and squirrels and everything. So that's kind of nice... Yeah, so, and there's a lot of woods in Carlisle.

Pete's discussions of "nature" in his town did not have an emotive element to them. Rather, nature had a utilitarian definition. It was about running and hiking, not birding or contemplating.

According to Pete, the lack of development of the natural realm in Carlisle was a positive attribute: "There isn't that much that goes on in Carlisle ... there's a lot of trees, a lot of nature, which is really nice, I think." He explicitly praised the conservation oriented zoning policies of the town: "I mean, I wouldn't really want to see, like, a supermarket get put in Carlisle." This anti-development sentiment reflected his negative associations with density, which were more explicit in his discussion of Roxbury.

Pete's strong attachment to his town was underscored by his response to a question that asked him where he would move if he were to win the lottery. He was unable to think of anywhere else that he would rather live:

I'd probably just stay where I am. I don't know, I probably wouldn't want to move out of Carlisle. I think it's really a great community and I have a good school. I think the Concord Carlisle High School is one of the best public schools in the area.

His emphasis on the quality of his school as a place asset reflected his focus on academics, as well as his parents influence. Given the tendency of American's to select their neighborhoods based upon quality of the local public schools, it was likely

Pete had been told that part of what made Carlisle a good place to live was the school system. He internalized that value and now it contributed to his positive sense of his town.

The only aspect of Carlisle that Pete seemed to view negatively was the new Tall Pines development, which he characterized as “the richest part of Carlisle” comprised of “all huge houses” and smaller lots than the rest of the town. His disdain for the construction of McMansion style developments fostered his positive sense of Lincoln. Pete was aware of the town’s stringent conservation policies prior to starting work with The Food Project and viewed these regulations as a desirable feature.

Lincoln

Pete entered the Food Project’s Summer Program with the sense that there were few significant differences between Carlisle and Lincoln:

Carlisle’s actually a lot like Lincoln. The building codes aren’t quite as strict, so there are more big houses, I think. But it’s a lot like Lincoln. . . the people in Lincoln seem like a lot like the people in Carlisle.

Because he saw Lincoln as similar to his home environment, he was immediately comfortable on the Lincoln Food Project site. Although Pete had no experience growing crops prior to the Summer Program, he approached the farming experience with a sense of confidence that distinguished him from the rest of our crew. This reflected his generally self-confident nature, and the fact that the place and the act of farming was a good fit with Pete’s identity as an outdoors person. His ease on the Lincoln land was very different to his discomfort in Roxbury.

Roxbury

Pete had never been to Roxbury prior to his time with the Food Project. His urban experiences were typical of the non-urban youth that I interviewed: “I mean, most of the time when I’m in Boston, it was only like the Science Museum or something,

so I don't - I mean, I've never really been to Roxbury before." Despite this lack of experience, Pete was able to articulate an image of Roxbury.

In his application to work for The Food Project, Pete expressed an interest in working with urban youth and exploring city life, but he came into the program with a negative sense of the social and physical realms of Roxbury. He communicated an image of a dense place, lacking nature and open space, the latter being the features he most valued in his home environment. His inability to find common ground with his peers from the city suggested that he was not entirely comfortable interacting with youth who had backgrounds that were different from his own. This lack of friendships affected the type of knowledge that he gained during the Food Project program. The lessons and observations from the summer that most affected Pete were the ones that conformed to his pre existing image of the city.

Prior to his experiences at The Food Project, Pete did not articulate a *racialized* image of Roxbury. This was not an indication that he was unaware of race; rather that he had a barrier to verbalizing his image. When asked to compare what he thought people who live in Roxbury might be like compared to those in Carlisle, Pete focused on the racial composition of his town, specifically its whiteness. Although he did not speak explicitly about Roxbury residents' races, the implication was that it was different from Caucasian Carlisle:

Okay, um, well, pretty much all the people in Carlisle are white. There's some Asian families. I think there might be one or two African-American families, but it's pretty much all white. And - like - especially in the school system everyone - all the kids are white.

It was striking that in his written responses during his pre-program imaging exercise, he employed the terms: "many minorities" and "diverse" to describe the social environment of Roxbury. Although these were vague terms i.e. he did not use specific racial categories, like "Black" or "Hispanic", they demonstrated that he had an image of a non-white Roxbury that he failed to verbalize during his interview.

Pete imagined the built environment of Roxbury as "crowded" with "many apartments" and "public transportation." Essentially, it was the polar opposite of Carlisle,

which he described as lacking public transport, having few residents and abundant open space. He linked the troubled social environment of Roxbury to its density:

I just think like in the city people are a lot closer [in Roxbury than in Carlisle] so there's just more tension. . . . So, I think in the suburbs it's easier to get along because everyone has more space. So, I think in the suburbs it's easier to get along because everyone has more space and - everyone is - in a way everyone's a little more comfortable, I guess.

This initial sense that Roxbury was more socially disordered than Carlisle remained in place, and in some ways was magnified, by Pete's summer experiences with The Food Project.

Pete's obvious comfort working on the land in Lincoln was in stark contrast to his level of discomfort in Roxbury. This was evident the first day when we arrived at The West Cottage lot. I jotted in my field notes that Pete looked hesitant about where to sit. He held onto his bag, not putting it in the shed as we had been instructed to do. Rather than immediately taking a seat in the circle of chairs with the other youth, Pete hovered outside the circle, looking around at his new surroundings with what I interpreted to be an anxious expression.

Pete entered the program with a sense that Roxbury was a socially tense and physically degraded environment. This image was reinforced and magnified by his summer experiences.

2.3.2 Pete's new sense of places: Post Program

Neighborhood, Town and Lincoln

There was no detectable change in the way that Pete sensed Lincoln, Carlisle or his neighborhood as a result of participating in The Food Project program. He entered with the sense that these were environments with positive social and natural features. The fact that the built realm was limited was something that he viewed as a place asset that should be maintained and even expanded. More interesting was the program's impact on his sense of Roxbury, an environment he had no experience with

prior to the program. This reflected the tight ‘fit’ between his personal identity as an outdoorsman and the physical environment of his home town. His positive sense of his local environs inhibited his ability to see assets in places that he believed were very different from where he lived.

Roxbury

Upon finishing the program Pete’s predominant sense was that Roxbury was a dysfunctional environment. This was most apparent when he compared it to Carlisle or Lincoln. Pete did garner a new recognition some positive aspects of Roxbury, particularly the presence of gardens and social cohesion amongst residents, yet they disappeared from his image when he compared the urban site to Lincoln or to his hometown.

Pete’s work on Food Project land made him aware of the presence of agriculture in Roxbury. This was not surprising given that this was the location that the youth were most exposed to through the Summer Program. Although Pete knew when he applied for a spot in the Summer Program that he would be doing urban agriculture, he expressed surprise at the land’s existence. He articulated this sentiment during his interview several months after finishing the program:

I [was surprised] by the Food Project Farm in Roxbury, and just really surprised that they even had a farm right – I mean, RIGHT in the middle of one of the poorest sections of Boston.

Not only did Pete finish the program with a new awareness of The Food Project’s land in Roxbury, he was alerted to the presence of the front and backyard gardens in the neighborhood. After a walking tour on our first day in Roxbury, Pete noted he was “surprised by how many small gardens were in the neighborhood.” These spaces were still a part of his image of Roxbury several months after the program:

So, I was just really surprised, and... I was REALLY surprised by how much agriculture there IS in Roxbury. I mean, I never really imagined that people would be like growing things like on their doorstep, basically. And all the gardens. I was completely surprised.

Prior to starting the program, Pete described nature in Roxbury in opposition to the abundance he saw in Lincoln and Carlisle. Roxbury's nature was in "isolated areas... plants around sidewalks." This changed due to his summer experiences. The expansion of his *place repertoire* meant that he no longer needed to rely on opposites to generate his sense of Roxbury. On the visioning exercise Pete completed at the end of the summer he listed features of Roxbury's landscape that he had observed over the summer, such as "reclaimed vacant lots" and "gardens" to describe nature in Roxbury. Yet he also noted that it was "out of place", revealing his feeling that nature, something he valued, did not belong in Roxbury, a place of decay, disinvestment and poverty.

Pete's vision of the built environment of Roxbury after the program emphasized decay: "worn down", "trashy" and "vandalized" It was no wonder he felt that his beloved nature was out of place in such a degraded environment. The preeminence of decay as the frame through which he sensed Roxbury's built form was particularly evident when he compared it to Carlisle's:

I mean, the houses [in Roxbury] are just a lot more crowded together [than in Carlisle], and I guess the lots are a lot smaller, and I mean, there's just more trash on the - on the sidewalks and things.

Despite his awareness of agriculture in Roxbury, when Pete spoke about his vision of this environment, density and trashiness were the dominant images, not the gardens or the farm. That is, his image was comprised of elements that were the opposite of what he valued.

Pete's sense of Roxbury's social environment was influenced by The Food Project program through formal and informal conversations with peers, experiences in Roxbury and the words and actions of The Food Project staff. After completing the program, Pete still did not speak about the racial composition in Roxbury, but his written responses to his image of the social environment indicated that he had a specific image of the residents color and class: "Black, Hispanic and lower class" were the descriptors that he listed. This represented a either a greater willingness or a

new awareness of the demographics of Roxbury than Pete possessed prior to the program. This more explicitly *racialized* image was accompanied by a sense that while there were positive aspects to the social interactions between Roxbury residents, the neighborhood's physical decay and social dysfunction, particularly crime, trumped them.

Youth at The Food Project learned about places through workshops, direct contact, and informal conversations with their peers. Pete learned from the first two, but his unstructured education on the city was limited, as he did not often partake in casual conversations with his urban peers. Morning 'check-ins' were a formalized time where the youth often exchanged information about their home environments. For example, on Monday mornings, we were frequently asked to describe what we did over the weekend and assign it some sort of value, such as a weather pattern or emotion. During these times, Kiara and Justin often spoke about Roxbury cookouts and hanging out with neighbors. Their valuations were always positive—"happy" or "sunny." These interactions presented Pete with an image of Roxbury as socially cohesive place and emerged in his sense of Roxbury at the end of the program.

These stories of social interaction in Roxbury were reinforced by experiences on the Food Project lots in Roxbury; residents often came by and greeted the youth. For example, one particularly warm afternoon as Emily, Pete and I weeded the Albion lot (one of the smaller Roxbury lots), a black middle-aged man pulled up beside the garden in his car. Assuming I was in charge of our group, he said to me: "take care for these kids. Make sure they are drinking lot of water... they should not be out for a long time working in this kind of heat" As he drove off he called out to us: "great work, keep it up." The words of his peers and interactions with residents resulted in Pete expressing a more positive view of Roxbury's social environment than he had prior to the program:

It seemed to be like THERE [Roxbury] , people are a lot more familiar with their neighbors. They spend more time with their neighbors, and, you know, maybe they help their neighbors out more.

Despite the recognition of Roxbury's social networks, Pete's foremost image of the

social environment after the summer centered on its dysfunction. As he had at the beginning of the summer, Pete saw Roxbury's density as the explanation for many of its social ills. This was most clearly articulated when Pete compared the social environment of Roxbury to his own town:

Here [in Carlisle], people are a lot more spread out . . . There doesn't really seem to be any worry about crime here. It seemed like in Roxbury, I mean, there's always kind of a worry. You want to lock things up, and, I don't know, it just seems to be like less trashy [in Lincoln], and, you know, people maybe have more time and more money, and clean up after themselves.

The program magnified Pete's belief that Roxbury was dysfunctional. This was the result of a variety of factors, including statements by The Food Project staff, and his direct observations of the city and the urbanites on the crew.

Some of the messages about social disorder in Roxbury that were sent by the staff were implicit. For example on the first day of work in Roxbury Chris, the site supervisor, instructed the youth to put their bags in the shed with a reassurance that it would be locked. Pete's comment that "you want to lock things up" in Roxbury reflected this protocol. This contrasted the situation in Lincoln where personal things were left in open cubbies in an area that was often unwatched during the day. Interestingly, the only thefts that I knew of during my two summers with this organization, the lifting of cash and an iPod from a youth's bag, occurred in Lincoln.

There were other times when staff sent explicit messages about Roxbury's social environment, such as Chris's introduction to the Roxbury site. He started off by telling the crew "there is a lot more going on at the site [than in Lincoln]. . . if someone is walking or driving by, you need to direct them to myself, Denielle or Thomas [other staff]. . . partly for safety and partly because it is Food Project policy." His lecture emphasized the importance of using cross-walks because "people in Roxbury drive like maniacs. . . one year a crew worker got hit by a bus. . . there is a lot more going on here [than Lincoln]. Be mindful of safety." Chris finished off with a comment on what the youth should and should not bring to the site. Referring to a crew worker with

dangly earrings he noted that “there is no need to wear bling. . . a lot more people here are in desperate situations and there is no need to tempt people.” This speech helped to supplant Pete’s vague image of social chaos in Roxbury with a more specific set of concerns, including levels of crime.

Comments by fellow crew workers, particularly those from the city magnified Pete’s sense that the city was not safe. For example, while working in the city Emily, who lived in Dorchester (an inner city neighborhood adjacent to Roxbury), decided to invite our crew to her place for an after work barbeque. I asked Paul and Pete whether they were planning to attend. Pete could not go as he had a soccer match that evening. Paul stated that he did not think he would go due to safety concerns. Specifically, he did not want to have to take the subway home in the evening: “I don’t wanna get jumped at the Jackson T [the subway station in Roxbury].” After he said this I looked up at Pete, who kept his eyes fixed on his weeding, listening but not engaging Paul in a dialogue about his concerns.

Pete’s lack of close friendships with his urban peers meant that he did not have meaningful conversations about the city. This was different from his non-urban crew-mates Julie and Steve, whose private exchanges were a key mechanism in shifting their sense of Roxbury in a positive direction. Pete’s lack of engagement with his urban peers represented a partial explanation for the difference in his response to the program; that is, his overwhelming negative sense of Roxbury’s environs. The extent of Pete’s detachment from the urban youth came through during our final straight talk session in which Kiara declared: “you and me conversated, but not really.” Emmanuelle stated that she did not feel that she really knew him. Paul echoed these sentiments noting that he had no information about Pete other than the fact that he like to run and do field work. Interviewing Paul several months after the program, he commented that he had to take someone off of our crew, it would have been Pete: “Well, me and him didn’t connect that much, other than the fact that he liked to eat pork-fried rice.” Pete’s failure to get to know Paul was particularly striking given the two boys were quite similar along many dimensions, including their interest in school, love of playing sports and hard work ethic. Their lack of friendship underscored the

extent of his detachment from the urban youth.

On some level, Pete was aware of his own urban anxieties. At the end of the summer during our final straight talk session he told Julie: “[it was] amazing how you fit in in Roxbury...I don’t know how much you have been in Roxbury, but it was incredible how you were just talking to kids.” This comment highlighted his discomfort in this urban environment.

2.3.3 Conclusions

Pete entered The Food project program with a very strong connection and positive sense of his home environment and of Lincoln; this reflected their strong fit with his identity as an outdoors person. This identity drove his anti-development sentiments, which were reflected in his strong admiration of Lincoln’s landscape. The importance of his school as a place asset was a manifestation of the high value that he placed on academic achievement. It also indicated the transmission of his parents’ place values: the quality of the public school system was a key component of what makes a good neighborhood. The Food Project program did not appear to impact his initial senses of these non-urban environments. Pete finished the program feeling that his initial perceptions were accurate.

Pete’s initial image of Lincoln, Carlisle and his neighborhood contrasted sharply with his image of Roxbury, which he sensed as a pathological environment. Although Pete’s Food Project experiences expanded his image of Roxbury to include some positive aspects of its social and ‘natural’ realms, his overall sense remained distinctly negative. The reasons for the differences between Pete’s responses to the program and those of his non-urban crewmates were twofold. The first was that he entered the program with a strong fit between his home environment and his personal identity. Unlike Steve and Julie, Pete’s experiences in Roxbury were not impacted by an awareness of place characteristics that were lacking in his *micro-environment* or Carlisle. He was completely satisfied with his own place and was unable to see good things about an environment that he felt was so different from his own. In fact, his perception that Roxbury was a dysfunctional environment appeared to be heightened

when he compared it to his own neighborhood and community. The second was his apparent inability to connect with, and thereby learn from, his urban counterparts in the program. Pete latched onto the comments and incidents that reinforced his pre-existing negative stereotypes of Roxbury, rather than focusing on the statements and incidents that challenged them.

Pete's Food Project experiences were influenced by his narrow definition of success. Doing good fieldwork and participating in the workshops and games run by the staff were his measures of success. He did not exhibit openness to learning about the assets of different types of people and places. That said, it is important to underscore that these traits are typical of many fifteen-year-old youths; they are reticent to try new things or to confront their insecurities. The Food Project deals with youth at a stage of their life course where their identities and values are in flux. As Pete moves out of adolescence into young adulthood and beyond, he may well develop an appreciation for places that do not conform to the ideals he espoused at age fifteen.

2.4 Non-Urban Youth: Discussion

As the narratives of Pete, Julie and Steve convey, there were commonalities and differences in their sense of their own neighborhoods and hometowns, as well as their sense of Lincoln and Roxbury and the impact that The Food Project had on them. These variations are a reflection of their individual identities, values and social skills. That being said, some striking similarities in their sense of places existed prior to their entry into The Food Project program, such as their sense of safety and security in their neighborhoods and home towns, and images of Roxbury as the opposite and Lincoln as nearly identical to their home environments. There was a paucity of racial descriptors used in reference to any of the three environments, particularly Roxbury. These patterns held for the majority of non-urban youth whom I encountered over the course of this research, including my control group, which consisted of a total of six non-urban youth. Pete, Julie and Steve all finished the Summer Program with a more positive sense of Lincoln and Roxbury as well as an increase in their use of

racial labels to describe their images of these places and their home environments.

Four of the youth in the non-urban control group applied to The Food Project's 2005 Summer Program, were waitlisted, but were never admitted. I met with these applicants before and after The Food Project Summer Program at which time they completed the same interview, and mapping and visioning exercises as the young people who participated in the program. In order to address themes that emerged around the relationship between racial identity and place, I used purposeful sampling to locate two Lincoln based youth who identified as African American. These two girls were only interviewed after the program. (For a detailed review on the methodology used to select the control group and data collection see page 61 of the Methods section (Sect. 1.4.))

The six non-urban youth who comprised my control group had the majority of their lived experience in non-urban environments. Table 2.1 provides a summary of the density and proportion of white residents in the hometowns of the non-urban youth (including the three Food Project participants) whom I interviewed for this study. All six of the youth in the control group resided in towns that are located to the west of the city of Boston. Five resided in towns that had densities between 500 and 2600 people per square mile. Luke, a male control group member, lived in Watertown, which is substantially denser than hometowns of the other youth. Its higher density gives the town a distinctly more 'urban' feel than the semi-rural environment of Lincoln. Luke's inclusion in the non-urban group was based on two factors. The first was Watertown's *relatively* non-urban feel compared to Roxbury, the Boston neighborhood where The Food Project's urban land and office is located. For example, Watertown is about one third as dense as Roxbury and 98% white (compared to Roxbury's 5%)⁶. The town's demographics, combined with the fact that Luke's other major lived experiences were in rural Washington State and small towns in western Massachusetts where his cousins lived, determined his inclusion with the non-urban group. That being said, his case is illustrative of the difficulties

⁶While there are rural locations, particularly in the southern United States, that are dominated by people of color in the Northeast non-urban areas tend to be predominantly white and many urban environments have high proportions of residents of color.

Table 2.1: The density and proportion of white residents in the non-urban youths' hometowns.

Nam	Town	Density	% White
Steve	Lincoln	533	89
Julie	Sudbury	589	94
Pete	Carlisle	542	92
Molly*	Concord	685	92
Amy*	Wellesley	2614	90
Jake*	Carlisle	542	94
Luke*	Watertown	8098	98
Claire**	Lincoln	533	89
Katy**	Lincoln	533	89

*Control youth applied to the program and were waitlisted. These youth were interviewed before and after the Summer Program.

**These youth identified as African American. Data was only gathered from them after the program ended. Neither had applied to The Food Project Summer Program.

involved with classifying youth as being purely urban or non-urban. This challenge is addressed in greater depth in the chapter that deals with the crossover youth.

The control group's sense of places did not change during the period that the participants were engaged in the Summer Program. This was in contrast to the participants' senses, which did shift. This difference between the two groups is highly suggestive that the changes amongst the participants were a result of the program and not some other external variable.

Three key variables have emerged in my analysis as important factors in shaping and shifting the non-urban youths' place perceptions. These are: 1) place repertoires; 2) environmental fit and 3) cross place friendships. A place repertoire is a *mediator* variable; it describes *how* the Summer Program changed the youth's sense of places. Environmental fit and cross place friendships are *moderating* variables; they influenced the direction and/or strength that the change in the individual youth's place repertoires had on their sense of a particular place. That is, the operation of expanded repertoires is tempered by the degree to which participants had a strong environmental fit with their home-place and the degree to which they formed cross-place friendships. Cross-place friendships are of particular interest as they provide a partial explanation for the youth participants' more positively valenced sense of

Table 2.2: A Summary of the *mediating* and *moderating* variables that operated on the non-urban youth participants' sense of places.

Concept	Type	Meaning	Example of Observed Effect at The Food Project
Place Repertoire	Mediator	Mental bank of place experiences (lived and virtual) that an individual draws upon to make an assessment of other places.	-Exposure to Roxbury expanded youths' place repertoire. Finished program with a higher resolution image of this environment.
Environmental Fit (with home neighborhood)	Moderator	Alignment of personal identity with home environment.	-Tight fit heightens awareness of what other neighborhoods lack i.e. more aware of environmental attributes that were lacking in Roxbury. -Poor fit heightens awareness of attributes in new places i.e. heightened awareness of Roxbury's positive attributes.
Cross Place Friendship	Moderator	Relationships with people from outside of one's home environment.	-Increase in use of racial indicators to describe place. -Higher resolution image of unfamiliar place i.e., Roxbury

Roxbury and their increased use of racial indicators after participating in the Summer Program. Table 2.2 provides a summary of these variables and examples of their effects in the context of The Food Project Summer Program.

In the discussion that follows, I examine the role of each of these three variables in determining what the non-urban youth sensed in their neighborhoods, home environments, Lincoln and Roxbury prior to the commencement of The Food Project program and how they impeded or facilitated changes in the participants' sense of places as they moved through The Food Project program. In addition, I discuss the extent to which the youth presented racialized images of these places and provide several hypotheses as to why this changed after participating in the Summer Program, including the garnering of cross place friendships. It is important to keep in mind that the aforementioned variables overlap and interact with each other and with other social forces. The purpose of articulating these as three discrete ideas is to create a useful theoretical framework for analyzing how non-urban youth garner their sense of places.

2.4.1 Place Repertoires

A place repertoire includes an individual's lived and virtual experiences in a set of places. Lived experiences vary in intensity, from being a resident of a place to a one-time exposure. Virtual experiences come from outside sources, such as the media, peers and family. In making assessments or discussing places, the non-urban youth drew on these repertoires, mentally comparing and contrasting features of places with one another. My observations indicated that lived experiences generally provided higher resolution images of places than those that came from ephemeral contacts or virtual sources. Clearly, there may be exceptions to this, for example where a youth is deeply involved in an Internet game that is place based or is highly interested in garnering information about a particular location. But in my sample the youths' lived experiences provided the higher resolution images that they leaned on most heavily in making their place comparisons⁷.

Prior to entry into The Food Project program, the non-urban youth (who did not live in Lincoln) proposed images of Lincoln that matched the environment that they were most familiar with, their own towns. While they had all been to Lincoln, none of them had spent extended periods of time there. Pete had a very positive sense of Lincoln. Like his hometown, he imaged an abundance of nature, open space and high quality homes. He was aware that the town had conservation oriented zoning codes that were similar to Carlisle, and this enhanced his positive image of this place. On the other hand, Julie imaged it as a boring environment, similar to Sudbury in its paucity of hangouts and un-neighborly relations between residents. The pattern held across the control group. For example, Jake described Lincoln's natural realm as the "same as Carlisle", and the built realm as "a lot like my town". These images were vague, indicating a lack of a fine-grained image of the town leading to the assumption that both towns were identical.

⁷While I did not attempt to systematically gauge the impact of the youths' virtual place experiences on their repertoires, their images of places were obviously influenced by the media. For example, several urban youth referenced television as a source of their image of Lincoln's environment. In order to fully understand the contribution of non-lived experiences on youths' sense of places a focused, in depth study would be necessary.

None of the non-urban youth whom I encountered in my work had lived experience in Roxbury, other than their late afternoon interview for the Summer Program that took place April 2005 at The Food Project's Roxbury office. Despite this very limited exposure, they all had a sense of this place. This sense was shaped, at least in part, by their existing place repertoires, which was comprised mainly of non-urban places. Their sense of Roxbury was influenced by a combination of images transmitted to them from outside sources that centered on decay, density and dysfunction and a comparison with their existing inventory of places, particularly their home environment, with which they were the most familiar. As a result, they contrasted Roxbury with their own familiar environment. This is an important point, as the majority of the existing sense of place literature focuses on people's sense of the environments that they are intimately familiar with, most often the place where they live. (See for example, the work of anthropologist Keith Basso 1996 and Environmental Psychologist Torri Derr (2002).) Despite their very limited direct experience with Roxbury, the youth possessed an image of it that impacted their experiences in this unfamiliar environment.

None of the non-urban youth whom I interviewed could think of a place "where danger resides" in their town or in their neighborhoods. They countered this image with one of Roxbury as a dangerous place, including the existence of violence, crime and gang activities. All of the non-urban youth identified nature in their town as being composed of forests and conservation areas, features that take up large areas of land. In contrast, the predominant image of nature in Roxbury was either non-existent or limited to single items i.e. "tree growing in sidewalk." While these descriptions were clearly aligned with media accounts of the city, it appeared that they were also using more familiar environments, particularly their neighborhoods and towns, as comparison points. For example, prior to participating in the program Steve felt that Lincoln residents' were "boring" and that Roxbury's were "not boring" and "fun".

Further evidence of the important role that place repertoires played in determining the youths' sense of Roxbury emerged during my discussion of Roxbury with Jake. This young man resided in Carlisle, but his family owned a rental property in Beacon

Hill, a very dense, wealthy neighborhood of Boston. His image of this place came from his limited experience visiting this neighborhood and hearing about it from his parents. Jake's image of the social environment of Roxbury was similar to his peers: "Roxbury gets probably lots of shootings, and violence, and lots of traffic and noise", but his explanation for this disorder reflected his broader urban place repertoire. His peers all related Roxbury's violence and disorder to density, whereas Jake did not. Having experienced a dense urban environment, he was aware that disorder was not a necessary outcome. Jake explained the difference in his perception of the levels of disorder in these two urban environments as a product of the class of Roxbury residents: "I think people make less money [in Roxbury than in Carlisle or Beacon Hill]."

Katy, an African American Lincolnite (whom I purposefully sought out and interviewed after the program ended) stated that she had never been to Roxbury, but appeared comfortable describing her image of this location. Along with contrasting it to Lincoln, she drew upon her virtual experiences with another inner city neighborhood in Detroit, the neighborhood where her father grew up. Though she had never visited either place, she said she imagined they were similar, very dense and that everyone lived in apartment buildings. Her description centered on the violence and social disorder of these places, that some people carried guns: "[My father] feels much safer here [in Lincoln] than he did in Detroit where he had to worry about getting robbed." She said that she imagined Roxbury was similar, that there would be lots of crime and that the buildings would be "cracked and broken down."

Participation in The Food Project expanded the youths' urban and non-urban place repertoires. Working on the land, waiting at the T station, walking between the Roxbury sites and to the train in Lincoln all gave them direct experiences with both Lincoln and Roxbury. In addition, their experiences with their urban peers and interactions with the residents of these places also augmented their repertoires. These experiences gave them a fuller sense of these environments.

Although the non-urban youth all lived in or nearby Lincoln, their summer experiences refined their image of this town, enhancing the richness of their place reper-

toire with regard to their hometown environment. For example, working on the land cultivated Julie's awareness of the abundance of farmland in Lincoln. Rather than imagining a place where there was nothing to do for youth, as she had prior to the program, she became more aware of the agricultural land. This awareness had a negative impact on her image of her own town because her comparison of the two non-urban environments highlighted the lack of farm land, something that she valued, in her home town. Pete's place repertoires also expanded. Pete now recognized that the land in Lincoln was more protected from the private real estate market than in Carlisle and he expressed a strong admiration for the residents of Lincoln, who were "more conservation minded" than those in Carlisle. Steve garnered a more detailed mental image of his own town by working on the Lincoln farm. Rather than seeing the abundance of agricultural fields as spaces for outdoorsy Lincoln types to enjoy, he possessed a clear vision of what was being grown and, to a limited degree, appreciated these spaces more than he had prior to the program.

Contact with the land in Roxbury broadened all of the non-urban youth participants' place repertoires and impacted their sense of this environment albeit in different ways and degrees. Environmental attributes, such as gardens and social cohesion became a new part of all of their images. Their images went from being 'low resolution', based largely on comparisons with very different environments and fuzzy media images to 'high resolution', more detailed images.

The extent to which the youths' expanded repertoires impacted their sense of Roxbury's environment was limited, at least in part by the prior strength of their environmental fit with their home neighborhoods. For example, after participating in The Food Project's Summer Program, Pete, Julie and Steve all re-imagined the social environment of Roxbury as socially cohesive and full of gardens. This new imagery was stronger for Steve and Julie, whereas Pete maintained an overwhelming sense of Roxbury's dysfunction. This was due, at least in part, to their varying degrees of environmental fit with their home environments, and their differing abilities to connect with their urban peers, to create what I refer to as cross-place friendships.

2.4.2 Environmental Fit

The concept of environmental fit⁸ refers to the consistent pattern that I observed between youths' sense of their immediate home environment and their self-identities. Youth whose personal identities were well aligned with the physical and social environment of their neighborhoods had a more positively valenced sense of that place as well as their town. In contrast, where there were tensions between personal identity and neighborhood affordances, the youth had a more negative sense of their town and neighborhood. My data does not allow me to say whether this relationship is unidirectional or bi-directional. That is, it is possible that the environment where a youth lived impacted their personal identity. For example, Pete's identity as an outdoors person may have been created, at least in part, by exposure to 'nature' in Carlisle. That being said, this process is not inevitable; Steve lived in an environment with similar physical attributes as Pete's, but did not share his appreciation of 'nature'. In fact, Steve's identity as a computer nerd was associated with tension between himself and his surroundings, resulting in a negatively valenced sense of place. This suggests that personal identity, while possibly influenced by environmental attributes, is not determined by it. Personal identity does, however appear to directly influence environmental fit.

Both Julie and Steve began their Food Project summer with a negative sense of their hometowns and their neighborhoods. As noted above, Steve was a non-outdoors person living in a "woody" town and Julie was a social rebel, living on a quiet, suburban street where there were no peers of her age. The negative sense of the home environments of these two youth contrasted with Pete's sense of his home environs. His Boy Scout identity was well aligned with the wooded landscape that surrounded his house.

The concept of environmental fit offers an explanation for cases where people

⁸Environmental fit as I use it here differs from Lynch's (1981) notion of fit, which was a measurable 'performance dimension' of a place. It referred to whether the physical form of the city afforded opportunities for its users to engage in particular activities. When I speak of environmental fit, it is in reference to the match between the individual's personal identity and the social and physical realms of a place. Environmental fit emphasizes individual rather than group identity and desires, and employs a broader definition of environment than the physical realm, which was Lynch's focus.

sense the same environment in very different ways. That is, it moderates the way the environmental inputs are perceived by an individual. For example, Jake, a control group case, was a distinctly non-athletic and non-outdoorsy young man living around the corner from Pete. Jake's main hobbies were computer games and learning about history. His single family home was set on a large piece of land where they raised chickens as "pets" and collected their eggs. Jake had no interest in helping on the property; he preferred to be inside playing on the computer. His identity as a history buff and computer whiz did not fit with his rural surroundings, resulting in a negative sense of his neighborhood and town: "Carlisle is too boring...I would rather live somewhere else, like in the city...nothing happens here." He expressed a preference for moving somewhere with more history because: "I really like um, castles and stuff." This was very different from Pete's sense that his town was "a really great community", the kind of place where he wanted to raise his own family.

A second example of the role of fit in determining sense of place comes from a comparison of Steve and Claire, who lived in the same area of Lincoln. Claire, an African American female whom I interviewed after the program had ended, expressed a very different sense of her neighborhood and town than Steve. Claire, her brother and their four friends from their street spent their free time playing in the wooded area around their homes, which they called "Forest Creek". Over the period of The Food Project Summer Program these youth had created a town, which included an imaginary bank with local currency (pine cones). She had a very vivid image of her micro-neighborhood that focused on her social networks and the woods behind her house (Fig. 2-2). Claire could not think of anywhere she would want to move to if she won the lottery, nor could she think of anything that she would change about Lincoln. Her identity as an outdoors type fit well with her home environment, resulting in a very positive sense of this whole town. This contrasted with Steve, whose overwhelming sense of his town was that it was "boring". That Claire had a sibling and peers on her street that shared her interests indicates the role that the social environment can play in determining environmental fit. The social realm of Claire's environment included companionship for the activities she most enjoyed, like

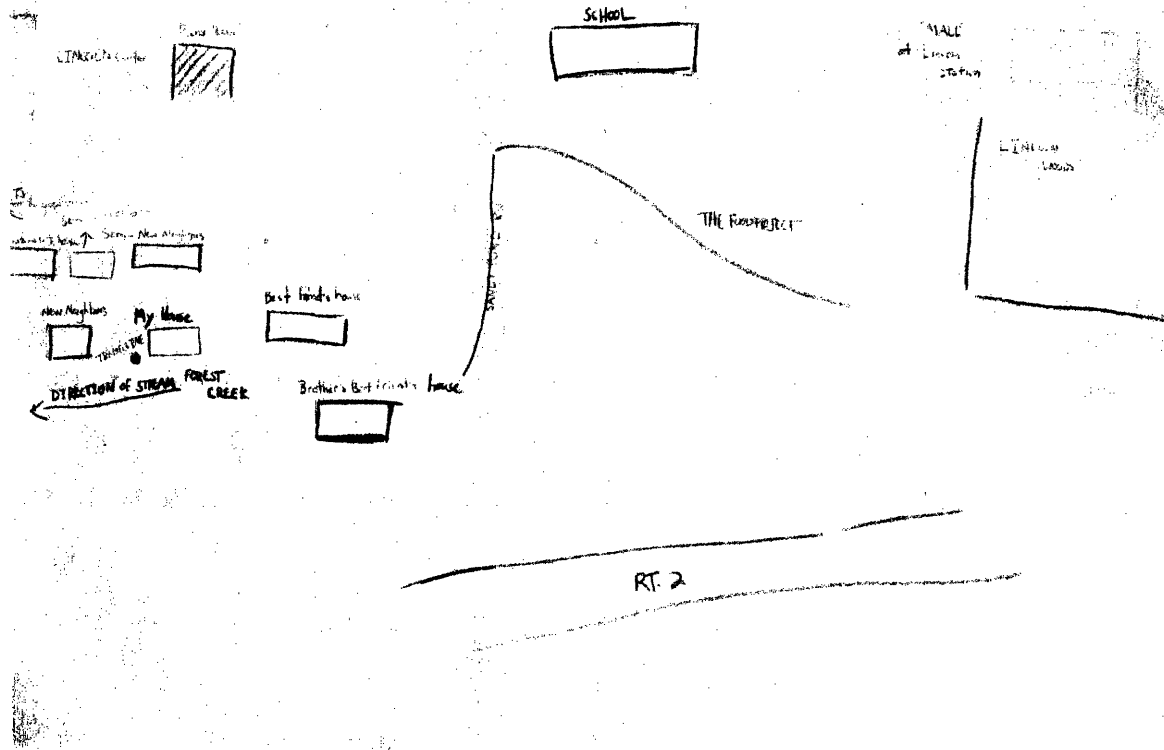


Figure 2-2: Claire's cognitive map of her neighborhood. The detail of the area immediately around her house illustrates her strong image of this place. Her careful labeling of the homes of the other young people in the neighborhood indicates the important contribution that her her social networks made to her image and ultimately, her positive sense of this place.

playing in the woods with her brother. This again differed from Steve, an only child who did not feel that he had much in common with his neighbors, even the girl next door who was his age. In fact, he noted that the his street had “forced [a block party] once... I thought it was kind of boring, because there wasn't really anybody to talk to.”

The extent to which a youth's home environment fit with his or her identity impacted their Food Project experiences. That is, it moderated the effects of their expanded place repertoires. Julie and Steve both started the Food Project with a sense that there was something lacking in the social environment of their home neighborhoods. They experienced Roxbury and interacted with their urban peers with a heightened interest in learning about the urban social realm; they wanted to know whether this environment had what they perceived as lacking in their own

place. After completing the program, both of these non-urban youth expressed a desire to move to more urban locations (although not to Roxbury). Their new place preferences reflected their belief that these places were a better fit with their identities. Julie felt there would be more street life which fit with her identity as a ‘partier’ and action seeker and Steve felt there were more appealing hangouts, such as comic book shops and movie theatres. Both wanted to live in environments (i.e., the towns of Cambridge and Arlington), which they believed had the density and social cohesion they experienced in Roxbury, along with the high quality homes, clean streets, and sense of security of their current residences.

Pete, on the other hand, started and ended the program with an unequivocally positive sense of his hometown and neighborhood. His identity as an outdoors person was a tight fit with his perception of what his home surroundings offered. He entered the program with a belief that Roxbury was the polar opposite of Carlisle. His focus during his time with The Food Project was its lack of open space and nature, the features he valued most. Although he made a mental note of Roxbury’s social connectedness, it was the images of dysfunction and decay that dominated his sense of this place.

Environmental fit appeared to be, in some senses, a mixed blessing. On the one hand, Pete’s tight fit with his home environment led him to have a very positive sense of it. On the other hand, it inhibited his ability to notice and appreciate aspects of environments that were different from his own. The effects of his expanded place repertoire on his sense of new environments were negatively affected by his fit with his home environment. Steve and Julie did not exhibit a strong attachment to their home environments. The lack of fit or the tension between their identity and home environment meant that as their repertoires expanded, they were primed to appreciate the value of places that were different from their own.

2.4.3 Cross-Place Friendships

The Food Project offered opportunities for the non-urban, white youth to interact with people of color from the city and vice versa. According to Allport’s (1954)

contact hypothesis, a program such as this should shift the non-urban youths' negative stereotypes about people of color, however little has been written about the impact that these relationships might have on perceptions of *places*. My work indicates that there was a trickle down effect from people to place but that it varied with the extent to which the non-urban youth who participated in The Food Project connected with their urban peers. That is, overcoming negative stereotypes of urban dwellers through contact impacted their image of the places that they inhabit when these contacts were socially significant for the youth.

It is important that the cross-place friendships at The Food Project were *heterophilous*; they were between individuals who were different along many dimensions, including their race, class and place of residence. According to the sociology literature these types of relationships are less common than *homophilous* ones (where individual's are alike across multiple dimensions). The reason for this is because heterophilous relationships demand more effort due to the actors' awareness that they bring unequal sets of resources to the relationship. Thus, these relationships are "costly and unusual" (p. 50). That these relationships existed amongst some of The Food Project participants indicates that the program facilitated the formation of some of these 'expensive' relationships.

Steve and Julie both bonded with their city co-workers in a way that Pete did not; they had deep and meaningful conversations with their urban peers about living in the city and about stereotyping. Their comfort with youth from backgrounds different from their own translated into a richer set of knowledge, insights and appreciation of the urban social realm. Pete was not included in many of the conversations where Steve and Julie 'learned' about urban pride or the value of diversity. As a result of their access to this new information, Steve and Julie finished their time at the Food Project with softened stereotypes of urbanites, and an enlarged place repertoire. Specifically, they finished the program with a sense that the social environment of Roxbury was more vibrant than their own neighborhoods. Pete became more aware that people in Roxbury had positive social interactions, but this image was limited by his original image of the crime and overall trashiness of the place.

2.4.4 Race as a descriptor of place

A consistent and unexpected observation of this study was that prior to the commencement of The Food Project program none of the non-urban youth used racial terms to describe Roxbury. This pattern held for the two African American women, Katy and Claire, whom I contacted and interviewed after the program had ended. One explanation for their *unracialized* image of Roxbury could be the whiteness of their place repertoires prior to the program. That is, they resided in predominantly white environments where crossing race lines was not a part of their lived experiences⁹. However, my data suggests that the omission of race was more likely a reflection of their negative stereotypes of people of color and/or a belief that overtly naming race was racist. The youth felt uncomfortable using race as a component of their place talk. This was particularly true when they spoke about environments that they imagined were populated by people of color, such as Roxbury.

Some of the youths' awareness of the racial makeup of Roxbury became evident in the comparisons with their home environments. For example, Pete and Julie emphasized the whiteness of their home environment when comparing it to Roxbury, although neither applied racial terms directly to Roxbury. Amy, the control youth from Wellesley did not mention race during her interview, but during the visioning exercise (both pre and post program) wrote down that she imagined Roxbury's social realm as "diverse" and "tough". This indicated that race was a part of her image of this unfamiliar environment, but the fact that she did not speak about this feature during her interview or use more explicit racial labels suggested that she was not comfortable vocalizing it. Another example of non-urban youths' hesitancy to name race emerged during my interview with Molly, a control case who was from Concord. After noting that she thought Roxbury would have "much more violence" than her town, I pressed her to describe what she thought people in Roxbury would *look* like

⁹Although Steve, Julie and Pete had all had exposure to youth of color at school through METCO, a bussing program that brings youth of color from the city of Boston to their schools, they all noted that they were not friends with these urban youth. Julie's unfamiliarity was illustrated when I asked her which neighborhoods the METCO kids at her school were from and she responded with a shrug, saying that she had no absolutely no idea, just that they were from the city and that she really hadn't ever talked to any of them.

compared to those in her neighborhood. Her response reflected a hesitancy to use racial descriptors of urbanites. She prefaced her response, “black” with: “I don’t know if this is okay to say”. This hesitancy might be interpreted as reflecting her belief that being race blind (except to whites) is non-racist.

Another potential explanation for lack of racial identifiers used by the non-urban youth was that they were using coded language to talk about race. As discussed above their images of Roxbury tended to include social dysfunction (“violence”, “gangs”, “drug dealing”) and a lack of caring about their living environment (“trashy”, ‘broken down’ and “broken windows”). Research by sociologist Camille Zubrinsky Charles (2005) shows that these stereotypes are broadly held by white Americans, and that they negatively impact their desire to have neighbors of color. My data do not enable me to untangle with certainty whether they were using these descriptors as a proxy for race or poverty, or simply expressing their image of the inner city with certainty. The change in language amongst participating youth over the course of the summer combined with an acknowledgement that they felt more comfortable speaking about race, suggests the former explanation is more likely.

After participating in the Summer Program, the non-urban crewmembers more readily used racial words to describe Roxbury, although their level of ease varied. Julie and Steve used race labels to describe the social environment of Roxbury during their interviews, whereas Pete was only willing to write down these adjectives. The youths’ increased tendency to communicate about race reflected a variety of factors, including their cross-place friendships and the Food Project’s emphasis on diversity training; they finished the program with a greater degree of comfort when speaking about racial characteristics of places, particularly those that they imaged were populated by residents of color.

Steve, who at the beginning of the program did not even mention race in his discussions of the city or his own neighborhood, on completing the program was explicit about his image of the racial characteristics of both places: “It seems like here it’s a majority *white* community, and there, it’s a majority *black* community.” Julie was less explicit, leaning on a description of her home environment in order

to describe the residents of Roxbury: “I know there’s an Asian family, like on Allen Road. But there are no black people, no Indian people. . .” Her identification of lack of black people in her home environment, rather than a description of the ‘whiteness’ of Sudbury was a shift that indicated a greater willingness to speak openly about race:

Because like before I would just - I knew that I didn’t see color, and I accepted that, and like I just never really had a problem with anyone. But, now I sort of feel like I DO see color? And that’s a GOOD thing, and I SHOULD. Because like we all are different...It just means that it’s something that is. . . Oh, like I realize that it’s OK to see color. I don’t have to be colorblind.

These comments indicated that prior to the program Julie believed that not being a racist meant not noticing the color of others. By the end of the program she had internalized The Program’s message that seeing and naming was not an inherently racist act, which led her to name race in her description of places.

Steve and Julie’s comfort using these terms reflected a diminution in negative stereotypes of people of color as a result of their contact and friendships with their urban peers. For example, Steve described how his new friendships made him realize that kids of color from the city were not stupid, as he had previously assumed:

I think that one thing I realized is that I don’t think [kids from the city] are that different personality-wise. But one thing that I do notice that’s different is the dialect that they use. . . it’s just COMPLETELY different. . . It’s just like “Hmm. What are they saying? They sound stupid. . . It’s like ‘Yo, whatup, or whatever. . .’ But actually, it seems like we’re pretty much the same personality-wise. And I think that is one of the things that kind of turns people – turns people off from people of like different race... It’s just like ‘Hmm. What are they saying? They sound *stupid*.’ But, actually they seem pretty much the same inside.

The diversity education component of the Food Project program also influenced the youths’ use of racial terms when discussing place. Throughout the summer, they were encouraged to speak about race and were given the message that diversity was a place asset. Julie internalized this notion, ending the program with the sense that

her neighborhood “lacked culture” compared to Roxbury. Race was now a central component of her place talk.

After completing the Summer Youth Program, Pete still did not verbalize his image of race in the city but on his imaging exercise, his first two descriptors of the social environment were black and Hispanic, suggesting that he was aware of the specific racial characteristics of Roxbury. Yet, the fact that Pete still did not verbalize the race of Roxbury after the program was striking and indicated a lower degree of comfort talking about race than his non-urban crewmates. Despite his expanded place repertoire, which included contact with Roxbury residents and being a participant in the workshops on race and diversity, Pete had not garnered the ability to use race as a part of place talk¹⁰. This reflected his inability to make friendships across place lines. Pete did not have the types of meaningful contacts with his urban peers that might have diminished his negative stereotypes of them and their environments.

2.4.5 Conclusion

The non-urban youth in this study had varying images of their hometowns, neighborhoods and the unfamiliar environments of Roxbury and (in some cases) Lincoln. The youths’ place repertoires, environmental fit, and cross-place friendships influenced their sense of these places. The impact of expanded place repertoires was tempered or moderated by a strong identification with the perceived superiority of a particular type of home-place i.e. tight environmental fit. The impact of an expanded repertoire was also diminished if the acquisition of a broader place repertoire remained a physical/aesthetic experience, rather than a socially immersive one i.e. where the young person lacked crossplace friendships. The Food Project program impacted these three variables, shifting the participating youths’ sense of places in different ways and altering their avoidance of racial descriptors of Roxbury (Fig. 2-3).

¹⁰This was interesting given that he finished the program with no ‘violations’ thereby earning a much coveted fifty-dollar bonus. Implicit in the receipt of this extra cash was the notion that he was ‘successful’ in the program as measured by behavioral accountabilities. The fact that he finished the summer with less of an ability to talk frankly about race than his peers suggests that he was not an unequivocal success in the non-fieldwork portion of the program.

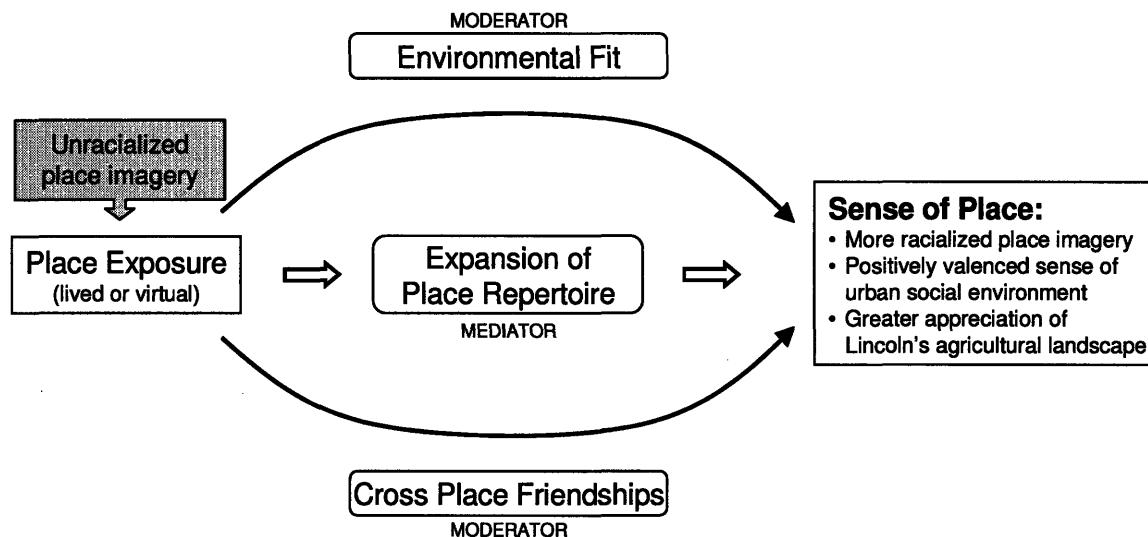


Figure 2-3: A diagram illustrating the model that emerged from my research with the non-urban youth. Place repertoire mediates the effect of place exposures on the outcome variable, sense of place. The direction and strength of the effect of place repertoire on sense of place is moderated by environmental fit and cross-place friendships. Some of the changes that I observed in the non-urban youths' sense of places after participating in the Summer Youth Program are listed.

The Food Project program expanded the youths' place repertoires by giving them intense, though bounded, lived experiences in the environments of Roxbury and Lincoln. This mediated the program's effect on their sense of Lincoln, Roxbury and their hometown and neighborhood. That is, in making assessments and discussing these places, the non-urban youth drew on their prior lived and virtual place experiences, mentally comparing and contrasting the features of all of these places with one another. For example, their observations during the program of the vast open spaces of Lincoln and the social cohesion of Roxbury were processed in comparison to their images of their own neighborhoods and hometowns. For all three of the youth this resulted in finishing the program with a greater appreciation of Lincoln's abundant farmland and a less negatively valenced sense of Roxbury, although the extent of these changes varied across each individual.

Youth whose personal identities were a tight fit with their neighborhood or hometown tended toward a more positive sense of these locales. Their fit influenced the

direction and magnitude that their expanded place repertoires, garnered through The Food Project program, had on their sense of places. For example, a tight fit seemed to inhibit the non-urban Food Project participants' ability to see positive attributes when they worked in Roxbury, an environment very different from their own. In contrast, tension between a youth's identity and their home environment resulted in an increase in a negative sense of their home environment, and this critical eye or misalignment helped them to see positive attributes in Roxbury. Another way of framing this is that the dissonance between their identities and home environments enabled environmental learning, although it did not determine its course.

Food Project participants who connected with peers from the city were more apt to re-image Roxbury in the terms that were presented to them by their urban peers. Thus Julie and Steve finished the program with a strong sense of the social cohesion of Roxbury as described to them by their urban crewmates, Justin and Kiara.

Prior to the summer, none of the non-urban youth used racial indicators to describe Roxbury. This reflected a lack of comfort with naming race, which likely reflected their negative stereotypes of people of color and/or a fear of appearing racist. Through The Food Project program, participants' learned and internalized the Project's message that diversity was an asset. This resulted in a greater degree of comfort when using racial language in reference to place. The result was that by the end of the summer participating youth presented more overtly *racialized* images of Roxbury than they had prior to entering the program. The extent to which this occurred was linked to their ability to garner cross-place friendships, suggesting that it reflected a diminution of negative stereotypes of people of color and their environments.

The non-urban youths' sense of places was a reflection of their individually unique identities, values and social skills. Despite this variation, the notions of environmental fit, place repertoires, cross place friendships offer strong explanatory power for their overall sense of places and provide a useful framework for thinking about how young people from outside of the city perceive places. This framework also provides a useful tool for comparing and contrasting the senses of these youth with their peers from

different environs, such as the city.

Chapter 3

Urban Youth:

Paul, Emmanuelle and Justin

My crew included three youth who resided in the city of Boston in dense residential neighborhoods and who had very limited lived experience outside the city limits. The Food Project officially labeled these youth as ‘City of Boston’ participants, although during the summer the staff referred to them as “urban” and “city kids”. Because they all lived in distinctly urban locales, I grouped them as ‘urban’. These three youth, Paul, Emmanuel and Justin, had lived in Boston for their entire lives. There were striking similarities about them; they all identified as youth of color and lived in households headed by women. Yet there were noticeable differences in their personal identities and values, which impacted their sense of their neighborhood, Lincoln, and Roxbury.

All three of the urban youth on my crew lived in neighborhoods that had a local commercial district, a variety of housing types, and a dense built form. These similarities set them apart from the low-density environments inhabited by their non-urban Food Project peers. That being said, the demographics and built forms of each youth’s home environment differed and impacted their sense of this place and of other, less familiar environments.

Paul, who considered himself Dominican, had lived in Jamaica Plain since he was born, but moved to the adjacent neighborhood of Roxbury during the summer

that I worked with him. Jamaica Plain is approximately 50% white, 23% Hispanic and 12% black. The median income is about \$42, 000, just above Boston's median (Selverajah, 2002). Despite this apparent racial diversity, there is intra-neighborhood segregation. Paul resided in the area where the majority of residents and shops were Hispanic. His move to Roxbury meant a move to a neighborhood with quite different demographics, its population is approximately 63% Black and 24% Hispanic. The median annual household income in this neighborhood is \$27, 000, or 63% of Boston's average (Selverajah, 2002).

Emmanuel, a Haitian American female, lived in Hyde Park, a 'street car suburb' located to the southwest of Roxbury. Hyde Park is approximately 50% white, 24% Black and 14% Hispanic. The median annual income in this neighborhood is \$44 705, which is slightly above (112%) the Boston average (Selverajah, 2002). Emmanuel placed a high value on access to shopping, which she felt was lacking in her home environment.

Justin, a black male, resided in Roxbury, near the Food Project's main growing site on West Cottage Street. As noted above, this neighborhood is predominantly black and poor relative to the rest of the city. Justin had extensive kinship and friendship networks in the neighborhood, including membership in a gang known as the Wolf Pack.

As the individual narratives of Paul, Justin and Emmanuel convey, despite having lived their entire lives in the city, the variations in these youths' personal identities, skill sets, and values led them to sense places differently both prior to, and after participating in The Food Project program. Each of the three narratives is broken into two parts. The first focuses on the individual youth's sense of Lincoln, his or her neighborhood and Roxbury prior to working for The Food Project. The second part highlights some of the changes in their senses and identifies the programmatic feature associated with these shifts. By teasing out the similarities and differences in the way these young people spoke about places prior to and after their time at The Food Project, I make inferences about the way that youth who are raised in urban environments think, learn and relate to different environments. The theoretical

framework that emerged from these findings is outlined in a discussion following the three narratives.

3.1 Paul

At the beginning of The Food Project Summer Program, Paul resided in a three-bedroom apartment in Jamaica Plain, a Boston neighborhood adjacent to Roxbury with his aunt (his mother's sister) and her three children. He had lived in this unit for seven years, sharing a bedroom with his youngest cousin. Prior to living here, he lived in two other apartments, each in a different, though spatially proximate, area of Boston. Half way through the summer, Paul moved (with his aunt and cousins) to a newly constructed residence in Roxbury, less than a mile from his Jamaica Plain residence. This recently completed condominium complex was developed by a community development corporation that promotes affordable housing in the communities of Roxbury and Jamaica Plain. A friend of Paul's aunt who worked for the corporation had "hooked them up" with this newly constructed, three-story rental unit.

Paul's father was of Puerto Rican descent. He resided in Jamaica Plain, a ten-minute walk from where Paul lived at the beginning of the summer. His mother, originally from the Dominican Republic, lived in Dorchester not far from The Food Project's urban site. On a train ride to work one morning, Paul explained that it was a bit strange to be half Dominican and half Puerto Rican, as the two groups really don't get along. When he first told me this, I expressed surprise and asked for an example. Paul responded, "Puerto Ricans say that Dominican girls are gold diggers and Dominicans say that Puerto Rican girls are sluts". He added: "but I don't believe in that... it's crazy. I'm stuck in the middle". He said when he is with his Dominican cousins they tease him about being Puerto Rican and his Puerto Rican cousins bug him about his Dominican blood.

Paul usually employed the general term "Spanish" when describing his ethnicity, but he identified as Dominican. The reason that he gave for this classification was that it reflected the language and culture of his primary residence. Whether or not

“Spanish” was a compromise term to deal with the fact that one parent was Dominican and the other Puerto Rican was difficult to know, although given the wide spread use of the term by his Boston peers (of all races and ethnicities)¹, it more likely reflected the local use of the word. Regardless, it was clear from my first contact with Paul that his ethnicity played a central role in his identity and this impacted his sense of places.

Over the summer I pieced together how Paul’s current living arrangement developed. On the train one morning, I asked Paul why he lived with his aunt. He explained that his family is “all messed up” and “my parents and aunt and uncle are all split up”. He added that when his parents’ marriage ended there were “family problems” at which time his aunt adopted him. Later that summer, while working in the fields, Paul opened up further, telling me about his ten-year-old brother who lived with foster parents in Chelsea, a small city north of Boston. I asked Paul why his brother was in a foster family while he lived with his aunt. He responded that he didn’t know the details, but that his parents always had “problems”, which meant that they had to put both of their children up for adoption. His aunt adopted him, and tried for his brother as well but “was not allowed. . . she already has three kids of her own and couldn’t afford it”. It was clear from Paul’s affect that he was unhappy with this living arrangement. Paul noted that Chelsea was really far from Boston and that he didn’t see his brother frequently enough. He added that although they talk on the phone regularly, it was not the same as living together. His words and his affect during this conversation indicated his unhappiness about his separation from his sibling.

Paul was obviously shy. The first week of the Summer Program he kept to himself, often sitting alone on the train ride to and from Lincoln. As the summer progressed, Paul’s easygoing nature and quiet sense of humor emerged, making him one of the most popular members of our crew. His popularity was evidenced by his fellow crew workers response to the following question, which I asked at the end of the summer:

¹According to Xavier de Souza Briggs (personal communication, April 18, 2007) this term is used throughout the Northeastern United States.

“If you were having a party with five friends from the summer youth program, whom would you most want to invite?” Paul was the only person who was named by every youth on the crew.

Paul’s family was living on the economic margin. After working for one month at The Food Project he had still not been able to keep either of his first two paychecks for himself. Everyone on our crew knew he was hoping to buy an iPod with his earnings. The status of this purchase provided a window into the monetary challenges facing his household. For example, one afternoon I was weeding nearby Lena, our assistant crew leader, and Paul. Lena asked Paul if he had bought his iPod yet. Paul replied, “My aunt took my whole paycheck.” He explained that she owed quite a lot of money to someone for the move to the new apartment in Roxbury and needed extra cash to start paying them back. Paul added that his aunt took his first check too, but had promised he could keep the next one.

Even though Paul did buy his iPod after the next pay period, he did not keep his entire wage. Part of it went to his aunt. His comments throughout the summer indicated that she needed his financial contributions to keep the household afloat. For example, one day out in the field he complained that he really wanted to keep more of his salary so that he could buy breakfast before work. I asked why he didn’t eat at home and he responded that there was nothing to eat. He continued: “You would think there would be cereal or something but there is not. There is not even any bread right now. We need to get us some bread”. The economic challenges faced by Paul’s family impacted his interactions with the wealthier, non-urban crewmates during the Summer Program, which ultimately impacted his sense of Lincoln’s environment.

Paul’s aunt appeared to be short on cash, but invested heavily in optimizing the education of her four dependents. Paul’s three cousins were METCO participants² and Paul was enrolled in a parochial school in the neighborhood. Upon finishing

²Getting a child into METCO requires that a parent sign up very early. In 2000, there were over 13 000 children on the waiting list for this program (Eaton, 2001). A quarter of METCO parents surveyed in 1996 had signed up for the program before their children were a year old (Orfield, 1997). Children who are in this program leave for school very early and often return late in the evening. Thus getting a child into the program and sustaining their participation requires a major investment of time and energy on the part of their guardian.

eighth grade he wrote an entrance exam for a prestigious private Catholic high school³. When I met Paul, he had just been informed that along with admission to this elite institution, he had been awarded a full scholarship. This scholarship covered tuition, but not his books and Paul was pretty sure his aunt would not be able to come up with “that kind of money”. Paul’ response to this economic strain was to work extra time⁴ at The Food Project in order to save 350 dollars to buy his textbooks for the upcoming school year.

Paul’s work ethic was evident out in the field and when we went to volunteer at the homeless shelter. He was a fast learner and worked hard at whatever task he was assigned. I experienced his diligence first hand one afternoon, as we weeded in adjacent rows. The job was tricky, requiring that we locate tiny sprouts amongst masses of weeds. We were supposed to clear the weeds immediately around each plant so that a hoer could come through quickly and complete the job without damaging the crops. Twice Paul alerted me to the fact I had missed some weeds. Rather than letting me go back to fix my mistake he jumped across to my row and did it for me

As I got to know Paul, I was struck by his resiliency. At fourteen years of age, he had already faced greater economic and personal hardships than many adults. Despite these challenges Paul maintained a distinctly positive outlook on life, strong work ethic, and pride in his cultural heritage. His sense of places was heavily influenced by his “Spanish” identity, both prior to and after completing The Food Project Summer Program. That is, he had a positive sense of places that were a tight fit with his “Spanish” identity and experienced tension with those that were not. His family’s financial struggles gave him a strong awareness of his own social class. This self-consciousness came to the fore during the Summer Program when Luis interacted with people who he identified as wealthier than himself.

³The school’s website notes that tuition is approximately \$11 000 dollars per year and that 99% of its graduates go on to attend four year colleges.

⁴Youth from the Summer Program could apply to work for two extra weeks at the end of the summer. Only about twenty youth were hired for this extended period.

3.1.1 Paul's Sense of Places: Pre-Program

Jamaica Plain

Prior to entering The Food Project program, Paul had no trouble identifying his neighborhood, which was in an area of Boston known as Jamaica Plain. His neighborhood was a few blocks in length and width and was defined by the concentration of Spanish residents compared to the racial and ethnic compositions of the adjacent areas:

Let's say I'm going on the bus. Like, I take the bus usually to go to my mother's house. So when I start heading into Dorchester, I see like, I see the population. I see like, there's more Black people than Spanish people. Um, like, there's more Black people, right.

As the above statement indicates, Paul started the program with a highly *racialized* sense of his neighborhood and of other places. When Paul spoke of Jamaica Plain, he tended to be referring to the relatively small area he considered his neighborhood, not the larger area defined by the city of Boston. Paul saw greater Jamaica Plain as a series of smaller neighborhoods, largely delineated by color lines, such as “the White version of Jamaica Plain, let's say, yeah, that's around JP lakes... Like the *suburban* area of JP”. His linking of the whiteness of this area of Jamaica Plain with a suburban descriptor reemerged in his discussion of Lincoln, which he imagined as a uniformly white suburban environment.

Paul had an ambivalent relationship with his neighborhood. On one hand, he saw a shoddily built environment and high levels of crime and violence. Despite these negative attributes, Paul felt very comfortable living in an ‘ethnic enclave’, where he shared the culture and language of many of his fellow residents. This close fit between his ethnic identity and his home environment resulted in an overall positive sense of this place.

Prior to his work at The Food Project, Paul had limited experiences in non-urban environments. He had not spent extended time outside the city of Boston. Yet he perceived the built form in his part of Jamaica Plain to be lacking, particularly when

he compared it to his image of Lincoln:

The buildings are not too nice. It's like—if you, like, compare them to like, another like, south end or Lincoln then they're like, cruddy... Well, they're like, old.

When asked specifically about what he did not like about his neighborhood, Paul's response focused on the social realm, not the built form, suggesting that this was the aspect of his environment he was most dissatisfied with.

Well, I see like, lots of bad things. I—like, street fighting—street racing's bad but it's kind of fun to watch. But then like, I see lots of drug dealing, like weird handshakes, people in their car kind of like stack the money. I don't like that... I don't like that stuff in my neighborhood.

Despite Paul's obvious concern about the goings-on in his neighborhood, his comments about street racing captured his ambivalence. It was simultaneously “fun to watch” and “bad”. Later he commented that street racing was one of the features of his neighborhood that he most enjoyed. His mixed feelings about this activity captured what Vale (1997) refers to as an ‘empathological’ relationship to place. That is, Paul was positively attached to the excitement that this activity brought to his street but felt it created a sense of chaos and acoustic disturbance. He was both drawn to, and repelled by, his environs.

Paul had no trouble identifying danger zones in his neighborhood. There was a temporal aspect:

If you're walking around my neighborhood like, 10:00 at night and after till like, 4:30 in the morning or something like that, then I think it's—that's late—that's like the time when it's not safe. It's like—that's why I don't go out with like—no later than 10.

There was also a spatial element, which centered on an area known as Jackson Square, where there was a subway station and a public housing project:

I hear like, a whole bunch of stabbings [near Jackson Square], like gang fights and stuff. Like, I only go to Jackson Square to take the T. Other than that, I'm—I'm not—I don't want to try it. I'm nowhere near Jackson Square. And the projects. The projects like, like next to Stop and Shop. . . I don't go there neither.

Interestingly, Paul did not express fear about the aforementioned neighborhood hazards. This sense of security reflected his confidence that his cognitive map of where danger resided was up to date and accurate, thereby allowing him to navigate around these places and times. In fact, Paul traveled freely between his hangouts of choice and felt highly attached to his neighborhood.

Despite his perception that there were “bad people”, “fighting” and a “cruddy” infrastructure in his neighborhood, overall Paul had a strong, positive sense of his neighborhood due to its fit with his “Spanish” identity. Most of his interactions with his fellow “Spanish” residents were unplanned and positive “I just see them on the street and I just say hi or something.” There were also plenty of good local hangouts where he could meet up with friends. Rizzo's, a pizza restaurant across from his house was such a place: “It's like a real famous pizzeria for like, *Spanish* people” [emphasis added].” The tight fit between Paul neighborhood and identity resulted in a strong sense of attachment:

I feel at home there because I'm a Spanish person. I'm Dominican and I feel like, I feel at home there. That's why I wouldn't want to move like to the suburban area because like, yeah, I feel good there.

In addition to his ethnic fit with the neighborhood, Paul valued its street life: “It's not like, too loud. It's not too quiet. Because like sometimes you hear street races or something and that's kind of cool to watch.” The sounds and action that Paul associated with his neighborhood were positive attributes that he imagined that would be lacking outside of the city. Those were features that trumped his more negative image of the social environs. This was clear in his response to a question about where in Massachusetts he would want to live if he were to win the lottery. Paul did not hesitate in his response that he would remain in Jamaica Plain:

I don't want to live in Lincoln. I-like, all those rich places that-I don't like it. I like it in JP. Like, if I could get a nice house in JP...

Paul then went on to note that he would not want to move to the "white part" of Jamaica Plain. He was emphatic about his desire to remain in the "Spanish" area of the neighborhood:

I would stay in the more Spanish part. Now they're starting to renew the houses. They're taking a lot of time so then I would just like, like, buy a house, renew it, like, like make it nice and new, like, in the Spanish part. So I could still stay in the Spanish part but in a good house.

The above comments captured the primary importance of Paul's ethnic identity in determining his perceptions of his neighborhood. Although he felt that its built realm was substandard, and that there was social disorder and danger zones, the tight fit between his identity as a "Spanish" person and the environment trumped these perceptions, resulting in an overall positive sense of his neighborhood.

Roxbury

Paul's image of Roxbury was that it was similar to his neighborhood, except for the race of the residents: "Jamaica Plain is like Spanish people. I consider Roxbury more Black people. Um, but other than that, it's like the same." This sameness extended to his image of the built environment and the social environment: "They're [the buildings] like the same thing as JP, not too good." This image reflected his limited lived experience in Roxbury. He combined his images of Jamaica Plain and his beliefs about Black folks, to create his sense of Roxbury.

Prior to entering The Food Project program, Paul articulated a sense that the social relations in Roxbury and Jamaica Plain were similar: "Um, the same thing with the good and bad people. There's like half and half... Yeah, they're pretty similar except for like the Black people and the Spanish people". However, other comments that he made suggested that he imaged Roxbury (and Dorchester) as more pathological environments. For example, during the first week of the program, two

police officers spoke to the youth about safety at the two The Food Project sites. One officer was from the city of Boston and the other from Lincoln. He emphasized the omnipresence of danger in Boston, particularly in Roxbury: “Obviously Lincoln is not Roxbury. It’s a different world”. His speech focused on the random violence in the city: “in Boston a lot of people carry guns” and that “these people [criminals] are not trained marksmen... they will just fire and might hit you”. Later that afternoon as we weeded, I asked Paul if he thought the police officer’s views seemed a bit extreme. He responded that he knew what I meant, but he also knew “about Dorchester and Roxbury and wouldn’t want to live in either of those places”. Clearly, he viewed the levels of violence in these two areas, which he imaged as predominantly black, as worse than Jamaica Plain. Whether or not he attributed the differences in the social realms of these places to their racial compositions is impossible to state with any certainty, although Paul’s statements during the summer suggest that this was the case.

Paul’s tendency to link race and social dysfunction came through a conversation that we had out in the field during the second week of the Summer Program. I shared an anecdote with him about being mugged the previous year. When I mentioned that the mugger was white, Paul stated that was surprising, he had assumed the perpetrator was Black. He explained that this assumption was based on the fact that I had been living in Jamaica Plain at the time of the incident. This was an interesting comment in light of the fact that his image of Jamaica Plain was largely white and “Spanish” (not Black). It suggested that Paul held negative stereotypes of Blacks. These views were not that surprising given the racist tendencies of his primary caregiver, his aunt. There were numerous occasions over the summer when he told me that she did not like him to socialize with Chris, a black youth who lived in their new neighborhood in Roxbury. During one of these conversations he noted that this restriction, was “cause he’s Black. My aunt’s kind of racist.”

Lincoln

Prior to the Summer Program, Paul had no lived experiences in Lincoln. Despite this, Paul had a pretty clear image of it as a small, white, wealthy town, the polar opposite of his image of his own neighborhood:

All right, I think um, Lincoln is definitely smaller. It's less populated. I think Lincoln is more white people than like Jamaica Plain. The houses are like, like, they're like, mad good. . . It's like mostly rich people too.

Because of his lack of exposure to non-urban environments, Paul's perceptions of this place, which he believed was different from his neighborhood was to image it in opposition to his most familiar environment, his neighborhood. Paul had what I refer to as the *Brady Bunch* stereotype of suburbia. That is, he imagined that it was comprised of cordial yet boring families: "Yeah, they'd just be cool, and they'd say like "Hello," and "How you doin'?" And "How are the kids?" and stuff like that". But Paul did not believe that these affable relations were a signal of the type of social cohesion that he so valued in his Jamaica Plain neighborhood: "People [in Lincoln] like keeps to themselves and stuff."

He associated this type of "suburban environment" with a lack of action and social cohesion and did not feel that he could ever live in such a place. His preference for residing in an urban environment came up repeatedly in his first interview: "I wouldn't want to move like to the suburban area. . . I don't want to live in Lincoln". On our second day of work as he and I walked from the farm to the train station he commented that he could never live in Lincoln as it was "way too quiet and boring". Lincoln's quiet, white environment was not a good fit with Paul's identity as a "Spanish" person who appreciated the street life of the city. This perceived lack of fit resulted in a negative sense of this unfamiliar environment.

3.1.2 Paul's new sense of places: Post Program

Roxbury

Paul changed neighborhoods part way through the summer. His aunt had managed to secure a spot in a brand new, subsidized development in Roxbury that was much larger than their former apartment. He no longer had to share a room with his cousin and there was central air conditioning so “they don’t have to buy air conditioners any more”. While the move made it impossible to assess The Food Project’s impact on his sense of his Jamaica Plain neighborhood, the similarities between the way that he visioned his new environment and his old one were notable. In particular, after living in Roxbury for only two months, he was already aware of the color lines in and around his new environs.

Like in his old neighborhood, Paul employed race as a means of delineating the boundaries. Recounting how he knew he was in his neighborhood, Paul described local color lines:

If - if you go up Center Street, and you see like more Spanish people - a lot more Spanish people, then if you head into more Eggleston, you’ll see a lot of more Black people. If you head more to Dudley, Dudley, Tremont, it’s just - it’s pretty much the same [as Eggleston].

Paul appreciated the newness of the family’s residence: “I like the house *a lot*”. It was substantially larger than their former apartment, which meant that he no longer had to share a room with his “little cousin”. It also had central air conditioning, a welcome relief to window fans during Boston’s humid summers. The development was on a dead ended side street, which meant a very different soundscape than his Jamaica Plain residence: “Well, it’s more quieter, whereas I don’t live on a main road any more. . . it’s, for the most part, calm.” Despite the relative quiet and better housing situation, Paul preferred his former environment. One of the reasons for this preference was that he did not feel safe in his new neighborhood:

In a way, it’s kind of dangerous. I’d say there’s like not that many gangs around here, but, from time to time, they will just roll by here. My friend,

he actually got shot, during the summer. . . He was hanging out at the bird house [a gazebo like structure]. There's a bird house right there [points out the window]. And he was hanging out there, and then um he got shot.

The friend who was shot was Chris, the black neighbor whom Paul's aunt did not like him to associate with. Paul attributed the cause to being in the "wrong place, wrong time". This seemingly random act of violence factored into his image of his new neighborhood as a dangerous place. In fact, he felt that the one greenspace in the development, the area around the gazebo, was a place to avoid. "I just don't hang out there."

Paul's preference for living in Jamaica Plain over Roxbury came up repeatedly during our final interview and was usually linked to his greater ethnic fit in the former: "Well, there's a lot more people [in Jamaica Plain]. A lot more drama. A lot more Spanish people. I guess you kind of feel more at home." This close fit also contributed to a greater sense of safety in his former neighborhood:

There's a lot of Spanish people [in Jamaica Plain], I just feel safer. The gangs - the gangs in J.P. really don't do anything. They just hang out all at night, like at 12:00, they just start making a lot of noise. It got to a point where it was like somebody had a gun. But, he popped it up, he didn't shoot anybody. Then that's like - that's like the worst thing they ever done. But, the cops came real quick, and - and solved that. But, other than that, there's really not a lot of problems in J.P.

Interestingly, approximately 24% of the residents identify as Hispanic in *both* Jamaica Plain and Roxbury⁵. The major difference is that in Roxbury, the dominant racial group is black, whereas in Jamaica Plain it is white. Paul's perception that there were a greater number of Spanish residents in Jamaica Plain was rooted in the fact that he lived in the 'Spanish enclave' of the neighborhood, whereas in Roxbury the majority of his neighbors were black.

Another reason Paul articulated for his Jamaica Plain preference was there were "more resources. . . if we needed something, all I had to do was go downstairs to the

⁵Given that Roxbury has almost 10,000 more residents than Jamaica Plain, its gross population of Latinos is actually about 2,400 higher than in Jamaica Plain.

store. But, now if we need something, my aunt will have to go to the store like drive to this store up here.” This was linked to his greater feeling of security in Jamaica Plain, where he knew how to navigate danger zones to get the things he and his family needed. In his Roxbury neighborhood, Paul did not possess that knowledge. Although the distance between his new apartment and retail space was not far, it required crossing through what he perceived as an unsafe space. The only route around it was the car, which was not accessible to Paul:

So, you have to go onto the main road [to get to the store], and it - that part is kind of dangerous, so my aunt will just drive there. So, in some ways, it makes things harder. But, the house is comfortable.

Despite Paul’s belief that there were more gangs in Jamaica Plain than Roxbury (where they “just roll by” occasionally), he was more secure in the former. One plausible explanation for this might be that he was connected to members of the Jamaica Plain gangs and was protected by them. However this was not the case; Paul was explicit that he did not know any of the gang members personally. His sense of security stemmed from his intimate knowledge of the spatial and temporal geography of danger zones (as discussed above) and the sense of comfort that came from sharing the ethnicity of local residents.

Once Paul moved to Roxbury, he spoke of the area around the Food Project and his own neighborhood as two distinct neighborhoods. This was a change from the beginning of the summer, when he viewed Roxbury as one large neighborhood. This reflected his increased place repertoire. His lived experiences in these locales provided him with a high-resolution image, allowing him to see differences between these sub areas. Despite this new tendency to differentiate locales, he still identified few intra-Roxbury differences:

People-wise, there’s a little bit more Black people in Dudley. And building-wise, I’d say the buildings here [his townhouse complex] are better than Dudley, for the most part, but, they’re - they’re actually working on that. They’re building a lot of new buildings in Dudley. Yeah, that’s about it.

Along with recognizing differences in the built form and racial makeup of these areas, Paul finished the program with a vivid image of The Food Project land in Roxbury. Paul noted that prior to working at The Food Project, he had been by the Roxbury site as it was not far from his mother's house in Dorchester, but he had never noticed it:

Before coming to the Food Project, I always saw the Food Project office. But, I never knew there was like actually a lot behind all of this. I didn't know there was - that lot is pretty big. Let me tell you. That lot is pretty big. I never seen that. I just saw the office, and I just thought that there was only gonna be OFFICE work, or all they do in Roxbury is just office things, and Lincoln's is like BIG, and so I THAT'S where I thought the actual farming WOULD be.

The lots went from being completely absent from Paul's image of the Dudley Street Neighborhood in Roxbury to dominating it, contributing to a more positive sense of this place.

Paul's awareness of the Food Project land in Roxbury was a reflection of his affinity for farming. This was exhibited by his enthusiasm during every agriculture workshop. For example, at the end of a workshop on weeds, Paul asked Molly, the farming assistants running that seminar: "If you had all the labor and money that you needed, would you mulch everything?" This question stumped Molly, who commented on the insightfulness of his question and took him with her to talk with Elise, the head farmer, about his query. His deep engagement in learning about agriculture was also evidenced by his reflections on what he had learned at the Summer Program. Unlike his crewmates, Paul did not speak about race or diversity, just farming:

Oh, how much hard work goes into growing food - growing foods. All the processes in which we grow different types of vegetables, like garlic. Garlic grows kind of amazingly. Strawberry - I - I just found out that strawberry actually takes two years for it to develop, and garlic, you have to take like real good care of, like you have to be like picky so it'll come out good. Okra - Okra, actually - I - I was told that okra - okra grows its flowers, and then the flowers kinda crumble up. And they cover themselves. And after they develop, they become okra. So, you're actually eating the flowers from

the okra plant. And that's crazy... Well, before - before the summer, I didn't even know what squash was. I - I never heard of squash... um, after eating that, squash can taste kinda good.

Given Paul's enthusiasm about the farming, one might expect that he would have started to notice urban agriculture in locations beyond the Food Project sites, particularly since there was a large community garden located several blocks from his new house. Yet, Paul remained unaware of gardens in his Roxbury neighborhood and those around his old residence in Jamaica Plain. His new sense of the Dudley Street neighborhood was limited to the programs' 'event place'. That is, it did not appear that he was transferring his consciousness of urban agriculture from The Food Project context to his home environment.

Paul finished the program with a stronger sense of belonging in the city. As noted above, he started the program saying that he would not want to live in Roxbury due to his perception that it was more violent than Jamaica Plain. By the middle of the summer he was proudly grouping himself with the other Roxbury youth. He still expressed a preference for Jamaica Plain over Roxbury, but either urban environment was preferable to Lincoln. This increasing sense of being urban stemmed from at least two sources. One was the positive image of Roxbury that was projected by his crewmates, such as Justin and Kiara. These two youth often came to work on Monday mornings with stories of fabulous cookouts and street parties they attended in Roxbury. They also often sang the praises of foods (co-co cheese bread, Ideal subs, and particular Jamaican Jerk Chicken joints). Paul felt very connected to these youth. After Justin got fired Paul commented on his disappointment about losing his urban peer: " 'Cause me and him, in a way, connected, which is we're both from Roxbury." A second subtler source of pride was the urban and suburban categorizations employed by The Food Project. The youth picked up on these categories, and increasingly identified themselves in these terms. This phenomenon was strengthened by the train ride to and from Lincoln as this was a time that the youth could socialize and bond most freely. The rides facilitated their development of an urban group identity. On several occasions, I heard Paul refer to himself as a "city kid" and near the end of

the summer I overheard him telling his three non-urban crewmates about how much more there was to do in the city than in Lincoln, repeating his mantra that he could “never live out there [Lincoln]”.

Lincoln

Paul’s sense of Lincoln did not change very much due to his participation in the Summer Program. Despite his limited exposure with the town’s residents, which comprised working on the farm and walking to the rail station, he felt that his initial image of the town had been confirmed by his Food Project experiences:

Well, before comin’ to the Food Project, when I went - when I was thinking about like going to Lincoln, I was - I was expecting to see a whole buncha White people, and that’s - like that’s what I saw.

His exposure to Lincoln also reinforced, and perhaps even magnified his awareness of the quality of the housing stock in Lincoln compared to that in Roxbury. For example, during the Community Build workshop, the facilitator asked whether the imaginary towns in the game reflected reality. Paul immediately raised his hand and answered: “Yeah. In the city in Boston, you see cruddy houses with paint chipping off. In Lincoln, the houses are big and new... [where I live] is cruddy and old.” After completing the Summer Program, Paul’s comparison of Roxbury and Lincoln’s environments was almost verbatim to the one that he gave prior to participating in The Food Project. He continued to emphasize the differences in the residents’ races, the quality of the built form as well as the fact that he would not want to live in Lincoln:

There’s a lot of drama, a lot of Black and Hispanic people here [in Roxbury]. In Lincoln, it’s the suburbs, and you just think there’s a lot of White people over there. And the houses over there are beautiful. But, I don’t wanna live there, ‘cause it’s boring.

Paul’s sense that Lincoln was “boring” was reinforced by his observations over the summer. One day while we were harvesting spinach in Roxbury, a car drove by,

music blaring. Paul looked up and said “that’s why I like Roxbury better”. He added that he liked hearing the music and seeing all the people and that “Lincoln feels mad isolated”. He finished off by stating yet again that he “he could never live out there [in Lincoln]”. After the Summer Program had ended, Paul reiterated his sense of the differences in the two environments, emphasizing the relative isolation and lack of familiar acoustics in Lincoln:

‘Cause like in some ways you have more fun [in Roxbury]. I see lots of like old faces and stuff, and sometimes I met some of my friends over there. And if you’re weedin’ or something, and somebody goes like drivin’ by, and they’re blastin’ the radio or something, you’re like “Oh, I like that song,” or something like that. But, in Lincoln, you really don’t get that much stuff.

Paul’s stronger urban identity underscored his sense that quiet, isolated environment he experienced in Lincoln was a poor fit with his identity. This tension was compounded by his belief that the residents of the town held negative stereotypes of people from the city, that “all people from the ‘hood and the ghetto are bad”. The result was that he did not feel attached to this place, a sentiment he expressed through his statements about not wanting to live there.

Although the non-urban youth on our crew all enthusiastically stated their connection to Paul, he did not reciprocate their exuberance. This was revealed by his actions and his words. For example, whenever the youth were given the chance to select their own seating for lunch, Paul always selected a table that was comprised entirely of urban youth. After the summer when I asked him who he would include on a Food Project party list, he named five urban youth: “Joe, Kiara, Jeremy, Justin, and Rebecca, the Dominican. Dominican Rebecca.” He did not even consider inviting Steve, the one non-urban youth whom he sometimes spoke with over the summer. He also did not hesitate in his response that he would have traded Pete, the non-urban youth on our crew for his friend Joe, who was a Puerto Rican from Roxbury.

One of Paul’s barriers to forming close friendships with his non-urban peers appeared to be his self-consciousness about his relative lack of financial resources. For

example, during dinner at the overnight, I overheard Paul discussing illegal downloading of music from the Internet with Pete and Melissa, a young woman from Carlisle. Paul was bragging about the large number of songs he had downloaded in anticipation of getting his iPod. Pete said that he buys CDs rather than getting music online as he felt one should support the artists. Melissa agreed. Paul responded: 'I don't have money to buy music'. The conversation stopped dead. An alternative interpretation of the first exchange is that it reflects the awkwardness that class differences create for social interactions, not just Paul's self-consciousness about his relative lack of financial resources. I do not think this is the case, however given that the non-urban youth on our crew uniformly expressed a social bond with Paul.

Another illustration of Paul's awareness of his relative lack of wealth occurred after it was announced that Pete from our crew was getting the end of summer bonus. In response to this announcement, Paul called over to him: "Hey Pete, you got an extra 50 dollars, spare it for the poor people!". Paul's dearth of bonds with his non-urban peers meant that Paul did not have the opportunity to engage in informal learning about non-urban environments. That is, he did not have the kinds of interactions that may have overturned some of his own negative stereotypes about non-urbanites, such as the belief that they were racially biased.

The one aspect of Lincoln that Paul developed an appreciation for over the summer was its open space. When asked where he would move if he won the lottery, he still named the Spanish part of Jamaica Plain, just as he had prior to the program. Yet he was no longer unequivocal about this decision. He started out with the qualifier: "in a way, I want to live in Lincoln, I want like all that space, just like get a basketball hoop, or something, and just play basketball all day". This desire for wide-open space was, however trumped by his desire for the action and energy of the city, which he linked to its density:

I wanna hang out with some people. Like in Lincoln, there's not that many people in Lincoln, 'cause there's a lot of space. I've been living in the city for my whole life, and I'm just used to a lot of people, so if I could have that space, I would have in Lincoln, bring it to the city, I guess

I'd be good. I guess I'll buy me a big house in J.P. . . . [On] Center Street. 'Cause it's FUN over there.

Paul's experiences working on the Lincoln land and walking back to the train station after work gave him a positive sense of the town's open space and he appreciated the high quality of the built environment. Yet, the tensions between this environment and his identity as a "Spanish" urbanite drove his preference for what he sensed was the dense, lively environment that characterized the city.

3.1.3 Conclusions

Paul entered the program with a strong, positive sense of his neighborhood, the "Spanish" area of Jamaica Plain. This reflected the tight fit between his environment and ethnic identity. Paul believed that major difference between Roxbury and Jamaica plain was that the majority of Roxbury residents were black. Paul associated the presence of these black residents with greater levels of social disorder, including crime and violence. He imaged Lincoln as the polar opposite of Jamaica Plain and Roxbury, a white environment that lacked excitement.

Paul's summer experiences instilled in him an appreciation for farming, which impacted his image of Lincoln and the Dudley Street neighborhood in Roxbury. The Food Project land became a central component of his image of both of these places, giving him a more positively valanced sense of these places. This effect was much more pronounced in Roxbury, where he saw the street life and ethnicity of the residents as a better fit with his urban, "Spanish" identity. Interestingly, his appreciation of the urban agriculture in this part of Roxbury did not 'spill over' into his own Roxbury neighborhood. Paul did not make meaningful cross-place friendships due to his self-consciousness about his relative lack of financial resources. This meant that he did not have the intimate conversations and interactions with his non-urban crewmates that were necessary to overturn his beliefs about the racial biases of the residents of the town of Lincoln.

3.2 Emmanuelle

Emmanuelle lived in Hyde Park, the southernmost neighborhood in Boston. She resided in a single family home with her mom, brother and her two cousins, whom her mother had adopted. Emmanuelle alluded to the existence of financial pressures at home. Her mom, a nurse, had to work incredibly hard to earn enough to support all four of her dependents, but Emmanuelle noted that “now that I am working [at The Food Project], I can help out” with things like the phone bill and food. Although her parents were not divorced, her father was seldom in the country due to his job with an HIV education program in Haiti, where he had two other children with his “mistress.”

The first day at The Food Project, Emmanuelle barely spoke a word to anyone on our crew. During the first week of work she sat alone on the train and her responses to efforts at conversation from myself and the other youth were monosyllabic. By the second week, Emmanuelle showed signs of opening up, sitting on the train with Kiara, another young woman on our crew and speaking more often out in the fields. It became increasingly evident that she had a good sense of humor. Out in the fields, Emmanuelle regularly pulled her jogging pants up to her underarms to imitate Steve Urkel from the TV show Family Matters, which consistently elicited raucous laughter from the other youth. By the middle of the summer she was initiating conversations with her peers about topics covered in the workshops, including race, sexual identity and social justice. Her questions and comments revealed an interest in learning about alternative worldviews and the ability to think critically about her own strong opinions and values.

Emmanuelle’s identity centered on her Haitian roots and the Pentecostal church that she attended every Sunday. This was literally ‘illustrated’ during a workshop where youth were asked to draw a picture that captured their multiple identities. Emmanuelle’s drawing included the Haitian flag (“my flag”), and the bible because she was “big on religion.” It also had a picture of a stick person enclosed in a circle: “I drew me in a circle, with someone asking to let me in and me saying ‘no’ because

I am an isolated person.” This comment captured Emmanuelle’s persona, difficult to get to know but self-reflective and aware.

Despite her shyness, Emmanuelle was quite assertive when she felt she was being treated unfairly. For example, when we were working in Roxbury, Chris, the site supervisor assigned her the job of putting stakes into the ground. After she got the first one in, he took the hammer from her, stating that he would finish the job as he could see that she was struggling. Emmanuelle looked irate and snapped that she would just “tie the rope [to the stake] since that is all I am capable of.” Later that afternoon, Emmanuelle wondered whether she had overreacted, stressing that it really bugged her “when people treat me like I am helpless.” My interpretation of this incident was that Emmanuelle was acutely aware of the challenges faced by young women of color. Her aggressive response reflected her belief that overcoming these barriers necessitated being forceful. This was reinforced by a comment that she made during a workshop later in the summer: “My mom always told me that I have to work hard because I am a woman and I am black. . . I do have disadvantages but I can get over them if I try real hard.”

Emmanuelle’s family fit the stereotype of ‘model immigrants’, hardworking and upwardly mobile. Her eldest cousin had just been notified that he had received a full scholarship to Georgetown University. According to Emmanuelle, at the insistence of her mother, she attended MATCH, a rigorous charter high school that emphasizes college preparedness and that she would rather have gone to a less intense school with more of her friends from middle school⁶. Emmanuelle’s father also expressed high scholastic expectations, pushing her toward Law School. Emmanuelle explained these academic demands as cultural, Haitian parents are competitive and want their children “to be better than the next person’s kids.”

Christianity was another major force in Emmanuelle’s life. She particularly valued the youth group at her Pentecostal church as a place where she could discuss issues

⁶MATCH’s website states that in their three years of existence, every graduating student has gained admission to a four year college. This is impressive given the demographics of the student body; it is comprised almost completely of students of color, seventy-two percent of who live in poverty (<http://www.roxburyprep.org/>).

with people who shared her core values. Some of these ideals were challenged over the summer, both through contact with a set of peers who did not share her views, and more explicitly through material covered in the workshops.

Although Emmanuelle's *closest* friendships were with urban youth of color, Emmanuelle used fieldwork and the workshops as opportunities to engage in conversations with her non-urban peers. These discussions were often about complex social issues, such as sexual identity. Prior to the summer, Emmanuelle did not know any gay people, as "it is not a part of Haitian culture." Meeting two openly gay women at The Food Project, a staff member and a youth leader, challenged her beliefs about the extreme immorality of homosexuality. Although Emmanuelle's views on this topic were not completely altered by her summer experiences, she showed a genuine desire to hear and talk about the lives and experiences of gays and lesbians. Her struggle to work through her feelings about this topic were evidenced by her comments during a diversity workshop: "I don't really understand if people say they are gay or lesbian and I look at them as if they are lower... that is something I do, but I am working on it."

Her openness to learning about the life experiences of people who were different from herself affected her sense of places in that it heightened her feelings that the non-urban environment belonged to the 'Other' and that she belonged in the urban realm. That is, her attachment or sense of belonging to the city as a whole was heightened. One of the indications of this was the development of a feeling of ownership over urban language.

3.2.1 Emmanuelle's Sense of Places: Pre-Program

Neighborhood

Hyde Park, the neighborhood where Emmanuelle lived, has a distinctly less urban feel than Roxbury, Dorchester or Jamaica Plain. This is captured by the city of Boston's website, which describes it as offering "the intangibles of city life as well as the open space more commonly associated with the suburbs. (City of Boston, 2007)." Its

'suburban' attributes were at the root of Emmanuelle's ambivalent sense of her home environment.

Given that Emmanuelle had lived in Hyde Park, in the same house, for her entire life, I expected her to express a high level of attachment to this locale. This was not the case. She appreciated certain amenities, such as access to Cleary Square, a nearby commercial area, but her overall sense was that there was a paucity of things to do in the neighborhood. She desired more commercial amenities, and street life. She expressed this place dissatisfaction in her interview at the beginning of the summer and during casual conversations with her peers out in the field. Describing where she lived to Julie, Emmanuelle used a very sarcastic tone: 'Hyde Park is cool. . . No, nothing ever happens there.' She did not feel that the neighborhood met her needs in terms of places to hangout with friends or stores that she was interested in frequenting. The value that she placed on shopping was evident in an identity workshop during the Summer Program in which the youth were asked to group themselves by their shared central identities. Emmanuelle headed up the "shopper" group.

During her first interview, when I asked Emanuel how she knew she was leaving her neighborhood she responded: "I know. Its just that you are in a different neighborhood." When I pressed her on *how* she knew this, she replied that her neighborhood was "busy." She attributed this to the presence of the Hyde Park commuter rail station. Interestingly, Emmanuelle lived on a quiet side street a half a mile from the station, but the hustle and bustle associated with this commercial and transportation hub dominated her sense of her neighborhood. She was one of the few youth who did not image her house as the center of the neighborhood. In fact, on her cognitive map that she created the first day of the Summer Program, Emmanuelle did not include her house in her drawing, despite the instructions that the only thing that needed to be on the map was their home. (Fig. 3-1.) This reflected the importance of commercial amenities in determining her sense of place. Emmanuelle valued Cleary Square because there were *more* "things to do" than the area around her house, but explicitly expressed dissatisfaction with the range of stores and restaurants it offered. Thus, her image of a bustling commercial district did not contradict her earlier assertion

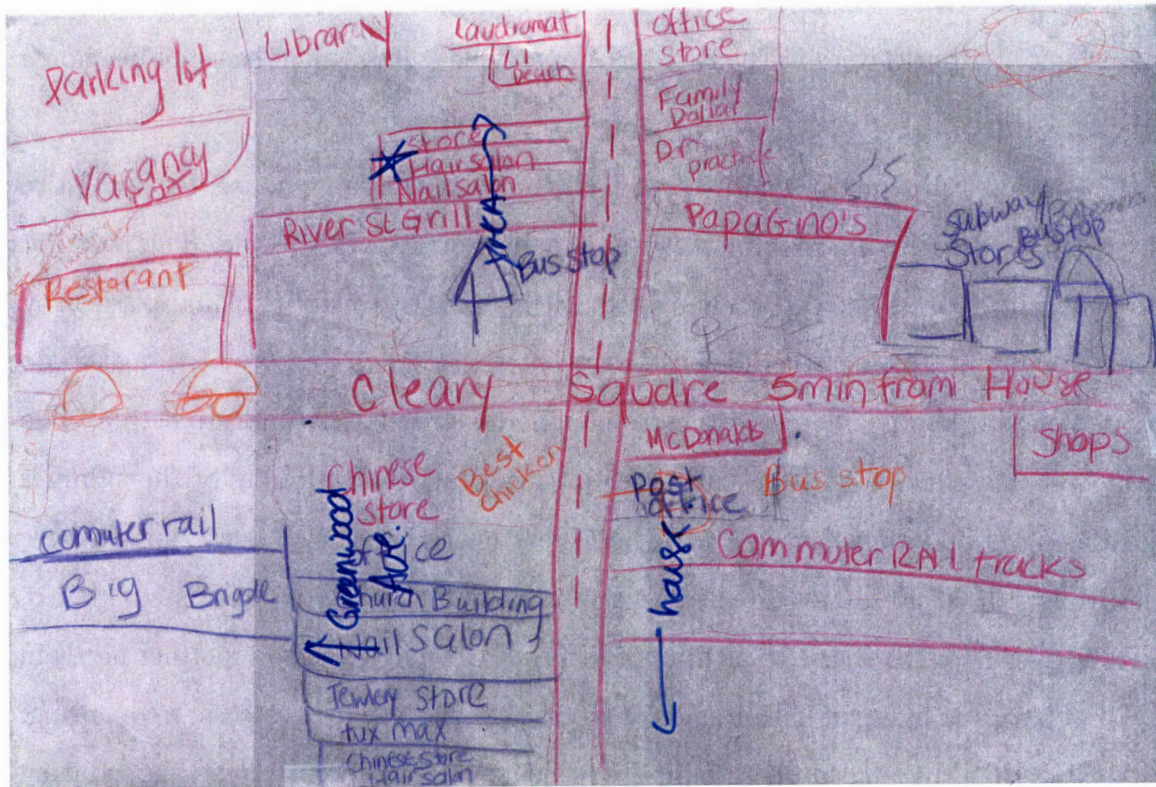


Figure 3-1: Emmanuelle’s cognitive map reflected the fact that the commercial area of her neighborhood was the area that she most valued. She did not even include her house on her map, noting that the area immediately around her home was ”boring.”

that there was a lack of things to do in the neighborhood. Emmanuelle utilized the stores and restaurants in this area only because there were no other more desirable choices. Emmanuelle also indicated that there were times when it was not safe to walk in Cleary Square, particularly on her own.

For Emmanuelle, the geography of danger in her neighborhood was highly temporal in nature. The dangerous strip that she identified in Cleary Square was only unsafe at night, due to heightened gang activity. She cited some of the gang members whom she knew from the neighborhood as her source of information, they had warned her to avoid this area after dark, “So, I don’t really walk there at the night time.” She added that her general feeling of security “Depends on who I’m with... [It is always safe if] “I am with my boy cousins.” Later in the summer Emmanuelle mentioned, “my cousin used to be in The Crips” , and so it was likely that some of her knowledge about the nighttime dangers came directly from him. That nighttime

made other parts of her neighborhood feel less safe was illustrated by Emmanuelle's decision not to attend an after work event because she felt anxious about walking from the bus stop to her house at night; a walk that she felt comfortable making each day after work when it was still light outside.

Emmanuelle did not describe Hyde Park in racial terms; however when I asked she noted that it was a mixture of mostly Black and White people⁷. Her neighbors on one side of her house were "Jamaican" and on the other side were "Caucasian." She did not spend time with either family. She did, however have one good friend on her street, a Haitian girl who attended the same high school as Emmanuelle and whose older brother was a good friend of her cousin.

Emmanuelle readily employed race as a way to organize and describe unfamiliar or new environs. For example, Emmanuelle had never been to Brookline but was aware that both Nicole and our crew leader, Mark lived in Brookline. Nicole was a practicing Christian but often referred to herself as being "half-Jewish." Mark had shared his Jewish identity with the crew on numerous occasions. Out in the fields one afternoon I overheard Emmanuelle say to Nicole: "it seems like there are a lot of Jews in Brookline." Another example of this mental modeling emerged when I tried to describe the location of an ice cream shop in the Inman Square area of Cambridge. Emmanuelle replied that she did not know Cambridge well as the only time she went there was to visit her aunt and her uncle. When I asked where they lived she responded, "I don't know. A lot of white people live there." As discussed below, Emmanuelle also used race as a primary means of comparing Roxbury and Lincoln to Hyde Park.

Emmanuelle started the summer with a more sophisticated sense of the city's geography than many of her peers. This was due, at least in part, to the fact that she traveled to school by subway and bus. As our crew waited for the train to travel from the Roxbury site to run The Food Project's downtown Farmer's market, I overheard her telling Kiara that if you rode to the end of the line you could get to the Braintree

⁷This was a fairly accurate depiction of reality. As noted in the introduction to the urban youth, Hyde Park is approximately 50% white and 24% black.

Mall. The two girls remained deep in conversation, Emmanuelle describing various shops at different subway stops, until our train pulled up.

During her interview prior to the Summer Program I asked Emmanuelle if she would ever want to move to Lincoln. She responded: “no way...it is too rural.” She explained her aversion to this environment as being a combination of the lack of action and the lack of amenities: ‘Cause I’m used to the city life... That there is always people like moving around and stuff to do, like it’s convenient. If you want to get stuff... It’s only like 2 miles not like 20 miles to get to like the store.” Emmanuelle’s desire for accessible commercial amenities and summer experiences combined to foster the development of a more distinctly urban identity and preference over the summer.

Roxbury

Emmanuelle’s dislike of rural environments did not translate into a positive sense of Roxbury. In fact, she started the summer with a distinctly negative image of this place. She described the people who lived there as “rude” and that it was “dirty” and “dangerous.” She was unable to think of any part of Roxbury that she considered “natural.” She was very aware of the racial makeup of Roxbury. When comparing Hyde Park to Roxbury, Emmanuelle stated: “Roxbury is more Black.” Whether or not she linked the race of this environment to her image of its negative social and physical environs is impossible to know, although the literature suggests that people of color are in fact associated with perceptions of neighborhood disorder (Sampson and Raudenbusch, 2004).

Emmanuelle’s sense of Roxbury shifted quite dramatically over the summer. Much of this was due to her close friendship with Kiara, who was constantly singing the praises of living in Roxbury, specifically the sense of community and the endless opportunities for ‘fun’. This was reinforced by Emmanuelle’s experiences at the Food Project’s urban site, particularly learning about the history of the Dudley Street neighborhood. This information cast the neighborhood in a distinctly more positive light. At the end of the summer Emmanuelle had a positive sense of Roxbury, which she saw as part of the urban realm, where she felt she belonged.

Lincoln

Despite having never been to Lincoln prior to starting work with The Food Project, Emmanuelle possessed an image of this place that centered on it being “boring” and “white.” Although she felt Hyde Park lacked hang-outs, Lincoln’s dearth of action was even more extreme: “There’s more like, there’s not like more people but there’s like civilization [in Hyde Park]. I mean there’s civilization in Lincoln but there’s different kinds of people. . . [Hyde Park] is more diverse. Lincoln seems like. . . all the people seem one race. . . Caucasians.”

Unlike her urban peers, Emmanuelle was able to identify aspects of Hyde Park that she felt were similar to Lincoln. However, the part of Hyde Park that she saw as similar was not part the area she considered neighborhood, it was what she referred to as the “rich part of Hyde Park.” Like Lincoln, it was “quiet” and “peaceful.” Emmanuelle noted that the houses in this part of Hyde Park were similar to what she imagined in Lincoln in that they were “big and nice.” One thing that she did not equate about the two places was the race of the residents. The rich part was, according to Emmanuelle, racially similar to the rest of Hyde Park, “a mixture.”

Emmanuelle’s feeling that the Lincoln’s environment was lacking included her sense of the social relations. Although she noted that she imagined the residents were “nice” and “friendly” , she also believed that they “keep to themselves” , which contributed to her overwhelming image that the town was a “boring” place. Her sense that she did not belong in this place, which she imaged as having barren social relations, was illustrated one afternoon on our walk from the farm back to the commuter rail station in Lincoln. As we emerged from the woods and the station came into view Emmanuelle called out: “Civilization!” This was followed by a monologue about how she could never live in Lincoln, as it was “too quiet.” She added: “I know that people all get along here but it just seems boring.” Curious as to whether folks getting along was a reference to interpersonal relations or a lack of crime, I asked her what made her think that people got along. Instead of answering the question, Emmanuelle shrugged: “I could never live this rural kind of life.”

3.2.2 Emmanuelle’s Sense of Places: Post-Program

Neighborhood, Roxbury and The Urban Environment

Emmanuelle’s summer experiences did not have a major impact on her sense of her neighborhood. She continued to feel that there was a lack of things to do, but her expanded place repertoire heightened her preference for it over less urban environments, specifically Lincoln. More striking was the development of a distinctly urban identity. The latter was due to a couple of factors. The first was her strong identification with the other urban youth in the program, she lumped them all together as a group. The second was rooted in her relationships with the non-urban participants and her experiences in Lincoln, which magnified her feeling that she belonged in the city. The tensions between Emmanuelle’s identity as a ‘shopper’ and her home neighborhood moderated the effects of her expanded place repertoire on her sense of Roxbury in a positive direction.

Emmanuelle showed a clear preference for hanging out with the other urban youth at The Food Project. During lunch breaks when the youth were given permission to sit wherever they wanted to, Emmanuelle always selected a table comprised of urbanites. Even when the youth were supposed to sit with their crews, Emmanuelle was often up from the table, socializing with her friends from the city. My field notes commented, “[At lunch] Emmanuelle and Kiara were constantly up from our table, talking with Isaiah, Jordan, Joshua and Ashley [urban youth of color].” She saw these youth as being like herself in terms of clothing, language and religious values. As a means of organizing her social preferences, Emmanuelle took on the Food Project staff’s language, referring to herself and these peers as “urban” and “city kids.”

Within our crew, Emmanuelle showed a strong preference for working with her crewmate Kiara, whose identity was centered on being a black youth from Roxbury. Part of this was their shared identity as youth of color. Kiara and Emmanuelle felt that they had more values in common with each other than with their non-urban, white peers. For example, during a conversation about abortion, Emmanuelle pointed out that “it is interesting” that both she and Kiara were pro-life, while the white

crewmembers were all pro-choice. The girls were also drawn together by non-political forces such as music and dance. For instance, one morning in the kitchen at the homeless shelter I watched Emmanuelle and Kiara chop vegetables, talk animatedly and intermittently break into song and dance for the entire hour and twenty-minute work period. Similarly at the farm while waiting to start a workshop Emmanuelle, and Kiara sat beside each other, singing and dancing in their chairs to a rap tune. The rest of the girls on our crew sat quietly watching, but not joining in.

The youth on our crew and the Food Project staff noticed the girls' tendency to self-segregate. Both young women received multiple deltas for this exclusivity during straight talk, both from our crew leader and from their peers. During our final straight talk Paul told Emmanuelle that while there were times that she is really fun, it was most often with Kiara and not with the rest of the crew. He noted that the previous day "you were only laughing with Kiara during skit prep."

Emmanuelle's very tight relationship with Kiara separated her from the other youth in the crew but it also gave her new insights into living in Roxbury and her own identity as an urbanite. In her interview after the program had ended, her sense of Roxbury emphasized its social cohesion and abundance of neighborhood cookouts, both things that were consistently highlighted by Kiara. Comparing the social environs of Roxbury to her own neighborhood: "I would say people in Roxbury are more like together. . . I mean people in my neighborhood they like care but its not like everybody always comes together for cookouts. Not everyone on the block comes together. . . like in Roxbury."

Emmanuelle's first hand experiences in Roxbury also impacted her sense of this place. During the fifth week of the program when we were on a tour of the Dudley Street neighborhood, we stopped at the Shirley-Eustis House. This imposing mansion was constructed in the mid 1700s by the Royal Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony and is now a museum. Emmanuelle was particularly excited by the existence of such an elaborate home in the middle of a dense urban environment. On our walk back to the growing site, Kiara commented to Emmanuelle "this is a really nice part of Roxbury." Emmanuelle's reply, "don't underestimate Roxbury" illustrated

her growing sense that Roxbury was a desirable environment. By the end of the program, Emmanuelle shifted from emphasizing the negative social realm of Roxbury to describing it as having “mad people” , “mad stores” and being a “popular” place to live.

Emmanuelle’s non-urban experiences contributed to her identification as an urbanite. While her contact with her non-urban peers overturned some of her negative stereotypes about white suburbanites, it also reinforced her feeling that she belonged in the urban realm. One source of this feeling was her awareness of the socioeconomic divide between herself and her peers from outside of the city. This sentiment came out during casual conversations. For example, while harvesting vegetables one morning, Julie, Kiara and Emmanuelle discussed their clothing preferences and styles. Julie mentioned that she didn’t really wear expensive clothes but that her sister “buys shirts for like 200 dollars.” Emmanuelle’s sharp toned response that “it sounds like you can afford it” suggested a certain level of resentment. This sense of relative deprivation and possibly coupled resentment came out again near the end of the program, when our crew leader asked Julie why she was not applying to the School Year Program. Emmanuelle, who was applying⁸, interjected: “She doesn’t really need to [because she has money].”

Another incident where Emmanuelle’s awareness of the economic gap between herself and the non-urban youth was evident occurred at the end of the summer when Olivia, a white youth from the wealthy town of Harvard Massachusetts announced that her iPod had been stolen. In response to the theft, the staff took up a collection from the youth to try to replace it. On the train ride back to the city I asked Emmanuelle if she planned to contribute. She replied: “Well first of all, Olivia is a lot better off than me. I don’t think that she will have any trouble paying for a new iPod. And second of all, I have to pay for my lunch, transportation... not like the kids from the suburbs.” Emmanuelle felt that the youth who lived outside of the city were all wealthy and that the urbanites shared her economic constraints.

⁸Emmanuelle applied and was accepted to the School Year Program but had to withdraw at the last minute due to mandatory Saturday classes at her school (to prepare for the state wide standardized tests).

One of the most intriguing ways that Emmanuelle's urban identity manifested itself was in her use of and relationship to language. Specifically, she began to lay claim to words and phrases as being distinctly urban. For example, one day she overheard Paul telling me that he got an "edge up" over the weekend. Emmanuelle interrupted the conversation, telling Paul that I would not know what he was talking about, as that was an urban expression. On other occasions, she took it upon herself to 'teach' me certain terms, such as 'hate'n': "you tell someone who is being mean 'don't be hate'n'."

At other times Emmanuelle seemed bothered by the notion that the non-urban youth were usurping these terms. The following exchange, which occurred one morning while harvesting potatoes, illustrated this sense of ownership over urban language.

Julie: There's mad heads over there [referring to a group of youth working in an adjacent field].

Emmanuelle: That's not something I would expect *you* to say.

Julie: Why not?

Emmanuelle: I dunno.

Julie: What did you expect me to say?

Emmanuelle: There is a lot of people over there.

Julie: What would you have said?

Emmanuelle: Probably there's mad heads over there.

I reflected in my field notes that my interpretation of this exchange was that Emmanuelle did not like Julie's appropriation of 'her' expressions.

"Crunk" was another term that Emmanuelle felt belonged to the urban youth. While working in the homeless shelter one afternoon, Julie commented that even though it was a made up word, it had caught on quickly with her friends. Kiara replied "yeah, lil john" [the rapper who made up the word]]. I asked what the term meant. Emmanuelle explained: "you know, crunk music...like party music that is really amped up." Julie looked puzzled by this definition, she lowered her voice and said that for her friends it meant being stoned and drunk at the same time. Emmanuelle and Kiara looked at each other and shook their heads. Emmanuelle said that she guessed that *might* be the meaning in the sense that it is about getting really

crazy. Julie said yeah, like we talk about getting “crunked up tonight.” Several weeks later while working at the Roxbury site “crunk” reemerged as a topic of conversation. As the crew weeded an overgrown corner of the lot, Steve described a party in Lincoln where people were “crunked.” Pete looked puzzled and asked what that meant. Steve replied that it was “getting really, really drunk or stoned.” Emmanuelle, who had been working quietly up to that point, piped up that “is not the *urban* definition. When *we* use the word crunk, it means crazy, or totally amped up.” Steve noted that he only learned that word in 2005. Emmanuelle said that was okay because “Lil John only made it up in 2004.” Emmanuelle’s tone of authority combined with her linking of the terms “we” and “urban” indicated that she felt the term crunk belonged to the city, of which she was a part.

Lincoln

Despite Emmanuelle’s tendency to spend time at The Food Project with youth who were most like her, in the fields she conversed with her fellow crew workers from outside of the city, particularly with Steve, Julie, Emily and Nicole. In fact, the only non-urban crewmate she did not seem to communicate with was Pete. Her particular lack of connection to him was evidenced by her comment after the program had ended that if she were to have a party with people from The Food Project, he would not be invited. Emmanuelle was also very engaged in the workshops that dealt with issues on race and diversity. In fact, after an identity workshop Emmanuelle spontaneously commented to our crew how much she enjoyed the workshop and the fact that it was good to learn about white people’s perspectives; specifically that not all white people are racist and that they do not say ‘like’ all the time. In response to this statement I admitted that I had not been aware of this stereotype prior to the summer. Emmanuelle replied that it came from the media, which usually portrays white girls as ditzzy.

At the end of the summer, Emmanuelle maintained her initial sense that Lincoln was white and that not much happened there. She noted that she hardly saw any people in Lincoln and that there did not seem to be any good places to hang out.

These notions were reinforced with conversations with Steve, who regularly described the dearth of activities in Lincoln and referred to his town as “boring.” Emmanuelle showed no interest in living in this type of environment: “It’s for people who just want to settle down and have like a nice like quiet life. There’s like nothing to do.” Lincoln was boring, and in contrast, urban environments were exciting places where people like herself belonged.

Emmanuelle’s work on the farm did not produce an intimate bond with the land the way it did for some of her peers, such as Paul or Julie. In fact, Emmanuelle expressed a distaste for fieldwork. She received two unmotivated violations over the summer and often complained during fieldwork. For example, one afternoon when she and I were assigned to harvest cucumbers, she moved very slowly, complaining, “my back hurts and I’m tired.” When I interviewed her after the program ended she mentioned that she would like to return to The Food Project the following summer as an intern, but only if she could get a position that did not require *any* farm work.

Despite not enjoying farming, Emmanuelle was more aware of the natural realm in Lincoln by the end of the summer. She felt that “nature is seen more” in Lincoln than in the city. However, this was not something that she framed as being a particularly positive attribute. Much more important to her place assessment was the lack of commercial space. The importance of this feature was reflected in her choice of the ideal residential environment, which she identified as the city of Cambridge, in a location “near to the Cambridgeside Galleria Mall.”

3.2.3 Conclusions

Emmanuelle entered The Food Project with a negatively valenced sense of her home environment. Although she had lived in Hyde Park for her entire life, she felt it was a boring environment; it lacked the amenities that a girl who loved the mall desired. It was not a strong fit with her identity. Having little direct experience with Roxbury, her sense of it conformed to a stereotypically negative image of the inner city, lacking in the social and physical realms. Her image of Lincoln was vaguely reminiscent of the ‘rich area’ of Hyde Park, suggesting that the wealth of the residents was part of

her image. Her resentment of her non-urban peers' relatively high incomes further indicated her awareness of the class differences between herself and residents of towns such as Lincoln.

Emmanuelle's summer experiences did not have a major impact on her sense of her neighborhood. She continued to feel the lack of things to do, particularly in terms of desirable commercial amenities. That being said, her lived experiences in Lincoln expanded her non-urban place repertoire, which heightened her appreciation of the facilities that did exist in Hyde Park. She increasingly articulated her preference for it over even less urban environments, specifically Lincoln. The most striking impacts that the program had on Emmanuelle was her newly developed positive image of Roxbury and a distinctly urban identity. Emmanuelle particularly appreciated the "mad stores. . . mad people. . . and busy" nature of Roxbury at the end of the summer. She was also impressed by the neighborhood's history and the residents' efforts to revitalize their own neighborhood. Her urban identity was fostered by her growing recognition that she had more in common in terms of values and experiences with the other urban youth in the program than her non-urban colleagues. Like the Food Project staff, she referred to the former group as 'urban'; they were a unified group. Emmanuelle finished the program with a strong sense of belonging to the urban realm.

3.3 Justin

Justin was a bright, handsome fourteen-year-old male. He had lived in Roxbury his entire life; the first six years in an apartment in Uphams Corner, and the rest on the first floor of a triple-decker, owned by his maternal grandmother. He and his mother occupied the first floor of the building and his two older brothers who were in their early twenties took up the other floors, one on each. Justin's grandmother lived across the street in a single family house with his aunt. The houses were only a few blocks from The West Cottage lot. In fact, Justin had "volunteered" there in an informal way the previous summer.

Several weeks into the summer, during a workshop on identity, Justin shared that his father, a Cape Verdean, had been absent since he was an infant. During the discussion Justin noted that he was technically half African American and half Cape Verdean. Despite having “pure Cape Verdean blood”, Justin felt no connection to that culture, as his dad was “never around.” He was emphatic that he identified as an African American, the ethnicity of his mother. He added that things were financially challenging in their household as his mother, who was visually impaired, was currently unemployed.

My description of Justin from our first day at work was: “Pretty quiet but likely bright.” This first impression turned out to be quite accurate. Justin was heading to The Boston Latin Academy in the coming fall for ninth grade. The Academy is one of three exam schools in Boston where youth are admitted based upon a combination of their grade point average from the previous year and their performance on a city-wide test (Boston Public Schools, 2007). Due to his academic prowess and his outgoing nature, The Food Project classified him as a ‘leader’ during his interview for entry into the Summer Program.

Justin was in many ways a typical adolescent, testing boundaries and exploring his identity, but he entered The Food Project with an awareness of the complexities of race and class in urban America that differentiated him from many of his peers. This consciousness was evidenced by a lunchtime exchange on the third day of work. Kiara was drinking a bright red drink from a small plastic bottle, and was holding a second electric blue drink in her other hand. Mark, our crew leader, wondered aloud what was in the drinks. Kiara quickly retorted that she knew, water, sugar and food coloring. Justin interjected that there were chemicals in there and that the drinks were “only sold in urban neighborhoods [because] they are cheap and full of chemicals.” He finished off by stating, “They are bringing down urban people because the drinks are full of chemicals.” I reflected in my fieldnotes that Justin seemed to believe that selling this junk food cheap in urban neighborhoods represented a conspiracy to diminish the health of its residents, and that I suspected he saw this as *both* a racial and spatial issue.

Another characteristic that emerged over the course of the program was Justin's tendency to bend the truth. The first obvious illustration of this occurred at the homeless shelter where our crew worked once a week. In exchange for our work, the shelter provided us with lunch. On our first visit, the youth took much more food than they actually ate. After seeing all of the waste, the shelter's director spoke to the group about wasting food that would otherwise go to homeless folks. The next week, some of the crew still took more food than they could eat, including Justin and Julie. At the end of the meal, our crew leader confronted them. Julie pointed out that she wrapped up what she did not eat and was planning to take it home so it did not go to waste. Justin did not miss a beat, responding that he had eaten all of his food. This was an outright lie as I had watched him put a plateful of food in the trash. As we headed up to the conference room for straight talk, I overheard Julie asking Justin in an unmistakably sarcastic tone: "What did you *do* with your pizza?" Although this was a minor incident, my fieldnotes recorded my surprise at the ease with which Justin attempted to cover his tracks by lying.

Other events throughout the summer reinforced my suspicion that Justin had a dishonest streak. For example, one particularly hot day when we were out in the field, Justin asked for permission to go to the bathroom. Nearly thirty minutes later, I made the same request. As I approached the port-a-potties, I noticed Justin sitting under the shade of some trees nearby. When he saw me, he quickly got up and rushed over to the taps and washed his hands. He called over that he had just been sitting for a minute and was heading back down to work. Clearly, that was not the case; he had obviously been taking a break while the rest of the crew worked out in the fields. While minor, this episode illustrated that Justin had no trouble distorting the truth. It also hinted at a tendency to put his own interests before those of the rest of crew, who could have used his help and would also have liked to take a break from the sun.

Justin's peers picked up on his tendency to tell half-truths. On the train ride to and from Lincoln, youth occasionally engaged in free-style rapping, which generated a lot of buzz. A big crowd would gather around the rappers, cheering, hooting and hollering until the inevitable intervention by an assistant crew leader, who would

tell the crowd to take their seats. Justin repeatedly bragged that he was good at free-styling but refused to perform in this or any other Food Project venue. There were a number of incidents where the other youth challenged Justin for not following up on his claims. For example, Justin had promised that he would perform at the upcoming Talent Show, but while weeding out in the field the morning of the event, he announced that he had decided against it. His crewmates Paul and Emmanuelle were clearly unimpressed and goaded him about the fact that he always bragged about rapping but never did it. On a train ride later in the summer Isaiah and John, two black urban youth who often provided beats for the rappers, started chanting Justin's name to pressure him to freestyle. Apparently Justin had told them that he could only freestyle with a beat. Despite the availability of a beat and the taunting of his peers, Justin never rapped.

Other than struggling with honesty, Justin appeared to thrive in the Summer Program. Like most of his peers, he received the occasional violation for being unmotivated or for poor modeling, such as the time that he, Emily, Nicole and Paul sat in the field chatting rather than working (which got them all 'unmotivated' violations). Or the time he and Julie wrote notes to each other throughout a workshop rather than participating (earning them 'poor role modeling' violations). This relative success made his dismissal during the fifth week of the program a great surprise to my crewmates and myself.

3.3.1 Justin's Sense of Places: Pre-Program

Roxbury

Justin had an 'empathological' (Vale, 1997), or ambivalent emotional relationship with his Roxbury. On one hand he had a very strong sense of belonging, and valued certain elements of the physical and social realms. At the same time, he disliked the physical and social disorder that he observed. His ambivalent relationship to his home environment was illustrated in his interview at the beginning of the summer in which he explicitly stated that he would never want to leave Roxbury "because it

is my home” *and* that he would like to move to “the rich side of Boston.” He was simultaneously drawn to and repelled by this environment.

Justin identified two levels of neighborhood, “all of Roxbury” and a smaller sub-area called “Julian”, which was the name of his street. In the discussion that follows, I note the occasions where Justin’s use of the term neighborhood was in reference to all of Roxbury, or what I refer to as his home environment, and on the other occasions where he is referring to his *micro-neighborhood*.

Justin’s definition of a neighborhood, at both levels, was centered on the notion of social cohesion. While he had some trouble articulating a concrete measure of how someone would know they were in Roxbury: “You just *know*. You just know where you’re at.” He expressed a belief that there was a form of social glue that defined all of Roxbury as well as the neighborhoods surrounding it: “It’s like Roxbury is *united*, and then Dorchester is *united*, and Jamaica Plain is *united*.” Justin did not employ racial descriptors to differentiate between these neighborhoods, although he was explicit that Roxbury residents were “Black and Cape Verdean”, which matched his own racial and ethnic identity.

As well as sensing Roxbury as a unified entity, Justin had a strong image of his *micro-neighborhood*, Julian, which was comprised of his street. Justin had strong bonds with the residents of this area. Along with his immediate family, Justin had friends his age on his street and around the corner from his house. Justin had formed a “gang” called The Wolf Pack. The young men in this group hung out together in the neighborhood and looked out for each another. Justin also felt connected to the adults in this area: “My neighbors are nice. In Roxbury you probably know all your neighbors. . . .Anytime you see them they’ll say hi to you and you say hi back.” Justin had what sociologists would refer to as ‘strong bonds’ in his neighborhood and home environment.

Justin’s sense of belonging in Julian was heightened by an intra-neighborhood rivalry. Specifically, Julian, where Justin lived, was in conflict with the “adults and kids” of nearby Lucerne Street. The rivalry started over a robbery:

Well, I guess one of my friends was just walking; he had a cell phone and suddenly they all surrounded him with a knife and then he was on a cell phone so they took his cell phone and then went in his pockets and pulled a knife on him.

As a result of this rivalry, Lucerne Street was the one place in Roxbury Justin said he did not feel safe. If Justin did venture over there “they’d [Lucerne residents] probably jump me” and if Lucerne residents came to Julian, members of his neighborhood would do the same. Justin expressed concern about other neighborhood conflicts, including gang activity: “A lot of people [in Roxbury] don’t make sense. . . Like killing people just because they’re from— just because they’re from like a rival gang and you really don’t even know the person.

Justin’s portrayal of all of Roxbury as united alongside his description of internal conflicts was difficult to reconcile. My interpretation of this seeming contradiction was that it was analogous to family tensions. Internal sibling rivalry often exists alongside an overall feeling of loyalty and attachment to the family unit. The conflicts between micro-neighborhoods were internal and did not trump Justin’s sense of belonging to all of Roxbury. The presentation of conflict alongside unity was also a manifestation of Justin’s ambivalent relationship to his home environment.

Justin’s image of the built form of Roxbury was mixed. On one hand he used terms such as “trashy”, “poor” and “highly populated” to describe it. On the other hand he articulated an appreciation of its ongoing renewal: “Well, they’re rebuilding a lot of houses in Roxbury, so most of the houses are nice now. . . They used to be crappy and torn down.” Justin noted that The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative office was a landmark. This was the office of the Community Development Corporation that was responsible for much of the building he was referring to, although Justin did not credit them with this achievement. He believed that the municipal government was responsible: “People, the city, is making them [the vacant lots] into houses and stuff.” Whether learning the history of the Initiative through The Food Project curriculum would have impacted Justin’s sense of the Dudley Street neighborhood is, unfortunately, impossible to know as he got fired the week before our crew started to work in the city and the history was told.

When describing what he liked about his neighborhood, Justin emphasized the access to commercial amenities, specifically those located along Blue Hill Avenue, a main thoroughfare that runs through Roxbury. This aspect of his environment provided the services and hangouts that he desired:

If I want to go to the barbershop it's right up the street. If I wanted to go get some snacks; it's up the street. Restaurants – it's all in the area. . . Like, everywhere – everywhere in Roxbury if you live anywhere in Roxbury – to go to a barbershop or a convenience store or something like that it's all in walking distance.

Clearly, this image was influenced by Justin's pre-driving status. Whether the walkability that he so valued as a fourteen year old would continue to contribute to his positive sense of Roxbury should he gain access to a was difficult to know. It was clear that at this stage in Justin's psychosocial development accessible commercial areas loomed large in his neighborhood image and contributed to a positively valanced sense of this environment. The value that he placed on access to these amenities reemerged as an important factor that shaped his experiences in, and sense of Lincoln.

Lincoln

Although Justin had never been to Lincoln prior to working for The Food Project, he articulated a clear image of this place, which was essentially the polar opposite of Roxbury. The streets were “clean”, unlike the trashiness he observed in Roxbury. The people were “more richer” than his neighbors and people lived in single family houses they owned, whereas “in Roxbury everybody, like, pays rent and there's a lot of apartment buildings cause that's what everybody usually lives in an apartment building, so usually all the apartments are close.” Justin also contrasted the social relations in these two environments: In Roxbury when you first meet a person they're usually more out for themselves [whereas] in Lincoln they're more - they're more happy to meet you and stuff and, like, happy to try to be a friend and stuff.” At the same time, friendships in Roxbury were more real, that after you got to know people in

Roxbury, “they can be trusted.” This was in contrast to the superficial relationships in Lincoln where people “don’t really” each other as they do in Roxbury.

Despite recognizing some positive attributes of Lincoln, Justin was clear that he did not want to live there, that he preferred Roxbury: “Cause Roxbury is my home.” This preference was rooted in his belief that the social environs of Lincoln were “boring” and that the residents, though “kind and happy”, did not possess the same kind of cohesive relationships with one another as he experienced in Julian. That being said, that Justin admired and desired some aspects of wealthy environments, emerged in his response to where he would want to live if he won the lottery: “The rich side of Boston.” When I pressed him for specifics, his lack of geographic experience and knowledge came to the fore: “I don’t know. I know there has to be some rich side, though.” Justin’s place preference further illustrated his ambivalent relationship to Roxbury and Lincoln. He was searching for a place that fit with his urban identity but lacked the social disorder that he perceived in Roxbury.

Part of Justin’s place exploration included testing Lincoln’s tolerance for ‘the other’; this included testing its’ residents response to an urban youth, particularly one who fulfilled their potential negative stereotypes.

3.3.2 Justin’s Sense of Places: Post-Program

The termination of Justin’s contract with The Food Project occurred in the fifth week of the eight-and-a-half week program. I attempted to meet with Justin a month after the program ended, but his mother denied her permission. This meant that Justin did not complete a post program mapping, visioning or interview. The changes in his sense of places that I identified as a result of his participating in a truncated version of The Food Project Summer Program are based upon Justin’s comments and behaviors that I recorded in my fieldnotes during his five weeks with the program.

Roxbury

As the summer progressed, Justin was more and more vocal about his pride at being from Roxbury. For example, during an agricultural workshop in the third week of the program the youth were told that the soil at the Food Project's Roxbury site was better than that in Lincoln⁹. In order to demonstrate this point, the workshop leader had the youth try to create balls of soil with materials from each place and then drop them to see which stayed together. When Justin observed that the earth from Roxbury stuck together better, he shouted out with pride: "Rox-bu-ry!" Similarly, when our crew leader announced which of us would work on community lunch in Lincoln and which in Roxbury, Justin cheered for his Roxbury assignment, stating that "Roxbury is way cooler." While it is difficult to know how much of this articulation was due to a growing sense of comfort with the group and a consequent willingness to share his feelings and how much was due to an actual change in his sense of Roxbury is difficult to know, my belief is that the urban/suburban categorizations of The Food Project set up a dynamic whereby the urban youth adapted a team mentality, cheering for their home environments. Justin and many of his urban peers started to refer to themselves as "city kids", a term used by the Food Project staff when they were addressing the urban youth. This sense of unity was also fostered by the train rides to and from Lincoln, where the urban youth had time to bond with little supervision. An alternative explanation is that Justin's increased urban pride reflected a sense of alienation and resentment in relation to the wealthy non-urban environment.

Together with a growing sense of pride about his urban background was a sense that the physical environs of Roxbury were lacking. This sense came from Justin's experiences on the land in Lincoln and his conversations with his non-urban crew-mates. For example, during lunch at the shelter during the third week of the program I overheard Julie telling Justin that her yard backed on to conservation land, which she described as "land where you are not allowed to build...it's like forest, meadows...it's like nature." Pete then launched into a description of all of the wildlife

⁹The soil at the Roxbury sites had been brought in when the land was reclaimed by The Food Project.

in Carlisle, including foxes, badgers, deer and lots of chipmunks. In response, Justin note with a laugh: “This is my nature—pigeons, stray cats, raccoons, rats... once in a while we get robins and blue jays.” On one hand this comment indicated that Justin had a strong image of ‘nature’ in his neighborhood, but the deprecating tone of the comments suggested that it was not an element of his environment that he felt particularly proud of and contrasted with Pete and Julie’s positive image of nature in their home environs.

Lincoln

Justin’s lived experiences in Lincoln heightened his sense that this was a place where he did not belong. He was particularly struck by the dearth of commercial amenities. For example, over lunch during the fourth week of the program I overheard Justin telling Steve, Pete and Julie about how convenient life is in the city compared to Lincoln: “in Dorchester and Roxbury you got everything you need.” These comments either reflected his growing sense of pride that he was a city youth or a reflexive defensiveness.

Justin’s experiences in Lincoln went beyond those of most of his urban peers in that he had contact with at least one Lincolnite who was not associated with the program. In the third week of the program, rather than waiting for the train with the rest of the urban youth, Justin entered the dentist’s office that was located near the commuter rail. This action was forbidden by a Food Project policy, which forbade the youth from entering any of the commercial spaces that were adjacent to the Lincoln commuter rail station. Upon entering the office, Justin told the receptionist that he was thirsty and wanted some water, which she provided. The following week he went in and asked to use the toilet, which the dentist also allowed. Justin’s next interaction with the dentist’s office was his final one as it pushed the boundaries of the relationship too far. Justin’s testing of the boundaries and exploration of the limits of Lincoln resulted in the termination of his Food Project contract.

3.3.3 The Firing

Justin's career with the Food Project ended abruptly. On the Wednesday morning of the fifth week of the program, Justin did not arrive at the homeless shelter with the rest of the group. I recall wondering about his absence, but did not give it a lot of thought. Justin had yet to miss a day of work and I assumed he had simply overslept or had a doctor's appointment. Although Justin had received violations for poor motivation and poor role modeling, there was no indication that he was at risk for being fired. This impression was shattered during our mid-morning break when Mark, our crew leader, informed us that Justin had gotten into serious trouble at the end of the previous workday. He was vague on the details of the incident that led to Justin's dismissal, simply telling us that the previous day "someone" had driven three crew workers to Lincoln's Commuter Rail Station. When the three youth arrived they "got into some trouble at the nearby dentist's office." Pete then told us that Justin was among the three, but that he did not know the whole story yet and hoped we would refrain from talking about it until he was given more information from the senior staff. Of course, the youth did not heed this request. As we filed back to work, I overheard Kiara telling Nicole, that Justin probably *wanted* to get fired as he had been offered a position with ABCD, a municipal youth employment program.

Working alongside Julie and Kiara in the kitchen of the shelter, I listened to them debrief the incident. It turned out that Julie was the "someone" who had given Justin a ride. This put Julie in a bad position as the official Food Project policy was that youth were not allowed to drive to/from the Lincoln site. They were supposed to park at the commuter rail station and travel with the other youth via the bus to the farm in the morning and then walk back with them at the end of the workday. This rule was never strictly enforced, and by the middle of the summer three or four non-urban participants drove and parked at the site each day. Youth were not supposed to be picked up from the farm by anyone, including parents or peers. Both Justin and Julie were aware that they were violating the rules when she drove him and the other boys to the station.

Although Julie acknowledged that she knew that by driving Justin and his peers to the station she was breaking a Food Project rule, she said she felt compelled to grant him “one last favor” as Justin had told her that he was moving to Rhode Island and not returning to work at The Food Project. This was not true. Julie was angry that Justin had lied to her about moving and that he did not seem to care that he had placed her job at risk by getting her involved in his escapades. She also felt “betrayed” since she considered Justin “a friend.” Furthermore she was upset that Justin had not confided in her about his new job (but had talked to Kiara about it), which I suspect was another lie. Julie’s perception that she had a ‘friendship’ with Justin was shattered by this event.

The following morning the site supervisor in Roxbury, Matt, informed the youth that Justin had been fired. Matt explained the series of events that had resulted in The Food Project staff’s decision to terminate Justin’s contract. The story began Tuesday after work when “a crew worker gave three other crew workers a ride to Donelan’s” [the grocery store adjacent to the commuter rail station]. By this point I think most of the youth knew that worker was Julie, but Matt never named her. He did, however name the three workers who got the ride, Justin, Ryan, and Brandon.

Matt informed the group that after being dropped off at the station parking lot, the three boys entered the waiting room of the same dentist’s office that Justin had previously visited. Rather than asking to use the office’s facilities, on this visit Justin drew his ‘dew rag’ over his face to shield it and told the secretary that he was going to steal the toys. The boys then left the office. A few minutes later Justin returned on his own, his dew rag still over his face and repeated his threat. The secretary responded by calling the police, at which point Justin and the other two boys, who were waiting outside, took off.

The police arrived, chased, and ultimately caught the three males. According to Matt, once they were in the police station, the boys lied about what had happened at the office, denying the charges. I later found out that the police managed to get confessions from Ryan and Brandon by questioning them individually. Justin stuck to his story that he had not entered the office. Four senior Food Project staff members

were called down to the station along with the youths' guardians. Eventually, the boys confessed and they were allowed to leave, but the situation remained unresolved, as the dentist had decided to charge the boys with trespassing.

Matt finished by relaying the staff's decision on the boys' fates at The Food Project. Ryan and Brandon could be rehired, which meant volunteering at The Food Project for 2 days, writing a letter to the Food Project and the dentist explaining what they had done and finally going in front of a jury comprised of four of their peers and Matt. The panel would render a final decision as to whether the boys could stay on. Justin was simply "not eligible" to be rehired; he was fired and permanently banned from all Food Project land. Matt acknowledged that all three of the boys had broken two important rules, accepting a ride and entering a Lincoln vendor. But Justin's threats and continual lying to the police and the staff placed his transgressions in a different category from his peers and were the reason for his stiffer sentence.

Matt finished with the observation that although both Ryan and Brandon had the chance to be rehired, the fact that Brandon was absent suggested that he was accepting the termination of his contract. He explicitly welcomed Ryan back to the "community." In fact, Ryan did manage to get rehired but subsequently accumulated so many violations that he ended up being fired on the final day of the program. Brandon was never seen or heard from again. As discussed below, this outcome reflected the different backgrounds of the boys. Ryan had lots of familial support. Brandon had none.

I spoke with the Thomas, the Director of Youth programming at The Food Project, about this incident several months after the program had ended. The charges were still in process and the staff still digesting the incident. When I asked Thomas why he thought Justin committed this 'crime' he responded that he felt that he was the kind of kid who lacked boundaries. He cited the example of his behavior at the police station after his arrest. Apparently Thomas saw him walking down the hallway and asked him where he was going. Justin did not respond, and walked straight past him. When Thomas asked a second time in a sterner tone Justin gave a vague reply about needing to get something from Ryan. Apparently, Ryan was being questioned

in a separate room with a police officer and his father. Justin walked into the room without knocking and asked for his earring back.

During this meeting I also discovered that Justin continued to deny wearing the mask and that his mother was backing him up on this claim. Thomas's feeling was that Brandon and Ryan had a good chance of getting off because they only entered the office once and neither of them wore masks. Ryan's dad, who was a lawyer and representing his son, claimed that it was going to be easy to get the trespassing charges thrown out because an office waiting room is technically a public space. If the dentist really wanted to nail the boys, he should have laid more serious charges relating to their threatening behavior. Thomas noted that the "real victim" in all of this was Brandon as "he has no parents" and "is just in the system." Ryan's father highlighted this fact in his meetings with the staff and suggested that they try to serve as his 'advocate.' Thomas noted that they tried calling his caseworker several times, leaving messages saying that they would like to advocate for Brandon. They never heard back from his caseworker nor from Brandon. In Thomas's words, "these kids just fall through the cracks."

The incident opened Thomas's eyes to the need to work more closely with the Lincoln police. Specifically, he felt that they were not trained on how to deal with "city kids" and that as a result, there were things that he felt were handled inappropriately. When I asked what he meant, he said that the police had chased, tackled and handcuffed the three boys and then put them in the back of the police car. Apparently one of the boys had bruises on his wrists from being "lifted up by the handcuffs", which seemed an extreme measure. He also mentioned that when he was in the police station right after the incident, he overheard the policewoman who tackled Ryan bragging about it to the other police; his interpretation was that they appeared to have enjoyed playing cops and robbers.

The lack of boundaries identified by Thomas, only partially explains Justin's behavior, which also reflected his perceptions of and responses to Lincoln's environment. Justin entered the program with the belief that the residents of this town were "kind and happy." His behavior was partly about testing out this imagery. How far could

he push these folks? I would also argue that Justin was acting out the stereotypes that he believed Lincolmites held of city youth. His behavior was a way of testing their response to a 'typical' boy from the 'hood. My guess is that Justin did not intend for his actions to be taken so seriously, particularly given that he threatened to steal toys. He was just 'playing' with the dentist and his secretary. However, pulling his dew rag over his face had turned this act from a misguided joke into threatening behavior.

The episode with Justin was not the first time that The Food Project had had to deal with youth who were testing the boundaries in Lincoln. During a meeting with Thomas before the Summer Program commenced, I asked why the youth were not allowed to enter the shops at the Lincoln commuter rail station. It turned out that in previous years there had been two major incidents with urban youth stealing from the local grocery store. Thomas suggested that the reason for this was that some of these youth had never been in commercial spaces with such lax security. Again, I would argue that rather than a simple testing of boundaries this was more a case of experimenting with the environment of the 'Other.'

The first incident that that Thomas described involved a young man from the city who stole a number of ice cream bars and proceeded to give them out on the commuter rail to all of his friends. Apparently, the youth thought this was hilarious; hence the story was retold to their non-urban peers, and eventually got back to the staff. This created a dilemma for the organization: whether to discipline the perpetrator or report him to the police. Their concern was that reporting him would reinforce negative stereotypes about black kids from the city. They opted to deal with it themselves. How this was done was not clear from my discussion.

The second episode occurred later in the summer. Rather than removing merchandise from the grocery store, a group of youth had gotten into the habit of opening and then sipping from bottled drinks. After quenching their thirst, they would replace the half empty bottles in the cooler. Finally, one these youth, a black male, was caught in the act and chased out of the store by a shopkeeper. The manager called The Food Project to complain about theses illegal activities. In response, the

organization offered to bring in the group of youth who were involved in the incident. The owner refused this offer as he felt he couldn't identify the youth. Thomas felt that underlying this comment was the sense that "they [black males] all look alike." Ultimately, these incidents resulted in the youth being barred from the Lincoln shops.

3.3.4 Conclusions

Because of Justin's early exit from the program, assessing its impacts on his sense of place is somewhat speculative. That being said, his case is still 'representative' in the sense that he was one of four youth who entered the program and whose employment was prematurely and permanently terminated that summer. These youth represented over five percent of the participants.

Justin entered the program with an ambivalent or empathological sense of his home environment. His Food Project experiences were limited to Lincoln but still appeared to have an impact on his sense of Roxbury. Specifically, he became increasingly proud of being from the city and aware of Roxbury's assets, particularly its commercial amenities. Justin's relationship with Lincoln was complex. On one hand he felt it was an ideal social and physical environment and on the other he showed some disdain for how boring it was, and his actions suggested that he saw the residents as naïve and even exploitable. Justin's exploration of this town involved testing the limits of its residents. This pushing of the bounds ultimately resulted in Justin being asked to leave the program.

On one level, Justin was an archetypal adolescent, exploring his identity and testing the limits of authority. Yet this conclusion is challenged by the fact that he also had almost all of the 'classic' risk factors stacked against him. He is a male youth of color growing up in a female-headed household in a relatively poor neighborhood where gangs and violence are part of the social realm. He lacked a male role model and has developed the tendency to be dishonest with his peers and those in positions of authority.

Youth organizations, like The Food Project, have the potential to make the greatest impact on these high-risk individuals. McLaughlin et al. (1994) concluded in

their extensive study of youth organizations that one of the key factors that made a difference in the lives of at-risk urban youth is involvement in a youth organization where there is an adult that takes a sustained interest in them. This indicates the potential positive influence that The Food Project can have on the at risk youth who enter their Summer Program. Unfortunately, the sequence of events in Justin's case and their consequences meant that the opportunity to nurture and develop a bright, talented youth into a prosocial local leader, was lost.

3.4 Urban Youth: Discussion

There were commonalities and differences in the way that Paul, Emmanuelle and Justin sensed their immediate neighborhoods, home environments (Jamaica Plain, Hyde Park, and Roxbury), and the unfamiliar environments of Lincoln and (in the case of Emmanuelle and Paul) Roxbury. That being said, some striking similarities in their sense of places existed prior to their entry into The Food Project program, including their ambivalent sense of their neighborhoods and home environments, a perception that Lincoln was boring, and an image of Roxbury as socially dysfunctional. These patterns held for the majority of urban youth whom I encountered over the course of this research, including my control group, which was comprised of five urban youth who applied to The Project, were waitlisted, but never actually entered the program. (For a detailed review on the methodology used to select the control group and data collection see page 61 of the Methods section (Sect. 1.4.))

The urban control group included two males and three females, none of whom reported living in Roxbury. (See Table 3.1 for the locations and demographics of their neighborhoods.) One of the young women, Brianna, lived on the border between Jamaica Plain and Roxbury. According to maps from the city of Boston, her house was located in the Eggelston Square neighborhood, which is officially a part of the neighborhood of Roxbury but she was explicit that her residence was in Jamaica Plain.

One of the urban control group youth, Rob, did not live in the city of Boston.

Table 3.1: The demographic characteristics of the home environments of the urban youth who were interviewed for this study (Selverajah et al., 2002; *Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2007).

Name	Neighborhood	Density (person/square-mile)	% Black	% White	% Asian Pacific Islander	% Latino
Paul	Jamaica Plain/Roxbury	12 442/14 380	16/63	50/5	7/1	24/24
Emmanuel	Hyde Park	5 056	40	43	2	13
Justin	Roxbury	14 380	64	5	1	24
Bo	Chinatown**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Brianna	Jamaica Plain	12 442	16	50	7	24
Rob	Brookline*	8 059	3	80	13	4
Alyssa	Roslindale	9 306	16	56	4	20
Aaliyah	Hyde Park	5 056	40	43	2	13

**Chinatown is part of Boston's 'Central' planning district, which is comprised of a "cluster" of older neighborhoods, including Chinatown, the North and West Ends and Downtown (Boston Redevelopment Authority, 2002). Reporting the racial composition and density of this district does not provide meaningful data on Bo's neighborhood experiences in Chinatown. Close observation in this neighborhood indicates that the residential density is high (apartment buildings are the predominant housing type) and that there is a high concentration of Asian American residents.

When I met this fourteen-year-old male of Haitian descent, he had recently moved to the town of Brookline, which is difficult to classify as urban or non-urban. Its hybrid nature stems from its bustling commercial districts, apartment houses, and subway line, alongside grand old homes set on large lots and a working farm. That being said, Rob's residence was Eggmont, one of the town's public housing projects, which is comprised of a series of apartment buildings adjacent to a major retail area. The more urban 'feel' of his neighborhood combined with the fact that he had lived the first thirteen years of his life in Mattapan, a relatively poor Boston neighborhood¹⁰ led me to include him in the 'urban' group.

The urban control group's sense of places did not change during the period that the participants were engaged in the Summer Program. This was in contrast to the participants' senses, which did shift, albeit in varying ways and degrees, suggesting that the changes amongst the participants were a result of the program and not some other external variable.

¹⁰The mean annual household income of Mattapan is \$32 748, approximately \$6000 less than the mean for the city of Boston.

The urban youths' place repertoires emerged as a *mediating* variable that explained their sense of places, which was *moderated* by their environmental fit, that is the extent to which their personal identity was aligned with their home environment. The program participants did not garner meaningful cross-place friendships, making it difficult to know whether strong bonds with their non-urban crewmates might have impacted their sense of places. There was an interesting asymmetry in the perception of the depth of friendships between the urban and non-urban youth, which was linked to the urban youths' belief that white, non-urbanites were biased against them as well as a growing awareness of the difference in their socioeconomic status. This asymmetry emerged when the youth were asked to reflect on which of their summer friendships they most valued, with whom they kept in touch, and whom they would like to see again. (See Table 3.2 for a summary of these variables).

In the discussion that follows, I examine place repertoire and fit and their role in determining what the urban youth sensed in their home environments, Lincoln and Roxbury prior to the commencement of The Food Project program and how they impeded or facilitated changes in the participants' sense of places as they moved through The Food Project program. I also discuss the factors that inhibited the formation of cross-place friendships, which according to the contact hypothesis have the potential to overturn the urban youths' stereotypes of the 'other.'

3.4.1 Place Repertoires

As described in the discussion of the non-urban youth (Sect. 2.4.1, page 118), a place repertoire includes an individual's lived and virtual experiences in a set of places. On the whole, the limited repertoires of the urban youth that I encountered during this study led them to have an ambivalent sense of their home environment, and a negative sense of both Roxbury and Lincoln. The youth who participated in The Project expanded their repertoires, and finished the Summer Program with a more positively valenced sense of their home environments and Roxbury due to an increased feeling of urban pride, which was instilled by implicit and explicit messages relayed during the Summer Program. Many of their negative priors about the attitudes and

Table 3.2: Summary of the *mediating* and *moderating* variables that operated on the urban youth participants' sense of places.

Concept	Type	Meaning	Example of Observed Effect at The Food Project
Place Repertoire	Mediator	Mental bank of place experiences (lived and virtual) that an individual draws upon to make an assessment of other places.	-Exposure to Lincoln expanded youths' place repertoire. Finished program with a higher resolution image of this environment, but still conformed to initial image of white and rich.
Environmental Fit (with home neighborhood)	Moderator	Alignment of personal identity with home environment.	-Tight fit heightens awareness of what other neighborhoods lack i.e. more aware of environmental attributes that were lacking in Lincoln, particularly lack of social cohesion. -Poor fit heightens awareness of attributes in new places i.e. heightened awareness of Roxbury's positive attributes. -Match between racial or ethnic identity and place results in positive sense of place.
Cross Place Friendship	Moderator	Relationships with people from outside of one's home environment.	-None. Urban youth did not garner meaningful cross-place friendships.

behaviors of Lincolniters were reinforced through their summer experiences.

Brianna, one of the control group youth, lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico for the first ten years of her life. Her experiences illustrate the importance of prior place experiences, particularly lived ones, in shaping urban youths' sense of places. When I met Brianna she identified her neighborhood as Eggleston Square in Jamaica Plain (although officially it was actually a part of Roxbury). Her emphasis on access to the subway as a feature of this neighborhood set her apart from the other urban youth, most of whom mentioned transit but did not attach a strong value to it. Brianna's experiences in New Mexico had made her acutely aware of what it was like, as a non-driver, to lack access to public transportation: "like they don't have the train system, and they have very, very, very few buses, so there's not really an MBTA." The presence of the buses and subway emerged repeatedly during both of her interviews as a positive attribute of her neighborhood. This, along with tight ethnic fit between her "Spanish/Puerto Rican" identity and the ethnicity of Eggleston residents were the reasons that she gave for "loving" her neighborhood and not wanting to move away. She traced the outline of her neighborhood borders in red, noting all of the 'Spanish' friends she had in this area (Fig. 3-2). This was in contrast to Albuquerque, where she emphasized the high concentrations of Native American residents in her former neighborhood.

Ambivalent Place Relationships

Prior to entry into The Food Project program, the urban youth had what is best described as ambivalent relationships to the social realms of their neighborhoods. Larry Vale (1997) has characterized these relations as "empathological", which captures the simultaneous push of social pathologies, lack of economic opportunities and the pull of strong social networks and feelings of belonging to their neighborhoods and home environments. While the urban youth sensed these places differently, they all expressed an awareness and concern about social disorder alongside an attachment to their neighborhoods. For example Justin had a very strong sense of belonging in Roxbury, and valued certain elements of the social realm, such as his bonds with the

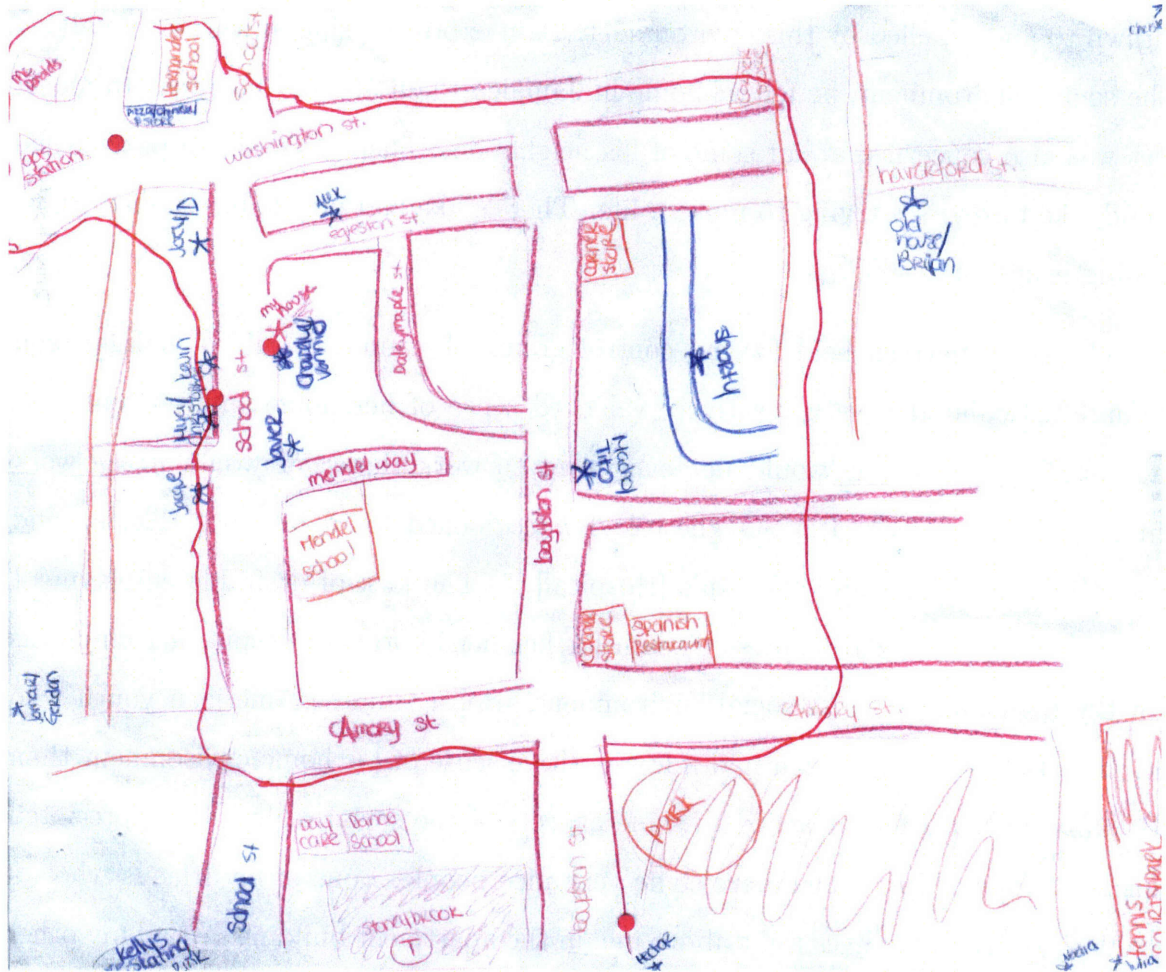


Figure 3-2: Brianna’s map of her neighborhood, created during her interview prior to The Food Project program. Brianna emphasized her social networks within the boundaries of her neighborhood (which she marked in red).

residents of his street and 'Wolf Pack', the gang of youth he hung out with. At the same time, he disliked the physical and social disorder that he observed: "...killing people just because they're from like a rival gang and you really don't even know the person." This ambivalence was captured during his interview at the beginning of the summer; he was explicit that he would never want to leave Roxbury "because it is my home" *and* he wanted to move to "the rich side of Boston." He was simultaneously drawn to and repelled by this environment. Paul expressed similar sentiments about the social environment; he felt at home in Jamaica Plain and did not want to move, yet was also concerned about some of his neighbors: "There's like, good people, like good-like businesses trying to make a life. There's like bad people like, doing drugs, selling drugs and stuff."

The same pattern held for my control group. Brianna who lived in Eggleston Square articulated a very positively valenced sense of her home environment, but also indicated that she would not ever want to work there: "I would *never* work in my neighborhood! It's SO ghetto! I *have* looked for a job, but, like around school, like Brigham and Women's [Hospital] ." The lack of desirable employment opportunities led her to express disdain for her neighborhood, despite her emphasis on the high quality of its social environment. Bo, a Chinese American youth who lived in Boston's Chinatown had a less positive sense of his home environment than Brianna, but still felt attached to some aspects of the social realm. He appreciated his local friendships: "There are some very nice people...one of my friends who's a grade lower than me lives right above me, in the apartment building... And my other friend, the one in the same grade as me, he lives - like his apartment building is right there." At the same time, Bo believed that Chinatown was dangerous environment and expressed a clear preference to move to the suburbs: "It's dirty and stuff, and at night, there's gangs or something... At night there's people going all like spray painting everything... Its dark and not safe." His ambivalence was summarized by his discussion of the neighborhood festivals, such as Chinese New Year: "Sometimes I really enjoy it, but like sometimes I don't. Like, um, I usually go like during, uh, the middle of the festival because then, everything is not as loud and stuff."

Safety and Security

All of the urban youth whom I interviewed were able to identify danger zones in their neighborhoods. This was in sharp contrast to the non-urban youth who uniformly reported that these spaces were non-existent in their local environs. One of the striking thematic consistencies in the youth's discussion of this issue was that, other than Bo, none of them felt that their *personal* safety was at risk in their home environments. The reason for this was twofold, they were intimately familiar with the physical and temporal geography of danger in their neighborhood and were able to navigate effectively around these places and/or their social networks in the neighborhood provided them with a feeling of protection. Thus their strong sense of belonging provided them with a feeling of security. For example, Justin felt secure in Roxbury despite the feud between his street and Lucerne Street due to his bonds with his neighbors and fellow 'Wolf Pack' members and his knowledge of which places to avoid. It is possible that the youths' attribution of their personal safety to local knowledge and social connections was a form of denial or 'cognitive dissonance'. That is, because they have no choice about where they live, in order to feel safe they told themselves a story that "it won't happen to me" because of my neighborhood knowledge and connections. My data do not provide evidence for this explanation, but it is certainly a hypothesis worth considering in future research.

Even Brianna, the non-Food Project participant who lived in the Eggeston Square neighborhood and had an unusually strong, positive sense of her environment, readily identified temporal and spatial danger zones: "like when it gets really late, Washington Street." Yet she felt protected by her social networks:

If you DON'T live in my neighborhood, and you like don't know people in my neighborhood, then, at night, on like Friday and Saturday night, just like the weekends. . . Like I'm not saying my neighborhood isn't safe, but I'm saying those - if I had to choose a time that was the most not safe. But I feel safe in my neighborhood because I know the people and because it's not as bad, like Key Street projects - no, no.

Alyssa, the control youth from Roslindale, identified the park that she and her

friends used during the day as a danger zone after dark: “The park I hang out at, actually [is dangerous]. At nighttime, I wouldn’t go there. ‘Cause a lot of people get robbed over there.” She added that she did not worry about this as she simply hung out in “Roslindale Square” during the evening, where there were people around rendering it a safe place. Aaliyah, a black female who lived in Hyde Park felt that there was “no danger” in the small area she identified as her neighborhood “but in other parts of Hyde Park, it gets more dangerous as you go more toward Mattapan.” She avoided entering this unsafe area and so felt completely safe in her immediate neighborhood, even at night. Rob, who described the Eggmont projects as an ideal living environment in all other dimensions noted that he did not feel safe “At night in the parking lot, near the bushes, and all the way down near the buildings. ‘Cause there’s hardly anybody there, and there – it’s a lot of bushes down there.” He added that he still spent time outdoors in the evenings, he simply restricted his activities to the area around the basketball courts, where his friends were usually out playing. Their knowledge of the geography of local danger zones allowed these youth to navigate around unsafe areas and feel secure in their neighborhoods. This is aligned with Merry’s (1981) finding in her study of a Boston ‘project’ that adult residents’ perceptions of varied with their capacity to discriminate amongst people and areas in their environment.

The exception amongst the control youth was Bo, who did not feel safe in Chinatown. This appeared to be the result of his lack of strong social networks—his chief bonds were with two other youth and the women with whom his grandmother and great aunt played mah jong with each week. Not exactly a protective social network. His sense of insecurity was heightened by his mother’s restrictions on his mobility. Since she did not allow him out in the evenings he did not have a clear sense of how to avoid the neighborhood danger zones. The mugging of his grandmother and great aunt in their neighborhood also contributed to his image of insecurity: “My grandmother got robbed like right here [points to map], and her sister got robbed right here [points to map again], so my grandmother’s gold necklace was robbed, which I was really sad about because that was sort of a family heirloom or something and my

grandmother's sister lost her purse.”

The importance of this familiarity and social networks to the youths' sense of security and, ultimately their sense of places, was highlighted in Paul' case when he moved to Roxbury. Despite his belief that there were fewer gangs in his new neighborhood, he felt unsafe there. His repertoire of this new environment was still 'low resolution' and did not include the type of intimate knowledge or social connections he required for feeling secure navigating this place. His lack of a vivid image of where danger resided contributed to his insecurity and negative sense of this place. This example also highlights the potential importance that time spent in a given environment might play in shaping sense of place. The classic theoretical writings on sense of place, such as those produced by geographers Tuan (1977) and Relph (1976) assert that there is an association between time spent in a place and a positive sense of it. More recent empirical work, such as sociologist Robert Sampson's (1988) analysis of close to 11,000 adults survey responses indicated that longer residence in a place leads to greater number of social ties, which in turn results in higher levels of collective community attachment. Attachment in this study was measured as the percentage of residents who responded that they would be "very sorry" to leave the local area. As the author acknowledges, this single item measurement of such a complex phenomena limit drawing definitive conclusions, although they are suggestive that time spent living in a place impacts tends to impact one's sense of it. While my data does not allow me to ascertain whether over time Paul' image of his new neighborhood might become higher resolution and include the type of information that would give him a greater sense of security, I posit that this may not be the case. As discussed below, the strong tension between Paul's ethnic identity and his new neighborhood environment mediated the impact of his expanded repertoire on his sense of his Roxbury neighborhood. I hypothesize that his sense of being an outsider due to being a 'Spanish' resident in a black neighborhood was so strong that it diminished his environmental fit, and ultimately changes (in a positive direction) in his sense of this place.

Roxbury

The urban youth tended to speak of the physical form of Roxbury as similar to the environment that they were most familiar with, which was their own neighborhood. Yet, they consistently described differences in the social realm, specifically they equated more black residents with more violence. My guess is that this part of their place repertoire came from media accounts and parental warnings about this area. For example, prior to participating in The Food Project program Emmanuelle noted that Roxbury was “more black” and “dangerous” than Hyde Park. Similarly, Paul stated that Roxbury was very similar to Jamaica Plain except for the predominantly black population and the greater levels of violence.

The control group had a similar image. For example, Alyssa, a Jamaican American youth who resided in Roslindale stated: “I haven’t seen a lot of Roxbury, but I know that’s it’s a lot more rough over there [than in Roslindale]. . . Um, a lot of people are hanging around—a lot of black people.” When I asked Brianna how her neighborhood, which she referred to as “the Spanish part of Jamaica Plain,” differed from Roxbury, she noted that: “Well, technically, we live in Roxbury. Like, we are on the line, so our zip code is Roxbury¹¹, but it’s [Roxbury] *all* black people.” She had a very negative image of the social realm of this Black area:

“It’s SO divided, that I couldn’t even like begin to tell you. Like, I don’t know *anything* about those people, ’cause I don’t go there. EVER. Just ’cause. . . . I’m half Spanish and like half white, but I look white and a lot of girls especially *black* girls have the mentality, like that you can’t even look at them, like they’re really territorial, and I know like if I were like walking by, even if I glanced up and I held their gaze for a second or two; they’d be like, “What are you looking at?” So, it’s definitely; very definitely more rough than Eggleston Square [her neighborhood] is.”

Although it is impossible to know with certainty whether race and disorder were linked in the youths’ mental models (that is, black=violent), comments by some of the youth suggest that this was indeed the case. For example, Aaliyah who was

¹¹This was the only time in either of her interviews that she acknowledged that her house was officially in Roxbury.

part of the control group an lived in Hyde Park made the following comparison between Dorchester (where she lived until she was four) and Hyde Park: “Cause it’s [Dorchester] a lotta like African Americans, I guess and so it makes it more like ghetto, and it makes it more –it makes it worse, ’cause it’s not a good environment to grow up in.” She then went on to draw parallels between her image of Dorchester and Roxbury (despite acknowledging her lack of experience in the latter): “Cause there’s more African Americans [in Roxbury] so there tends to be more gangs and more violence and more like crime and stuff.” This was in contrast to her more racially diverse Hyde Park neighborhood: “It’s more mixed... Yeah, it’s more mixed. It’s more like Haitians and what do you call it? Latinos. There’s not *a lot* of gangs, or a lot of people who just chill on the street in ghettoness and trash. It’s very quiet, and most of the time, it’s clean.” This tendency to link race with social disorder fits with the results of recent study of Chicago neighborhoods (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004). The results of this work indicated that regardless of the respondents’ own race, social structure (including presence of black residents) was a stronger predictor of perceptions of social disorder than the disorder that was actually observed and documented by the researchers.

Lincoln

None of the urban youth whom I encountered in my work had any previous lived experience in Lincoln. Yet they all had a sense of this place, which was influenced by their existing place repertoires. Because they lacked experience in non-urban environments, they imaged Lincoln as the polar opposite of their own environments: clean, safe, beautiful buildings, white and rich were the most prevalent themes.

When I interviewed the youth prior to the commencement of the Summer Program, they all (controls and participants) presented an idealized image about the more friendly social relations between neighbors, which I refer to as the ‘Brady Bunch stereotype’, while simultaneously expressing a belief that it was a “boring” environment. Justin felt that in Lincoln people were “more happy to meet you and stuff and, like, happy to try to be a friend and stuff.” Similarly Paul noted that the res-

idents would “Say like ‘Hello,’ and ‘How you doin’?” And ‘How are the kids?’ and stuff like that” and Emmanuelle noted that “people all get along there.” Despite this seemingly positive perception, all three were explicit that they thought it would be a boring place to live in.

The control group expressed similar sentiments; that Lincoln’s social realm was characterized by social exchange and cohesion. For example, Aaliyah noted that Lincoln was “White and clean. I think they’re more friendlier, and more like wanting to know what their neighbor’s doing, and going over to their neighbor’s house, and stuff like that. I don’t know. I would probably like - if I get rich and famous someday, I’d probably like to have a house out there. But, I wouldn’t want to LIVE there.¹²” Alyssa, from Roslindale stated: “I think they’d [Lincolnites] be more friendly, actually. Like say ‘hi’... like during the day time, probably the like kids in the strollers driving by, but, not at nighttime.” She added that she did not think that there would be much to do in this town, that it would be “boring” for teenagers, such as herself. Bo was the exception in my sample in that not only did he hold a ‘Brady bunch stereotype’ of Lincolnites, he also expressed a preference for living in this type of environment. He imagined that people in Lincoln were “like you know how like when you move in, then I think they come over, and then... I think that would be kind of nice.” Bo felt the residents of Chinatown were generally unfriendly and undesirable neighbors.

Along with citing the fact that Lincoln was “boring” as a reason that she would not want to live there, Aaliyah also articulated a belief that its residents were racially biased: “[the residents of Lincoln] they’d be prejudiced. . . I see that on TV and stuff.” While I did not explicitly collect data on where the youths’ images of Lincoln were coming from, Aaliyah’s reference to television was aligned with Emmanuelle’s attribution of her image of white suburban girls as being stupid and saying ‘like’ all of the time to movies and television shows. Similarly, Kiara (discussed in the next

¹²As one reviewer pointed out, this comment sounded like the reverse of the concept of a *pied a ferme*, a term used to refer to a small second home in the city owned or utilized by a ‘jet setter.’ My interpretation of Aaliyah’s comment is that the home in the country would serve as a status symbol equivalent to a movie star’s estate, but that she preferred (like many movie stars) to live where there was more action, in the city.

chapter on crossover youth), noted that her image of the “happy families” in Lincoln came from TV. These comments suggested that the media is an important and under-explored source of youths’ sense of unfamiliar environments.

Concerns about the racial attitudes of Lincoln residents were echoed by the urban Food Project participants. For example, Paul was explicit in his belief, both before and after participating in the Summer Program, that Lincolmites tended to be racist. Emmanuelle noted that her experiences at The Food Project had taught her that not “*all* white people” are racist, implying that she saw The Food Project participants as the exception. While Justin did not speak explicitly about his image of racial bias, his belief that there was a plot to “bring down” urban residents by corporate America combined with his actions, which were about testing boundaries and stereotypes, indicated that on some level he felt discriminated against by forces outside of his own, familiar environment.

3.4.2 Racialized Repertoires

The urban youth held highly *racialized* images of places. That is, they used racial descriptors, such as Black, White, Hispanic, ‘Spanish’, etc. when talking about their image of places. This reflected a greater comfort with naming race than their non-urban peers as well as a greater awareness of racial differences across localities, which stemmed from the extent to which crossing color lines was a part of their daily lives. For some of them, crossing color lines had perceptible potential consequences i.e. dangers, which also served to heighten their image of these boundaries.

The youths’ awareness of local color lines was evident in their descriptions of how they knew they were in their neighborhoods and how they knew when they were leaving them. Paul knew he was leaving his Jamaica Plain neighborhood by the races that he observed:

So when I start heading into Dorchester, I see the population. I see like, there’s more Black people than Spanish people. Um, like, there’s more Black people, right? On the same way, if I’m heading to JFK, UMass, there’s Spanish people and then it starts getting like a little bit—gradually

more white people.

Similarly, Bo the Chinese American youth who resided in Boston's Chinatown used race as the main signal that he was in his neighborhood: "when you start seeing an increasing amount of Chinese people [you are in my neighborhood]."

This pattern also held for the youth who lived in less racially homogenous neighborhoods. For example, Alyssa, who identified as Jamaican American, lived in the much more racially "diverse" neighborhood of Roslindale. She too described the boundaries of her neighborhood in racial terms: "[My neighborhood ends] when I see a lot of the same race. . . Cause if I go down there, I see a lot of like the same Hispanic race and if I go up there, I see a lot of black race, and if I go over there, there's a lot of Greeks." (Fig. 3-3.)

Brianna', from Eggelston also provided a racialized description of her neighborhood borders. Her boundaries were based upon her preferred racial association as a "Spanish" person rather than a landmark or official municipal boundary:

Well, it depends on which direction you go. Like if you go like northwest on this map, on this thing, if you go like northwest, it's when you start seeing mainly Black people, 'cause that's like Dudley and like Blue Hill Ave and stuff. But, if you're going east [Laughs.], it's when you start - like when you like cross over into like Roslindale, and like it's all like the White people, and you... It's like when the race changes. That sounds really bad, and I'm not racist, but, it's just like that's the way Boston's set up, 'cause Boston is really prejudiced.

Brianna's belief that the ethnic enclaves she identified were the product of racism came through again later in this in this conversation:

Like their [black people's] section is Dudley, and like Mattapan. . . 'Cause Boston is like really racist so that's why people live in different areas. Like you do *not* see Black people in the North End. And if you do, it's very rarely.

This association of racial prejudice with white neighborhoods is aligned with the characterization of Lincoln as both white and racist that is discussed above.

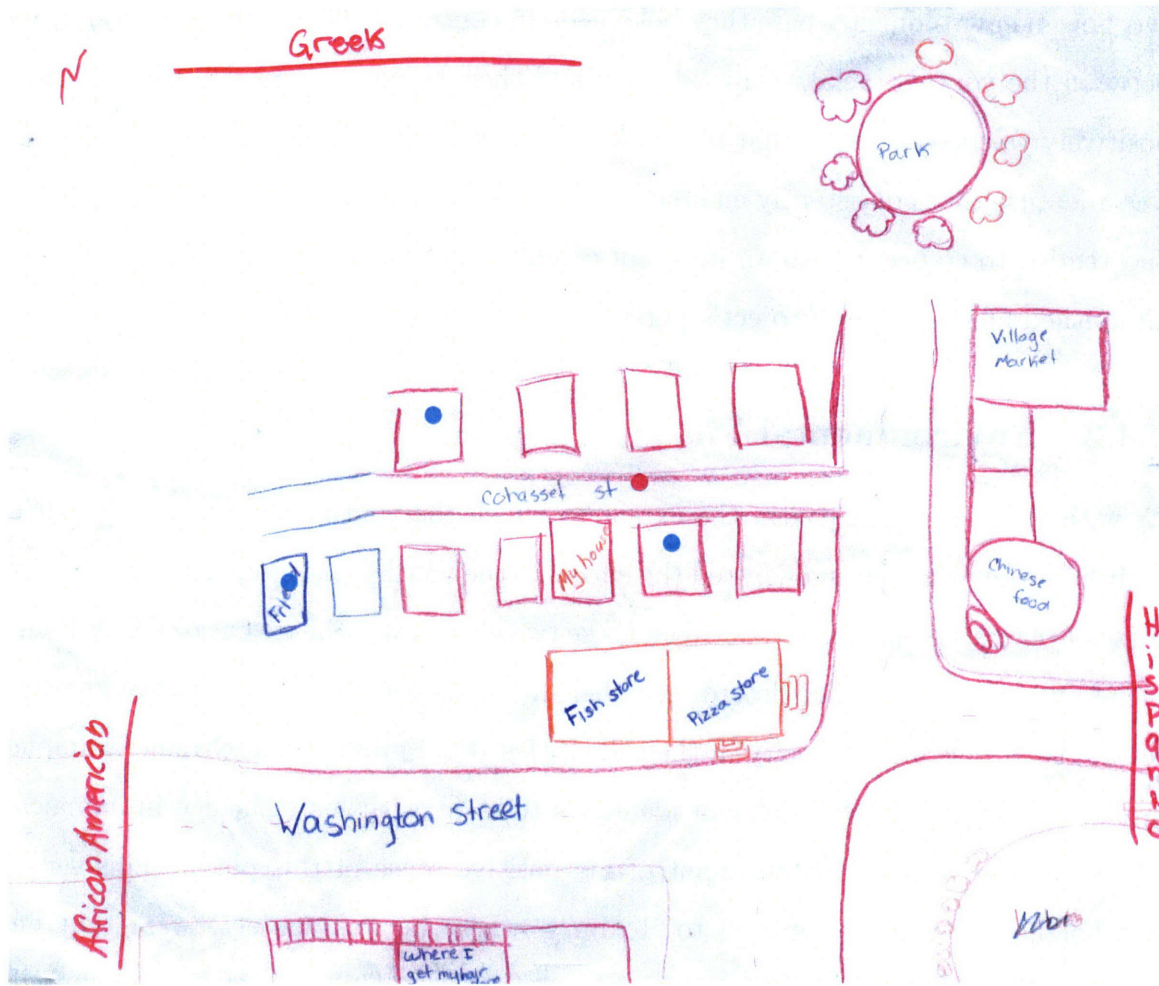


Figure 3-3: Alyssa labeled the boundaries of her neighborhood on her cognitive map using racial indicators.

Race was used to describe unfamiliar places, such as Lincoln and Roxbury. For example, prior to the program Emmanuelle noted, “all the people [in Lincoln] seem one race. . . Caucasians.” Paul echoed this sentiment: “I think Lincoln is more white people than like JP [Jamaica Plain].” In fact, every urban youth included “white” as one of the descriptors for the social environment of Lincoln on their visioning exercise. This sense that Lincoln was white contributed to the urban youths’ feeling that it was not an environment where they belonged. In contrast, where there was a tight fit between the youth’s racial/ethnic identity and their home environs contributed to a positively valenced sense of that place. As discussed above, the blackness of Roxbury was a feature that consistently emerged as a part of these youths’ images of Roxbury, and tended to co-occur with an image of neighborhood disorder, although the latter diminished amongst The Project’s participants by the end of the summer.

3.4.3 Environmental Fit

As with the non-urban youth, the extent to which the youths’ self identity fit with their home environment moderated the effects of the youths’ place repertoires on their sense of places. What differed between these two groups was the extent to which their racial and ethnic identities determined their fit. This was a reflection of the greater centrality of race and ethnicity in their identities. Paul provides an extreme example in that his “Spanish” /Dominican identity’s tight fit with his residence in Jamaica Plain was the *primary* determinant of his positive sense of this place. This sense was heightened when he moved to Roxbury, where he was acutely aware that he did not share the ethnicity of many of his neighbors. This lack of fit contributed to his negatively valenced sense of his new home environment. Justin identified as African American (although his father was from Cape Verde), which matched the race of his neighbors. While he was not as explicit as Paul about the importance of this fit to his sense of belonging to his neighborhood, he was clearly aware of the whiteness of Lincoln, where he felt he did not belong. Emmanuelle did not perceive a match between her Haitian identity and her neighborhood, where the residents were mostly “Jamaican and Caucasian.” The tension between her ethnic identity and

environment provides a partial explanation of her negatively valenced sense of her home environment.

The importance of racial fit was evident amongst the control group as well. Brianna, the non-Food Project participant from Jamaica Plain who identified as “half Spanish (Puerto Rican) and half White” expressed a very positive sense of her home neighborhood, much of which was rooted in the shared ethnicity of the residents:

“The people there, they make the neighborhood what it is. Like they’re fun. They are who they are. Like they - they *rep* their Puerto Rican side. They *rep* their pride in Eggleston, like SO MUCH. . . It’s mainly Spanish, and it’s kinda crazy because like, especially in the summer because you have like the Dominican festival and the Puerto Rican Festival.”

Similarly, Alyssa’s “mixed” neighborhood in Roslindale was a good fit with her own racial identity. Her father and biological mother were black and originally from Jamaica, but her adoptive mother (her father’s former wife with whom Alyssa lived) was white. Alyssa appreciated the fact it was a racially diverse environment and cited this as a reason that she would not want to move from her home.

Bo, the non-Project participant from Chinatown was an exception. That is, although his Chinese American ethnicity ‘matched’ with his Chinatown neighborhood, this did not lead to a tighter fit. In fact, he seemed repelled by living in an environment where the majority of the residents were Chinese: “Like - people in Chinatown like they really sort of like isolate themselves, unless like you get to know them. It’s like they’re actually kind of cold if you - unless you really get to know them.” He felt the residents were loud and that they did not look after their environment. The restaurants and commercial amenities did not appeal to him, despite their ‘chinese’ character. Bo wanted to move “to a [place with] suburban like housing”, which he imaged as less dense “an area sort of where there’s like not many people, and like less - there’s STUFF to do, instead of just like a lot of restaurants and stores around. Just like there’s gonna be like parks, and then there’s gonna be basketball courts, preferably a soccer place.” Bo found the hustle and bustle of Chinatown overwhelming, and was looking for an environment that afforded the types of activities that he

most enjoyed, which were sports requiring open spaces.

As Bo's case illustrates, fit was not solely determined by race and ethnicity. For example, Emmanuelle started the program with a sense that her home environment was lacking. In particular, she noted the dearth of good 'hangout spots' for a self-identified shopaholic such as herself. She entered Roxbury and Lincoln with a keen sense that this was a feature that was missing in her home environment. Comparing her place to Lincoln, the complete lack of what she judged to be shops of interest to her was her primary sense of this new place; it was "boring." In contrast, her experiences in Roxbury revealed that this was a place that had "mad stores" that appealed to her. Paul's experiences farming at The Food Project shifted his identity in that he discovered he enjoyed cultivating food. This became a part of his sense of himself. He finished the program with a heightened awareness that both Jamaica Plain and Roxbury lacked the farmland that he so appreciated in Lincoln. Yet, the tensions between this environment and his identity as a "Spanish" urbanite drove his preference for what he sensed was the dense, lively environment that characterized the city.

3.4.4 Increased Urban Pride

The urban youth who participated in the program garnered a greater sense of urban pride, which ultimately tightened their fit with their home environments and with Roxbury. This was the result of both explicit and implicit messages that the youth received over the course of the summer. The urban and suburban labels employed by The Food Project staff were one source of this increased identity and pride. The youth picked up on these categories, and increasingly identified themselves in these terms. This phenomenon was strengthened by the train ride to and from Lincoln as this was a time that the youth could socialize and bond most freely¹³. The rides facilitated their development of an urban group identity. The emphasis on the extraordinary history of the Dudley Street Neighborhood, which the staff generalized to Roxbury

¹³The non-urban youth did not have a parallel opportunity, as they did not travel to the city en masse in their own Food Project train car.

contributed to the youths' feeling that the city was a special place. All of these factors added to the youths' expanded pride with regards to being from the city.

There were also subtle messages from the staff about the inherent 'coolness' of the city. For example, our crew leader Mark's passing comments throughout the summer, suggested that urban environments were somehow superior to non-urban ones. He was a white, Jewish male who was about to start his freshman year of college at an Ivy League University. At the time of the program he lived in Brookline, a wealthy town that is geographically horseshoed by the city of Boston¹⁴, but his family lived in Dorchester until he was ten years old. He often spoke about his positive experiences living in Dorchester to our crew and constantly referred to himself as a "city kid", a term the urban youth readily adopted. Jennifer, a white female crew leader who lived in Concord (and was about to be a sophomore at a different Ivy league university), echoed these sentiments emphasizing the superior cohesion of the city over her own town. At lunch one day I listened as she and Amy, a Dominican crew-worker (who was not on my crew) from South Boston who was a METCO participant discussed the relative sociability of Concord versus the city. Amy started by pointing out how boring it is outside of the city: "I do not know how people live out in the suburbs" ; she once spent a weekend in Concord with a friend from school and it was "mad quiet" and there was nothing to do. She said at the end of the visit "I suggested that she come to my place next time." After a moment of reflection she added that despite being "boring", people there [in Concord] are "mad friendly", even a man she didn't know said hello to her, which she thought was a really nice part of living there. Rather than agreeing with this last point, Jennifer immediately responded that she thought people in the city were *much* "friendlier and nicer" and that in Concord only people who know you say "hi". Amy considered this point and responded that Jennifer was probably right as she had later discovered that the guy who said hi to her knew the family of the friend she was visiting, which explained his friendliness. My interpretation of the crew leaders' attitudes is that they reflected the organization's

¹⁴There is a commonly held belief amongst Bostonians that the city actively avoided being annexed by the city of Boston in order to preserve their excellent public school system.

emphasis on highlighting the assets of the inner city. An unintended consequence was that they projected a message of urban superiority, which resonated with the urban youth.

The Food Project program heightened Emmanuelle, Paul and Justin's pride and sense of fit with the urban realm. This was manifested in different ways. Emmanuelle increasingly took ownership of urban language; Paul became more adamant that he could never live out in the suburbs; and Justin challenged the non-urban realm, testing how far it would let an urban youth, such as himself push the boundaries.

3.4.5 Cross Place Friendships

The Food Project offers an opportunity for youth to have contact with people of different races and from environments that are very different from their own. According to the *contact hypothesis*, this exposure to, and interaction with other racial groups should result in the modification of exaggerated or broad stereotypes and undermine justifications for racism and prejudice. As discussed in the literature review, one of the conditions of this hypothesis is that the contact must occur under conditions of equal status (Allport, 1954; Wood and Sonleitner, 1996). In some sense this condition is met at The Food Project in that the act of farming is a leveling experience; it is unfamiliar and challenging for all of the youth, and this serves to equalize the power dynamic. In addition, all of the youth at The Food Project are subject to the same rules and regulations, although it is notable that the norms that operate in the broader society are in place at The Food Project. This tends to make achieving 'success' in the program easier for the non-urban youth. Despite these nearly optimal conditions, the comments and self-segregating behaviors of the urban youth participants indicated that they did not feel they made meaningful friendships with their non-urban peers over the course of the summer.

That these youth did not bond with their non-urban counterparts fits with the well-documented sociological phenomenon of *homophily*. That is, that people are most likely to have friendships with people who are 'like' themselves on multiple dimensions (McPherson et. al, 2001). For example, two months after the Summer

Program had ended, Emmanuelle told me that she was only in regular contact with two friends from The Food Project: Jeremy, a male Haitian youth whom she often spoke with in Creole when we were out in the fields and Kiara (from our crew), an African American woman who considered herself an urbanite. Like Emmanuelle, Kiara had a mother who was the head of the household and had very high academic expectations of her three children. That both Steve and Julie, white non-urban youth, felt that they had made meaningful relationships with urbanites over the course of the summer, indicated an asymmetric perception of friendships at The Food Project. My data indicates at least two sources of this imbalance, namely, perceptions by the urban youth of racial bias and awareness of class differences amongst participants.

As discussed above, the urban youth entered (and exited) The Food Project Summer Program with a sense that the residents of white, non-urban environments, such as Lincoln, were racist. This was surprising given their limited encounters with actual residents beyond their Food Project peers. Their pre-existing beliefs were 'affirmed' by their perceptions, rather than by particular incidents. It is reasonable to assume that these beliefs impeded their ability to feel truly connected to their peers from outside of the city.

In addition, the urban youths' awareness of the socioeconomic differences between themselves and the non-urban youth increased as they moved through the program, creating an additional barrier to the establishment of meaningful cross-place friendships. This was the result of their increasing place repertoires. Their initial fuzzy images of the economic differences between themselves and "rich" Lincolnites came into sharper focus through their lived experiences in Lincoln. They finished the program with a vivid image of this inequality, including the higher quality housing stock, and the 'status items' of their non-urban peers, including car access and iPods¹⁵. Recall that Paul' attempts to connect with Pete over music were cut short by the difference in their financial resources, which influenced their choices about whether to download

¹⁵The three youth who regularly drove to the farm in Lincoln were Julie and two other non-urban youth. None of the urban youth drove to the Roxbury site. Julie, Steve and Pete all owned iPods at the beginning of the summer, whereas Emmanuel and Justin did not own this much coveted item and Paul spent the summer saving to buy his.

music legally or illegally. Emmanuelle consistently articulated an awareness of Julie's relative wealth using a sarcastic tone that implied a sense of resentment. The urban youth all reported that should they have a party with friends from The Food Project, they would not invite any of the non-urban youth. In contrast, Paul was on the list of both the urban *and* non-urban youth and Emmanuelle likewise was on all the lists except for Pete's.

This imbalance in the youths' perceptions of friendships was manifested in a difference in their willingness to consider that their initial images and stereotypes of the "Other" were invalid. For example, both Emmanuelle and Paul started and finished the program with the sense that Lincolnites were racist. Steve and Julie, on the other hand, both internalized the positive image of the social realm of the city articulated by their urban peers. Justin's case illustrated an extreme case of awareness and resentment of the relative wealth and privilege he perceived in Lincoln. Justin challenged this place, testing how far its residents would let an urban youth push the boundaries

3.4.6 Testing The Boundaries: A Comment

Justin's firing provides a window into how difficult it can be for youth to enter the environment of 'the other.' Justin's actions may be explained by a variety of existing hypotheses, including the relative deprivation model, one of five frameworks presented in Jencks and Mayer's (1990) classic review of neighborhood effects. This framework suggests that neighborhood conditions affect individuals through the process of comparing their relative situation to their fellow residents. This theory fits with Justin's behaviors, which I interpreted to be a response to his relatively low class and minority status compared to the residents of Lincoln. His sense of deprivation in Lincoln led him to act out, and test the town's limits, thereby fulfilling the negative stereotypes that he believed was common amongst the "kind" and "happy" people of Lincoln¹⁶. Another possible interpretation leans on the idea of collective efficacy,

¹⁶This idea is related to the notion of 'reflected appraisals', which comes from the social psychology literature. The term refers to a process where we imagine how other people see us and this shapes

which is defined as the extent of neighborhood social connections and the degree to which residents monitor the behavior of others in accordance with socially accepted practices with a goal being the supervision of youth (Sampson et al., 1997). According to this theory, when Justin left his home neighborhood, the informal social sanctions he was accustomed to being bound by disappeared and he was tempted to test the limits of this new environment. What is clear is that Justin pushed the limits of the town and the Food Project program too far, adding a termination of employment and potential criminal record to his already hefty list of ‘risk factors.’

How or if The Food Project might have prevented this ‘failure’ is addressed in greater detail in the final conclusions, particularly the asymmetrical regulation around the youths’ freedom to explore the city versus Lincoln. For now, it is sufficient to note that generating an appropriate response to incidents where youths’ behavior crosses the line from typical teenaged testing to illegal activities is a difficult issue for any youth development organization. It is particularly problematic for The Food Project, which is committed to generating greater cross-racial and ethnic understanding through exposing urban and non-urban youth to the environments of the ‘Other.’ Banning the urban youth from commercial areas meant that their Lincoln experiences are limited to the farm and their daily walk back to the commuter rail station. Thus, there is little chance that urban participants would have the opportunity for the types of positive, informal interactions with residents of Lincoln that may potentially shift negative stereotypes about the town and its residents.

3.4.7 Conclusions

The urban youths’ place repertoires mediated their sense of places. As the youth participants moved through The Food Project program, their place repertoires expanded. This expansion included an heightened awareness of the “coolness” of the urban realm and its other assets. This expanded awareness led in turn to a stronger urban identity and a more positively valenced sense of their home neighborhoods

our self-perceptions. In the case of Justin, I suggest that he believed the Lincolnites saw him as an urban gansta and he internalized and acted out this role.

and of Roxbury. In addition, the youths' awareness of the racial character of places surfaced as an important variable in determining their sense of a particular locale.

The extent to which the urban youths' personal identities were aligned with their home environment, what I term their environmental fit, emerged as an important moderating variable. That is the tighter the youths' fit with their home environment, the less likely they were to positively sense new and different environments. Unlike their non-urban peers, the youths' ethnic and racial identity emerged an important component of their sense of fit in their home environment. In cases where their ethnic and class identities were well aligned with their home environments, the experience of places with different characteristics along these dimensions appeared to tighten their fit with their own neighborhood and home environment. That is, they garnered an even stronger sense of belonging in their local environment when they experienced new places where their ethnic and class identities differed from the majority.

The youths' lived experiences in Lincoln did not, in general, result in major changes to their sense of the town. This may have been due to the lack of cross-place friendships they made over the summer, suggesting that these relationships have a powerful moderating effect on place repertoires.

The urban youths' sense of places was a reflection of their individually unique identities, values and social skills. Despite this variation, the concepts of environmental fit and place repertoires offer strong explanatory power for their overall senses. These variables, with an emphasis on the role of race, provide a useful framework for thinking about how young people from the city perceive places. A schematic of this framework is shown in Fig. 3-4.

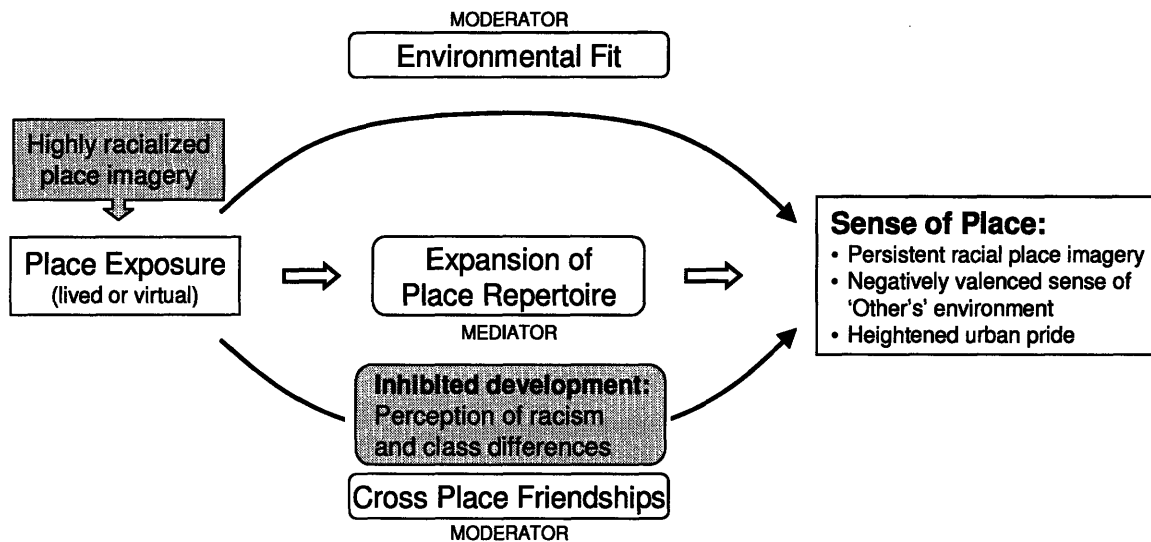


Figure 3-4: A diagram illustrating the model that emerged from my research with the urban youth. Place repertoire mediates the effect of place exposures on the outcome variable, sense of place. The direction and strength of the effect of place repertoire on sense of place is moderated by environmental fit. Perceptions of racism and class differences amongst the urban youth inhibited the development of cross-place friendships. Some of the changes that I observed in the non-urban youths' sense of places after participating in the Summer Youth Program are listed.

Chapter 4

‘Cross-Over’ Youth:

Kiara, Nicole and Emily

The cross-over category highlights the difficulty in labeling individuals as purely urban or non-urban. This problem arises for a number of reasons. First of all, most individuals have experiences in multiple place types, particularly as they move through their life course. Given our society’s high level of mobility and easy access to virtual place experiences through media sources, such as the Internet and television, it is a rare individual who has a purely ‘urban’ or ‘non-urban’ repertoire. An added layer of complexity arises because of the lack of a clear definition of the term ‘urban’. David Harvey (1973) suggested thinking of urbanity as ‘relational’. Thus, the urban core exists only in relation to the periphery.

The major part of the lived experiences of the youth discussed in the previous chapters was in environments that were unequivocally urban or non-urban in *relation* to the environment of the other. For example, the density (person/square mile) of Steve, Julie and Pete’s hometowns was less than half of the Boston neighborhoods inhabited by Paul, Justin and Emmanuel (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2007; Selverajah, 2002). The three youth on my crew who did not fit into either of these categories were Kiara, Nicole and Emily.

Kiara, and Emily were both classified as ‘City of Boston’ youth by The Food Project, but these girls differed from their urban peers in that they possessed sub-

stantial non-urban place experiences. Nicole was classified as 'Outside City of Boston', yet her town of Brookline, is difficult to label as solely urban nor non-urban in character. While the extent and duration of these youths' non-urban and urban experiences varied, my discussions with these young women indicated that their experiences in both place types were salient aspects of their place repertoires. These experiences influenced the way that they sensed places. This distinction led me to place the three girls in a category that I call 'Cross-Over Youth'.

When I met Kiara she was living in Norwood, a town about twenty miles outside of the city of Boston that while relatively developed is not urban relative to her previous residence, which was in Roxbury¹. Nicole lived in Brookline, a wealthy, predominantly white town that is literally surrounded on three sides by the city of Boston. Although not within the city limits, the fact that much of the town is fairly dense (it has bustling commercial districts, many apartment houses, and multiple subway lines), gives it a distinctly urban feel, particularly *relative* to a rural environment such as Lincoln. That Nicole had lived much of her life in the town's "projects" contributed to the urbanity of her lived experiences. Yet, classifying her as urban was also problematic due to the existence of large estates with well-manicured lawns and large parks, which lend a relatively suburban feel to parts of the town. Further complicating Nicole's urban classification was the fact that she had spent significant time out in a small town in New Hampshire, where her grandmother lived. That this place was a salient part of her repertoire, emerged as she referred to this place when characterizing her image of other, less familiar environments. Emily's family was relatively well off and owned a single family home in Ashmont Hill, a gentrified area of the inner city neighborhood of Dorchester. The fact that she lived in such an affluent enclave where the houses were mainly single family dwellings with their own yards (which made it feel more 'suburban' than the area surrounding it), combined with yearly visits to summer camp in the Berkshires, family camping trips and vacations to Europe and Mexico meant that Emily brought a very different menu of place experiences with

¹For example, Norwood's population density is approximately 2 739 people per square mile, approximately one-fifth of Roxbury's.

her to The Food Project than her ‘purely’ urban peers.

As the narratives of Kiara, Nicole and Emily convey, the broader place repertoires that they brought with them to The Food Project influenced their summer experiences. The place experiences afforded by their participation in the program were mediated by their repertoires. That being said, the variations in these youths’ personal identities, skill sets, values and prior place experiences led them to sense places differently both prior to, and after participating in The Food Project program.

4.1 Kiara: An Urbanite in the Suburbs

The Food Project classified Kiara as an urban youth. This was because she listed a Roxbury address as her home on her application to the program. In reality, Kiara lived in Norwood, a distinctly non-urban, predominantly white town about 20 miles southwest of Boston.² Despite having lived there for over two years, Kiara felt that Norwood was just a place “to sleep” and Roxbury was her neighborhood. She considered the former to be a distinctly “suburban” neighborhood and the latter, where she felt she belonged, to be “the city.” Her summer experiences magnified this sentiment and method of classifying places.

My field notes described my first impression of Kiara as “very outgoing.” This turned out to be an accurate characterization of this fourteen-year-old African American youth. She held strong opinions and was particularly passionate about issues related to race and social justice. Conversations with Kiara often dealt with her racial identity and social barriers associated with being a black teen. Her high level of awareness of racial prejudices connected her to the urban realm, which she imaged as a place of color.

Kiara’s racial consciousness came out during workshops and group meetings. For example, one morning the youth were asked about a social change that had come about due to collective action. Diana, a black female, said that black people used to have to sit at the back of the bus, but that this policy changed because “everybody

²The town’s population is over 90% white and less than 3% black (US census, 2000).

did something about it.” In response, Kiara shouted out: “we still are sitting at the back of the bus”, illustrating her sense that people of color face racial prejudices and discrimination on a daily basis. This contributed to her sense of being an outsider in non-urban environments, which she felt were populated by white folks.

Another example of her awareness of racial categories came out after our crew leader, Mark, gave her a delta for being overly exclusive with Emmanuelle, a black, urban female on our crew. Kiara confided in me that this was totally unreasonable given that after Justin (a black youth from Roxbury) was fired there were only three youth of color left on our crew adding that “really it’s more like, two [herself and Emmanuelle] because Paul is only half.” I responded that I thought being “Spanish” made Paul a person of color. Kiara argued that this was only “partly true... he is more flexible than Emmanuelle and I... he is able to go between groups more easily.” This comment illustrated Kiara’s cognizance of her own racial identity and the races of others.

Music and dance were central to Kiara’s identity. She used them to express herself and as a way to connect with her peers. Kiara would break into song, rap and dance at various times during the workday and on the train. For example, after our first week of work, Kiara started to perform freestyle rap on the commuter rail. Her peers recognized and admired her talent and were constantly asking her to perform. The non-urban youth who did not get to hear her on the train often asked her to rap when there was free time at the farm. As well as attracting attention, this ‘urban’ music and dance reinforced her identity as a city youth. This train-based activity served to magnify the division between the urban youth, who all rode the train together and got to watch these performances and the non-urban youth, most of whose parents picked them up from the commuter rail station. The non-urban youth on my crew asked Kiara to rap at the talent show numerous times and Steve noted that he had not heard her because he didn’t ride the train.

The youth in my crew all named Kiara’s outgoing nature a ‘positive’ during our final straight talk session. Her fun loving nature made her a popular farming partner and the girls regularly requested to work with her. Her popularity was evidenced by

the youths' responses to my query (after the program ended) about which of their five Food Project friends they would invite to a party. Kiara was named by every youth. These relationships provided an opportunity for Kiara to 'teach' about the assets of Roxbury and to learn about what it meant to grow up outside of the city. While Kiara's sense of the residents of non-urban environments improved to some degree as a result of her friendships with non-urban crew workers, she finished the program with an even stronger sense that she was 'of' the urban realm and an outsider in non-urban environments.

4.1.1 Kiara's Sense of Places: Pre Program

Norwood

Kiara lived in a gated condominium development in Norwood with her mother, half-brother and her mother's boyfriend. When I first met Kiara she had been living there for about two and a half years. The family moved to this predominantly white town from Roxbury, where they had been living since Kiara was born. Given the length of Kiara's tenure in Norwood, it seemed logical that she would now locate her neighborhood in this town. This was not the case. Interviewing Kiara on the first day of the program, she named "Roxbury" as her neighborhood. When I queried how many other places she had lived, Kiara replied: "I live in Norwood, that's it." Her use of the present tense implied that she was *currently* living in Norwood, which was confusing; I, like the staff of The Food Project, had assumed that she lived in Roxbury. Consequently, Kiara explained that despite owning a condo in Norwood, "Roxbury's my home." This was surprising given that she reported only staying there every second weekend during the school year. Norwood was her primary place of residence. When I probed Kiara about whether she considered Norwood "a second neighborhood" her response, "To sleep, but that's it", illustrated her lack of connection to this locale. During the Summer Youth Program Kiara always took the commuter rail to and from Lincoln with the other urban youth. Since her mother worked in the city, she usually dropped her at the train station on her way to work and then picked her up in the

evening at her grandmother's house in Roxbury. Occasionally Kiara slept over at her grandmother's and then took the subway to the train station in the morning.

Kiara's mother, an assistant teacher in the Boston Public School system and was also finishing a degree in psychology part time, moved her children to Norwood to access better schools and a safer environment. Her mother felt more connected to Roxbury than she did to their new neighborhood. After I finished interviewing Kiara, I asked her mother about how she felt about moving away from Roxbury. She responded: "I miss it like you have no idea." Kiara interjected: "She [my mother] is so popular... everywhere she goes everyone knows her. People around here don't know who we are." Their Norwood gated community did not provide them with the spatially clustered support networks that her mom grew up with. Her mother's struggle with leaving her Roxbury base influenced Kiara's sense of both Norwood and Roxbury.

While Kiara did not talk about Norwood in explicitly racial terms, it was clear that she was aware of its racial composition. In fact, Kiara's detachment and negative sense of Norwood was partly rooted in her perception that its residents were biased against her and her family because of their race. For example, on the third day of work at The Food Project, Kiara described some of the implicit and explicit forms of racial discrimination she had encountered living in this town. She felt there were subtle forms of racism, such as the reaction of Norwood residents to her mom's new Volvo: There were funny looks: "not like they thought we stole the car but sort of surprised... you aren't supposed to have that car [if you are black]."

The racial tensions that Kiara perceived at her Norwood school came out most frequently in her descriptions of her school environment, which she felt was inherently biased against students of color. She felt that some of the teachers picked on her "because I am black." Working out in the fields one afternoon she related a story about how she got "called out" for wearing a tank top on a really hot day. According to Kiara a teacher approached her in the hallway and told her that she had to cover her shoulders. Kiara said she argued with him that other girls were wearing skirts that were "so short that you could see up them when they sat down" and what she

was wearing was mild in comparison. The teacher sent her to see the principal, who informed her that her shirt was inappropriate as someone could simply take a pen and pull down the straps. When Kiara got to this part in her story she was visibly upset. She stood up from her weeding, put her hands on her hips and said: “You think I’m so low that I am going to let someone do that-I don’t let anyone even get that close to me.” I asked if she thought that this incident was race related, she said replied that “of course” it was and that some of the teachers, including this one, picked on her because she is black.

Later that day Kiara shared another story about a series of fights at her Norwood school that illustrated her belief that blacks were treated unequally at this institution. The first fight she described involved a white girl and a black girl. After the fight, both girls were suspended, as there is a zero tolerance policy for violence at the school. A couple of weeks later Kiara got into a fight with a black girl at her school and the security guard called the police, who arrived with a paddy wagon; the girls were taken to the station and subsequently had to appear in court. Kiara reported her mother’s outrage about the school’s different response to each incident. Specifically, that when a white girl was involved, the school followed their standard protocol, but that when it was two black girls, they treated them like “real criminals”. Kiara noted that she was still on probation at school, but that her mom was trying to fight the decision. Over the course of the summer, Kiara recounted other incidents of teacher discrimination, including being sent to the principal’s office for what she claimed were essentially the teacher’s racial biases.

In addition to feeling picked on at her school, Kiara felt that the staff and students underestimated the intellects of students of color: “We [the black kids] could tell that the teachers had certain ideas about us and so we tested their knowledge on certain things...they were surprised about our knowledge. A lot of white kids were also surprised. They were like ‘how do you know that?’” Given her perceptions of the racial dynamics in her town and school, it was not surprising that Kiara did not feel emotionally connected to Norwood.

Although Kiara expressed a negative sense of Norwood, particularly in terms of

interracial relationships, she recognized the high quality of its built form. Comparing the houses in Norwood to Roxbury she noted the greater green space and higher levels of maintenance:

The houses [in Norwood] are more pushed back. They're not as close to the street. There's a lot of like grass, sort of. Most of them are like fixed up. Like, you don't see a lot of run-down houses.

Despite her appreciation of the built form in her Norwood gated community³, the tensions between Kiara's identity as a black, socially conscious youth who enjoyed spontaneous social interactions with neighbors and her white, quiet gated community resulted in a negatively valenced sense of this place.

Roxbury

Not only did Kiara consider Roxbury her neighborhood, she sensed no similarities between it and Norwood: "I don't think there's no similarities. What one had, the other lacked. Her positive perception of Roxbury's social environment and its fit with her racial and ethnic identity contributed to her positively valenced sense of this place. The dearth of social connectedness and other residents of color dominated her image of Norwood.

The primary reason for Kiara's attachment to Roxbury was its social cohesion. This was due, at least in part, to the abundance of kinship networks that she had in this neighborhood. Much of Kiara's family resided there; her grandmother, great grandmother, aunt and uncle shared a triple-decker, which was the address she listed on her Food Project application. Another aunt lived in a house nearby. Her mother had grown up in the neighborhood and was still well known by current residents. Her great grandmother patrolled the main street: "My great grandmother, she is almost 90 and she still walks down Blue Hill Avenue everyday and everyone knows her. She walks every single day." This connectedness contrasted sharply to her sense of the social realm in Norwood where: "people don't know who you are."

³Interestingly, Kiara never mentioned the fact that there was a gated entryway to her development.

The social environment of Roxbury was such a salient feature of her image of that place that she used it to define the neighborhood boundaries. Initially she described its limits as “All of Roxbury because um, I don’t just interact with my street.” She later refined it, “Grove Hall is one end and by Dudley is the other end. Like that’s where there are lots of people I know.” Grove Hall seemed to be a particularly significant bounding point as that was where her aunt lived. She spent a lot of time there and knew the residents: “Me and my brother know people on her street just from her [my aunt’s] cookouts. . . I know people over there on her street. Just through us going there for cookouts.”

The primacy of the social realm in shaping her sense of Roxbury was further illustrated when she outlined how she would describe the neighborhood to someone who had never been there. Her imagery was purely social. There was no mention of the physical form:

It’s busy. You see a lot of people that you know, a lot of people you don’t know, a lot of people that will say hi and you get to know them, too. Like, a family member or something like that because they know one of their family members. It’s tight. It’s like sort of like, together if you talk to another person you talk to a person that’s from Roxbury and you have lived there your whole life then there has to be somebody that they know that you know and then you interact in that way and then the next time you may see them may be different. You may hang out with them and they become your friend. . .

Similarly, the ubiquitous social interaction in Roxbury made it a desirable place to ‘live’:

If they [neighbors] see you outside or something or you see them outside, they are going to say hello. They exchange conversations, like with your mom or oh, tell Uncle so and so, hi. Tell your mom I said hi. Come by, stop by or something like that. Or I’m having a cookout or a birthday party on Saturday. I want ya’ll to come over, you know? And bring your brother, you know?

Kiara readily shared her socially cohesive image of Roxbury with her Food Project peers. She regaled them with stories about the abundance of informal social activities.

For example, after weekends in Roxbury, Kiara told the crew about the cookouts and parties she attended. Comments such as " I had mad fun outside [this weekend], I had a barbeque outside" and descriptions of a "big cookout" where people stayed for the entire afternoon and into the evening were illustrative of her sense of the active social environment. These narratives influenced the other youth's image of Roxbury; Emmanuelle, Julie, Steve and Pete all spoke about the abundance of cookouts in Roxbury after completing the program. None of them observed this directly; Kiara transmitted this image to them.

Kiara was unable to identify any danger zones in Roxbury. Her mother articulated a different perception, she told me that she moved from Roxbury to Norwood because she "thought that it would be safer for my kids. I thought it would be a better school." Kiara, on the other hand, felt that safety in Roxbury was a matter of showing the right attitude:

It's like—the way I see it is that you can't walk the streets being scared at night. You have to like, always have courage when you're walking at night like, people could look at you and tell if you are a scaredy-cat or that you don't belong here. And that's when people are going to like, retaliate or even want to fight you... Because you can't—you can't really live in the city and be scared of things. Like whatever it doesn't make any sense. Why live there if you're going to be scared.

This sense of security may be rooted in reality, however, it likely reflected other factors, such as Kiara's tendency to idealize this neighborhood. An alternative explanation is that she did not spend enough time in the neighborhood to be aware of its unsafe areas, or even the geographic limits set by her elders, which precluded contact with dangerous areas. Regardless of the explanation, the fact that she articulated such a strong sense of safety in Roxbury illustrated her feelings of belonging to this place.

Kiara's image of the physical environs of Roxbury prior to the program was ambivalent. She described nature in derogatory terms, "bad air" and "dead grass." Her image of the built form was mixed. On one hand, she saw beauty in some of the old homes: "In Roxbury, like, we have some nice houses... you have your bigger house

and green grass and stuff . . .” On the other hand, she was acutely aware that some of the buildings were in a state of disrepair:

The buildings, they’re like apartment buildings but also there’s like sort of a lot of houses too and a lot of triple deckers and like, some buildings are old, not the best buildings to live in and they look crappy. . . Like they need work done. . . Like the windows. Just the outside part.

Kiara proceeded to link the physical disrepair of the buildings to the socioeconomic status of their inhabitants:

I’m not saying that the person who lives in it [the crappy building] is messed up but the outside of it tells a lot about that part of the neighborhood. . . You can tell [the lower income houses] just by their appearance.

The poor physical quality of the physical realm was a product of what Kiara most disliked about Roxbury: “Poverty.” There was a causal relationship between this lack of financial resources and blight:

There’s a lot of trash and stuff. It could be avoided and there’s no need for it. . . I’m not saying that there’s not going to be any, but some places is just like, ridiculous. Like, on the corner of streets is like you see like a pool of water and its all kinds of stuff is floating in it. It’s like, ugh, that’s nasty.

Unlike her non-urban peers, Kiara did not link the physical decay that she observed in Roxbury to urban pathologies. It was partially due to the residents’ lack of financial resources, but the main culprit was the ‘system’, which discriminated against poor, urban people of color:

Because the government don’t care. Like, they care but it’s like a color. Like, they like, they’d rather sweep downtown Boston compared to like, the city, like, the Roxbury, Dorchester, like the poor, diverse communities are close to downtown and stuff.

This statement revealed an important element of Kiara’s identification with Roxbury. Both she and this place faced prejudice based on their color and the fact they are urban. This common struggle contributed to her sense of fit with Roxbury and her feeling of being an outsider in Lincoln.

Lincoln

Prior to the summer, Kiara had never been to Lincoln. She generated this sense of her environment using her place repertoire, which included intimate experience in one non-urban environment, Norwood. Kiara's sense was that Lincoln was a lot like Norwood: socially isolated, white, and well maintained. When comparing Lincoln to Norwood, Kiara focused on similarities, whereas her comparisons to Roxbury were couched in terms of opposites. Although Kiara imaged Lincoln as an aesthetically pleasing environment, there was nothing about her discussion of this place that indicated that she felt attached to this landscape.

Although Kiara had not been to Lincoln prior to the program, she had a clear image of an insular community: "A lot of people don't know—like, a lot of people around here are like, so tight and into their community. They don't know nothing else beside Lincoln." This inward looking community was, in Kiara's mind, comprised of traditional families, mothers who stayed at home and fathers who commuted to work each day. This contrasted with her image of the family unit in Roxbury: "You don't have a lot of people that like, really stay home. A lot of people are like, working. Most of them one parent, like." Kiara's image of the family in Lincoln was aligned with her belief that their social lives took place inside the home; the opposite of Roxbury where there was constant action out on the street and on the front porches.

Kiara brought a racialized image of Lincoln to The Food Project: "White. There's nothing else." There were times that she used the terms white and suburban interchangeably, illustrating her sense that people of color were not a part of non-urban environments. For example, at the beginning of the summer, Kiara commented that she had particularly enjoyed a workshop as it was interesting to get to know more about "*white* people... they are so different... families out *here* [in Lincoln] are all the like Brady bunch—happy like, with a mom, dad and kids." This contrasted with her image of the black urban family: "Even if a family in Roxbury has two parents... with black families it's different. When they are together like that it's like the mom and dad aren't married." This statement illustrated her assumption that

Lincoln was populated by white, nuclear families. These families that were unlike her own, where she did not see her father who lived in Jamaica while her mother lived with her boyfriend,⁴ the father of her brother.

Kiara held stereotypes about the youth who resided in Lincoln (and non-urban environments in general). Some of these beliefs, such as whites have no rhythm or sense of humor and say ‘like’ all the time, were quite benign⁵. She also held less flattering stereotypes, such as the belief that many suburban youth were ‘druggies’. Over lunch one day at the homeless shelter she told me that “suburban” kids tend to be way more into drugs and stuff than “urban” kids. Kiara noted that at her school they smoke pot in the bathroom. She added that she heard that at some suburban schools (which she did not identify) the girls have long nails and use them to sniff cocaine in class and the guys put it in their books and sniff it during class.

Despite entering the program with some negative stereotypes about the social realm of Lincoln, Kiara had an idealized image of the built and natural forms of this town. For her “clean air” and an abundance of “green” characterized ‘nature’. In fact, her description of the landscape reflected media images of wealthy suburbs:

The scenery’s more like, movie type. It reminds me of like, the movies. Like, suburb area, the nice, green, perfect lawn that’s clipped like, so nicely. And like, the houses are like, big and pretty and stuff.

Her appreciation of the physical form was evident when I asked her where she would move if she won the lottery. Kiara stated that she would stay in Roxbury but described a Lincolnesque residential situation in the midst of the city:

I think I’d stay in Roxbury. I’d probably—I’d get a lot or something like a empty space lot or like a house that’s like far back, not as much on like the main road. Not off of a main road but pushed back like—on a hill or something like that and like build up a house there and stuff.

⁴When I interviewed Kiara after the program ended, her mother’s boyfriend had moved out of the house. Kiara declined to talk about it and I did not press her on it.

⁵As several readers pointed out, Kiara’s belief that using the term ‘like’ was a distinctly white linguistic trait was ironic given the regularity with which she used this term to punctuate her own statements.

While this might seem like an odd choice, given her positive image of the street life in Roxbury, it reflected her ambivalence about having the type of house that she imagined the rich and famous inhabiting versus her attraction to the high quality social life that she believed characterized Roxbury. Despite her appreciation of large well tended homes, such as the ones she imagined were in Lincoln, the urban environment was where she felt most at home due to its fit with her racial identity, the presence of kinship networks and a vibrant social environment. If anything, Kiara's experiences at The Food Project served to strengthen her feeling of being 'of' the city.

4.1.2 Kiara's Sense of Places: Post Program

Roxbury and the Urban Realm

Kiara's Food Project experiences strengthened her dichotomous, urban versus suburban, classification system of places. This was particularly true in terms of her sense of the social realms of these environments. Her commitment and connection to Roxbury and her disconnection from Norwood and Lincoln were strengthened by her program experiences. Her new knowledge about the historical forces that shaped Roxbury and her work on the land had a distinctly positive impact on her image of its physical environs, particularly the quality of the built form and the presence of urban green spaces. Although some of Kiara's negative stereotypes about the residents of non-urban environments were diminished as a result of her relationships with Food Project peers, she retained her strong sense of being an outsider to these environments.

Participation in The Food Project refined Kiara's sense of what it meant to be urban. It was still racial in that she imaged the city as a place of color, but she articulated a more distinct urban attitude. For example, Kiara believed that although the number of black people in Norwood was increasing, they were mostly people who were "more Norwood, *suburban* mentality" and so "I don't really know how to relate to [them]." Kiara distinguished between black folks from Boston who were 'truly urban' and those that were not: "There are some [black] people from Boston, but lots

of [black] people from Hyde Park, Roslindale, which I am not even familiar with. Like I would not even consider Hyde Park part of Boston, cause it is still kind of suburbs.” She also did not include downtown Boston as part of the city. These statements indicate that she saw city membership as dependent on race and neighborhood type. That is, being from Boston meant you lived in a dense residential neighborhood and you were a person of color: “Like if you are from Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan then I can relate to you-we have something in common.” Her three friends in Norwood were “all from Boston and we have like reason to go back and forth and we’re still like, urban.” Kiara’s use of the term “urban” emerged during her time at The Food Project, reflecting the program’s impact on her place classification system. Her use of the term ‘urban’ to refer to people who lived in the city reflected an appropriation of the Food Project staff’s language.

Kiara’s Food Project experiences heightened her sense of the excitement of Roxbury. This came across in her descriptions of Roxbury’s soundscape, something she did not seem aware of prior to the summer. In fact, during her final interview Kiara explicitly stated that what she liked *best* about Roxbury was “the noise”, particularly the sound of “sirens.” These noises were connected to the vibrancy of the neighborhood:

I don’t know why I like the noise, I just do...I like the culture. I just like it. Everything is like action, everything is so welcoming...And like everywhere you go there is somebody to talk to.

Her description of this vibrant soundscape contrasted with her discussions of Norwood and Lincoln. Both of these places were “Quiet.” In fact, that was “the first thing that comes to mind” when she imagined Norwood. In the case of Lincoln she added that the lack of sound was one of the reasons that “I don’t want to be there.” Her extended periods working on the farms in Lincoln and Roxbury heightened Kiara’s awareness of their soundscapes. She connected the acoustics of the city to her perception of a vibrant social realm and the “quiet” of the suburbs to its lack of action.

Learning about the history of The Dudley Street neighborhood in Roxbury and working on the urban land changed Kiara's sense of Roxbury's physical realm. While we were working in Roxbury the crew watched a video about the history of the neighborhood. Throughout the video, Kiara was engaged, nodding her head in agreement with the activists who spoke about the hardships, such as the presence of illegal trash transfer stations, arson and the abandonment that this neighborhood had faced. A young black youth spoke about the fact that positive events in Roxbury, such as the production of murals by local kids, never made the paper but that the neighborhood's violence was consistently in the news. In response to this statement, Kiara leaned over to Emmanuelle and whispered, "that is totally true." After the video as we walked back to the growing lot, Kiara commented that it was "impossible to imagine this neighborhood like that [full of illegal trash transfer stations and vacant lots]. . . It is so nice here..." After the program she spoke of the beauty of the houses in Roxbury: "The buildings are beautiful. They are big. . . like nice size houses." This was a change from her prior description of the built form, which included an emphasis on the disrepair and neglect of the built environment. Her image of nature included "gardens and trees." There was no mention of the "bad air" and "dead grass" that she described prior to her work with The Food Project.

After finishing the program, Kiara's desire to live in Roxbury was stronger than ever. In fact, when I asked her where she would move if she won the lottery her answer intimated that she still lived in Roxbury and that doing otherwise would be somehow be unacceptable:

Roxbury. I wouldn't move. . . who am I fooling? I am not fooling anyone but myself if I am moving out of *my* neighborhood. . . like that is my neighborhood, like you know? So me moving cause I won a million dollars into some rich, fancy neighborhood I am not showing really where I came from.

This was a striking statement from a youth who actually lived in the suburbs, particularly given that she made this comment while sitting at the kitchen table of her home in Norwood.

Kiara's belief that she 'belonged' to the city was so strong that the thought of not living there (or admitting to it) threatened her identity as an urbanite. This reflected two main factors. The first was her urban identity, which her Food Project experiences enhanced. Her contact and comparison of herself with her non-urban peers heightened her feeling that she was different from them. This came through in her comparisons of how they dressed and the way that they used language. Secondly she latched on to the dichotomous 'urban' versus 'suburban' categorization system used by the program. Her experiences riding the train with the former solidified her sense that she was a part of this group. Her strong feelings about belonging in Roxbury also reflected her mother's ambivalence about moving away from the neighborhood that she grew up in. In a conversation after the summer, Kiara's mother confided that once her children were grown up, she planned to move back to Roxbury: "I miss it like you have no idea... I'm going to be going back. Like I say to my brother, will you move so I can move back in [to his room at their mother's house... I miss it, oh my goodness, do I ever...]" These values were being transmitted to and internalized by Kiara and her experiences with the Summer Program served to further reinforce the sentiment that Roxbury was a good environment that fit with her identity.

Norwood

Kiara's negative sense of the social environment of Norwood remained after finishing The Food Project's Summer Program. This negative sense of the social realm of Norwood was rooted in Kiara's belief that the people who lived there were racist: "[The people are] phony. Like there are a lot of cheap smiles. Like especially to me, cause like I'm colored." She characterized the social environment of Norwood and Roxbury as opposites: Here [in Norwood], no one says hi to you. There [in Roxbury], a lot of people are always saying hi to you... people you don't even know." Kiara had few friends in Norwood, whereas in Roxbury strangers were potential friends. She described walking home from the grocery store with her grandmother and encountering some youth she did not know: "They were like 'Do you live here?' I was like 'I am here for the summer, sort of.' And they were like 'we live at such

and such on the 4th floor if you ever want to come outside and play... just knock on the door.” She felt that this sort of spontaneous interaction would never happen in Norwood and lamented its absence.

Kiara developed a close relationship with Julie, a white ‘suburban’ youth. At the end of the summer she reflected on their friendship: “it’s really cool how people from different backgrounds can become so close.” One of the assets that Kiara identified that she developed due to this friendship was the ability to interact more productively with her white school peers: “Last year in school I was very distant. I didn’t want to deal with people. People like Julie she really made me see okay, they are not bad at all. You know I can have contact with them, hang out with them. Now I am more comfortable.” Yet this statement was coupled with a series of comments about the rampant racism at her school. Kiara felt this exclusion at her school where the other students were “always making these jokes... it’s like this sneaky kind of racism play, something that really bugs you.” When I asked for a specific example, she related an incident that occurred the previous week, although she struggled to articulate the details:

Like they were making fun of African... or something... they were saying colored. Oh, It was a Latin word and they were saying it like they would say like ‘maboo’ or something like that. And people think that he [a boy in the class] is joking, but like me, I am not taking it the wrong way. Are you kidding me? Like crazy like insane or something? Like smart mouth... I said would you please not talk like that around me, cause I really don’t appreciate it. Me personally, don’t say that around me... You just know what they are thinking. You just have this vibe, like you know. They know its true. They are not blind to it.

Kiara finished by saying that although a lot of the comments were supposedly made in jest, they reflected the true norms and values of her suburban neighbors: “It’s serious because like what I know how people from the suburbs act.” Her friendship with Julie was not enough to overcome her strong sense of being an outsider who faced discrimination at her school and in the suburbs, places she imaged as white. Furthermore, while Julie was the white youth from the Summer Program who Mocha felt most connected with, after the program ended she did not include her on her list

of Food Project youth she would invite to a party, or name her as someone who she wished she were still in contact with.

Kiara's image of Lincoln at the end of the summer was the lack of social cohesion: "I'm gonna say people knowing their neighbors [in Lincoln and Roxbury] would be similar. I think that everybody knows people around their neighbors. I think its like out in the suburbs people know their neighbors, but in Boston you know your neighbors and people out in your *neighborhood*." This sense came, at least in part, from her conversations with Steve (who lived in Lincoln) and Julie (who lived in Sudbury, which is adjacent to Lincoln. These youth spoke to Kiara about the fact that nothing went on in their towns, often describing these environments as 'boring'. One day out in the fields Kiara listened as Julie and Steve discussed the dearth of social activities in their towns. Julie mentioned a party that she attended in Lincoln that had not been very fun. Steve responded that he wasn't "surprised that it wasn't very good given it was in Lincoln." Julie agreed and noted "that nothing much ever happens" in Lincoln or in Sudbury.

Despite the fact that Kiara got along well with her Lincoln peers during the program, she was explicit about her belief that the residents of this town were biased against youth of color. Near the end of the summer while working out in the fields, she described a movie that she had watched about apartheid. She stated that while apartheid was "messed up...there's segregation here too. Like in Lincoln, they be looking at you different when you are walking back [from the farm to the train station]." Whether or not this reflected reality is debatable but her statement illustrated that her positive work experiences, which were confined to the program's event places, were not enough to override her preconceived notions about suburbanites' racial attitudes, in Lincoln or in Norwood.

4.1.3 Conclusions

Ultimately, Kiara finished the Summer Program with an increased attachment to the city. She characterized it as a socially cohesive place, populated by people of color, with a reclaimed and revitalized physical realm. Digging in the earth and growing food

in 'her' neighborhood had a positive effect on her image and awareness of nature. Her new knowledge of the socio-political forces that created Roxbury's current landscape further increased her connection to this environment. She saw the history of this neighborhood through the lens of racial discrimination, which resonated with her own struggles and identity. The decay that she observed was a product of white flight, which was now all about "money and race," not the financial resources of the residents. Renewal dominated her image of the physical realm, which she understood as a product of the residents' successful struggle against the city bureaucrats and racism. The gardens were another source of pride: "I am so happy and surprised about how many people are in the neighborhood are really interested [in gardening]." Kiara ended the program with a positive sense of the social, natural and physical realms of Roxbury. That being said, she expressed disdain for fieldwork throughout the summer and was clear that she was hoping to secure a Food Project internship that did not require engaging in actual farming.

Kiara had some of her first positive interracial experiences at The Food Project. Through the program she made a white female friend, Julie, and participated in communal white and black tasks, and workshops where she felt she could openly express her feelings about race and discrimination. However these experiences did not change her negative sense of cross race relations in Norwood, particularly in her school environment. She finished the program with an even stronger urban and racial identity than she started with, which heightened the tension between her sense of self and Norwood's "suburban" environment. The result was a negatively valenced sense of this place.

In terms of creating a strong sense of stewardship and pride in the *urban* landscape, Kiara was the poster child for The Food Project. For better or for worse, this sense of caring and ownership did not extend to the non-urban realm. Her sense of otherness that stemmed from her racial identity kept her from developing an attachment to Lincoln or Norwood.

4.2 Nicole: a Multi-Ethnic White Girl

The first day of work at The Food Project, I jotted down my description of Nicole as a “smiley white girl.” While accurate, this initial impression did not capture either the complex nature of this fifteen-year-old’s racial identity, which played a major role in shaping her sense of places or her assets, including a highly devoted father with whom she lived with and an unusual talent for singing.

Nicole had lived in Brookline since she was two years old. This town, bounded on three sides by the city of Boston, is neither distinctly urban nor non-urban. Its hybrid nature is derived from the coexistence of bustling commercial districts, subway lines, and high-density residential areas with large estates, substantial parkland and a working farm. The town is predominantly white, relatively wealthy,⁶ and known for its support of social programs, including affordable housing and school integration efforts⁷.

From the age of two until thirteen Nicole, her father, and her older sister shared a two-bedroom apartment in Egmont, one of Brookline’s public housing projects. One year before I met her, the family bought an ‘affordable’ unit in St. Paul’s Crossing, a newly constructed luxury condominium complex. This development was located approximately one mile down the road from her former apartment. The move from public housing, where the residents were mostly “Black”, to “White” St. Paul’s meant a change in the socioeconomic status and racial composition of Nicole’s residential environment. She went from living in a community where she shared her neighbors’ social class, but was part of the racial minority to one where she was relatively poor but a part of the racial majority. These differences emerged repeatedly in Nicole’s comparisons of these locales, highlighting the role that race and social class played in her sense of places.

Nicole was a self described “daddy’s girl.” Her father and mother separated when

⁶The median income of the town is approximately 67 000 dollars, about 16 000 dollars more than the median income in the state of Massachusetts (US Census, 2000)

⁷Brookline was one of the towns that founded METCO, a school-bussing program, over forty years ago. Under this program, selected youth of color from the city of Boston are bussed to surrounding towns for school. The receiving towns underwrite the cost of this program. There is state funding that is supposed to support much of this, but the funding has always been inadequate.

she was four, and she had been living with her father and sister ever since. Her father worked as an assistant teacher at Brookline's public high school and was also a part time student, working toward a bachelor's degree in school counseling. Nicole was very open about her closeness with her father. She listed off his achievements to our entire crew during the first week of work: "My father has two children and has been a single parent since I was in Kindergarten. He is an uncertified teacher and so he is treated unfairly and not paid very well. . . despite all of these challenges he is now back at college for a psychology degree." Nicole spoke of her relationship with her dad so often and freely that it became a bit of a joke amongst her peers, who teased her about her "daddy." For example, near the end of the summer while weeding, Steve imitated Nicole, squealing: "I love my Daddy. . . My daddy got me this manicure." All the youth laughed, except Nicole who looked like she was fighting back tears.

Nicole entered the program with a strong awareness of people of color. In fact, despite having two white parents, she self-identified as multi-ethnic: "skin color does not necessarily describe your ethnicity. . . you can't know what is on the inside." This identity was rooted in her experiences residing in an environment where she was part of the racial minority.

Unlike most of the white youth in the program, Nicole started the summer with a rich repertoire of interracial experiences, ranging from her twelve-year residence in public housing to being part of the minority "black group" at her school. This is not to suggest that Nicole was oblivious to the challenges involved with racial integration. As we walked back to the train station from the farm after our first day of work, Nicole related how the black clique at her school recently shunned her: "They started playing the race card and totally cut me out of the group." I heard this story four other times over the summer, indicating her consciousness and fear of social exclusion based on her race. One of the Black girls, Beth, who had abandoned Nicole the previous school year, was a Food Project participant on a different crew. Over the course of the summer I watched Nicole work to regain her friendship. This entailed regularly asking to sit with her on the train and enduring teasing about her "daddy."

Given Nicole's identification as multi-ethnic and her recent exclusion from her black peer group, it was not surprising that she worked hard to be accepted by the youth of color at The Food Project. For example, during one of the first workshops, she shared that she had just moved out of a "project" where "the police were always driving up and down." Although she was not explicit about the racial character of her former residence, her comments certainly signaled to the group that she was not, as they might have assumed, a wealthy white person. Nicole also used fashion to signal her racial identity, taking cues from Kiara and Emmanuelle, the two black girls on our crew. She copied their example of knotting the bottom of their Food Project T-shirts, making them fit more snugly. By the middle of the summer she had taken on the girls' habit of wearing jogging pants over their jeans while working in the fields, no matter how hot or humid the day. This layering ensured that they looked clean and stylish when they arrived back in the city. For much of the summer Nicole wore her long, light brown hair braided in cornrows, a style sported by some of the Black and Hispanic girls in the program. This new hairstyle represented a success for Nicole in terms of reintegrating with her former Black school friends as she informed me that Beth's sister put in the braids when she was over at their home, the previous weekend.

The drawing Nicole produced during a mid-summer workshop on identity indicated that her aspirations as a singer and commitment to her Unitarian church were central forces in her life. Her picture included a cross and the statement: "When singing, I am sharing what God gave me." Upon presenting her chart to our crew Nicole explained that her ability to sing was a gift from God that she was supposed to share with others. Her commitment to her voice and church were evidenced by the time that she devoted to each of them. She had private voice lessons on Saturday mornings and daily practice sessions. Her church related activities included attending Sunday morning services and youth group events, and bi-weekly volunteering at a local soup kitchen. Nicole's voice served as a bridge to the urban youth. On the train ride, where most of the white youth sat together, Nicole usually sat with Zania and Nicole, both urban youth of color who shared her love of singing. The girls would

belt out Mariah Carey songs, often attracting the attention of the other youth who would then make requests.

Nicole's church provided support for her socially progressive value system. For example, one afternoon out in the fields our crew got into a heated discussion about homosexuality. Nicole did not hesitate to state her opinion that both she and her church supported gay rights, including marriage. Her compassionate nature was evidenced during our first morning at the homeless shelter. Looking around at the clients, Julie stated that she was afraid of them. Nicole quickly countered that "I feel proud of them... it takes courage to take the initiative and go to the shelter... they are taking responsibility [for themselves]." Nicole's open-mindedness shaped her Food Project experiences. This was particularly evident in the way that her sense of Roxbury shifted over the summer. As she learned about this neighborhood her image went from that of a poor, dangerous place to an image of a population victimized by systematic discrimination.

Nicole's prior experiences with people of color and the value that she placed on diversity and social justice all influenced the way that she sensed places. Environments that she perceived as diverse, open and socially cohesive were 'good' and those that were not were less desirable. This view was reinforced by her experiences at The Food Project, where there was both an explicit and implicit message that diversity and community were place assets.

4.2.1 Nicole's Sense of Places: Pre-Program

Brookline/Neighborhood

Nicole's case underscores the important role that place repertoires play in the development of new place relationships. The social and physical environment of Egmont, the public housing development where she had lived for twelve years, provided the frame through which she assessed and ultimately sensed places. Her tendency to use a comparative framework to describe places helped to elucidate the place features Nicole valued and those she found unappealing. For example, her sense of the qual-

ity of the built form of St. Paul's was heightened due to its *relative* newness and maintenance when compared to Egmont.

Nicole's initial response to my request that she identify the boundaries of her neighborhood was that it consisted of the entire town of Brookline. But as our interview progressed, she refined her definition to a linear area, a one mile long stretch of St. Paul Street, starting at the Egmont projects and ending at St. Paul's Crossing. The inclusion of Egmont was based on the fact that she still spent a great deal of time there, mostly hanging out with old friends. Later in the interview she redefined the boundaries, stating that when the family moved out of "the projects", they settled in a distinctly "new neighborhood" and Egmont was her "old neighborhood." This distinction emerged as she discussed the socioeconomic characteristics, specifically the different patterns of home ownership, in the two developments: "Well, now my dad owns the home instead of renting it so, it's just a new, different style of neighborhood." Nicole was unequivocal in her stance that ownership was desirable: "I prefer living in the new condo because it is really ours. . . before we were just putting money into nothing [rent] .⁸

Along with feeling good about owning her unit in St. Paul's Crossing, Nicole expressed a preference for its built form over that of Egmont. Her description emphasized the relative size, aesthetics and upkeep of their new abode:

Like I like how my house is bigger. Because BEFORE like it wasn't NICE inside the apartment that much. It was like, dark, and I don't like it. Like I didn't know how bad it WAS, compared to this [her new home]. It's like whoa. And the rooms - like now my room's bigger. It's nicer. . . the building is really big and it's really pretty because it was just made.

The decidedly positive tenor of her description of St. Paul's Crossing shifted when I asked about her new neighbors. Rather than speaking about the people, she described the differences in the built form of her unit and those owned by market rate residents.

⁸This prioritization of home ownership reflected the transmission of place values to Nicole from her father. How much of a youth's sense of place reflects parental views is likely influenced by a variety of factors, including the quality of their relationship. In Nicole's case, her father was a strong force in determining her social, and place related attitudes.

They won't put down wood floors for US, because we were the LOWER income. So, even though it - in THIS setting, we still face like prejudices HERE... Everybody else [got wood floors] except for the lower income. And they put us all in a corner... they sort of gyped us... Like all they had to do was spend a little extra time making ours as big as everybody elses. And they didn't do it, and then everybody else got wood floors, and then we got carpet. And then everybody else got like granite, and we got TILE. And that's OK, but, it's like "Why? Why would you do that?" And everybody else got stainless steel, and then WE get like bright white. And then it's like - and they get WOOD cabinets, and we get plaster cabinets, so it was really not the nicest thing they could do.

These differences in the quality of the units contributed to Nicole's sense that she was an outsider in her new neighborhood. She linked the exclusivity of the other residents to the fact that one of the gates to the development, that was adjacent to a Walgreen's drugstore that she liked to frequent, was always locked. Along with making it less convenient for her to go to and from the store, Nicole believed that it was closed in order to prevent outsiders from accessing the development: "They always keep it closed because they don't want anybody coming in from Walgreen's."

Nicole's feeling of social isolation in her new residential environment were particularly acute given the relatively high social cohesion she sensed in Egmont, which she appeared to link to social class:

There's a lot of rich people in Brookline. You have to be rich to live there. But I'm not one of the rich people. So I'm able to relate to people that live in the projects... I've known all those people [in Egmont] like my whole life so it's like I have family back there -not my real family-But it feels like they are my family.

Nicole's comments indicate that she embraced *economic homophily*. That is, she felt that it was easier to forge close friendships with people who shared her social class. This explained the social bonding that she experienced in Egmont and her family's lack of friendships with the market rate residents at St. Paul's. The latter was underscored by her response to my query about whether they were friends with the other residents: "No, not really because they're mostly doctors." She believed that wealthy individuals were unable to relate to those who were struggling economically:

“they [her neighbors] don’t see, like that, it’s not all about, like being, like rich and stuff...” She expressed this belief again during a Food Project workshop on class: “People who are considered educated, may not actually be educated. Those people should try living as a lower class person for one day.” In fact, her sense that shared class was a powerful unifying social force played a central role in the way that she experienced Roxbury over the course of The Food Project program.

Nicole placed a high value on diversity, particularly *racial* diversity. This was reflected in her discussions of places, which tended to have a racialized element to them. For example, describing Egmont, Nicole noted: “there were tons of different people, African-American, white, Spanish, Chinese—everybody.” This was in contrast to St. Paul’s Crossing:

It’s less diverse than my other neighborhood that I lived in because like, um, it’s really expensive ... it’s mostly white in there... I dislike that it’s not as diverse as my other neighborhood.

Whiteness and high social class were very nearly synonymous for Nicole. This was particularly striking given that she was herself a lower middle class white girl, although as noted above, she self-identified as ‘multi-ethnic’ not white, which explained why she did not see herself as an exception to her conflation of whiteness and high social class. An example of the conflation of these two place characteristics came out one afternoon while working in the fields as Nicole described the other residents of her condo complex to Kiara, Julie and Pete. She stated that there were “mostly rich people living in it, so it is mostly white.” Although she was aware of the presence of non-white wealthy residents, such as the “Indian doctors” who lived next door, she consistently linked wealth and whiteness. The linking of these two characteristics remerged as a central feature of her image of Lincoln.

Despite her apparent discomfort living amongst rich white folks, Nicole’s sense of low-income areas, such as public housing projects, included an element of social dysfunction and danger. Egmont’s social coherence and cohesion was an exception to this general rule:

It wasn't really a Project because nothing bad was running around there. It's just a name that they put on it but I don't believe it really was [a Project] because I didn't come to any occurrences of people having knives and going through all that.

This was in contrast to the “*other* project in Brookline”, which she did not name but emphasized that it was “really bad” and she would not feel safe there. It is likely that the residents of the “other project” held similar negative images of the social environs of Egmont. The difference in perception of safety and security between the two was the result of Nicole's intimate knowledge of the geography of danger in the latter. She noted that while she felt she could travel freely through this neighborhood, she knew to avoid “the basketball courts at night [where people] get in fights or something.” Her experiences living there had taught her that if anything bad were to happen it would be after dark in this location.

The acoustic environment contributed to Nicole's sense of both her old and new neighborhood. When I asked Nicole to describe St. Paul's to someone who had never been there, her first response was “Quiet.” She contrasted this with Egmont, where she noted that drunken neighbors yelling, traffic noise and voices of friends were the sounds she recalled. On the one hand Nicole appreciated the quiet of her new home, but on the other hand she also missed the action associated with the sounds of Egmont:

I prefer the quiet when I'm like studying for a test and stuff. But, when I'm going to sleep, it's kind of - it's too quiet, 'cause I was used to like people playing outside, and just looking out my window to see who it was. Now, it's just like dead. Just - you can hear the wind.

Nicole's commentary on the soundscape of these two places highlighted ambivalence toward them. Her mixed emotions were evident in her reply to my question about where she would move if she were to win a lottery. Nicole was certain that she wanted to remain in Brookline, but would move to a location that was simultaneously urban and non-urban in character:

I would want to live in my own house, like not in a condo. I think I would like that. Like actually having a house, and having my front lawn, and

then having my OWN bedroom... but I would want to be around other houses so I could like, have neighbors to talk to.

This preference for residential density came up again in a conversation that I overheard her having with Pete about where he lived. As they weeded, Nicole commented: "I think small towns are kind of creepy." Nicole attributed this to the lack of people and being used to living in "the city" and therefore being used to having lots of people around.

Like her non-urban peers, Nicole's overall assessment of where she lived was linked to the quality of its schools. That is, she noted the excellence of Brookline's public school system as a positive environmental attribute:

Some of the things that I like about Brookline is the school system. I think it's really good there. Like eighth grade, like the education compared to other schools is like, um, a ninth, tenth grade education. I think that's really good.

The quality of the schools in Brookline explained part of Nicole's sense of loyalty to the town: "I like the schooling there... Like I wouldn't want to leave that".⁹

Lincoln

Despite having never visited Lincoln previously, Nicole started the program with a strong sense of its environment. She described Lincoln in similar terms to those she used for St. Paul's Crossing: an exclusive white enclave with beautiful buildings, wealthy residents and a lack of action. She explicitly drew analogies between the landscape of this town and the area around her grandmother's house in rural New Hampshire. This underscores the importance of the extent of one's place repertoire in shaping images and perceptions of places. An individual's repertoire provides the material for analogies and contrasts that ultimately shape their sense of places.

When asked to describe Lincoln, Nicole noted that although she had never been there, she would imagine it was "White." Nicole attributed this image to the town's

⁹While it is well known that school quality influences residential preferences amongst parents, the extent to which this is absorbed by youth and influences their sense of places has not, to the best of my knowledge, been considered in the literature.

name: “Like the name is sort of LINCOLN—sort of doesn’t sound—like it would be diverse. But I hope it is.”¹⁰ That Nicole “hoped” to find diversity underscored that this was a place characteristic that she valued. She followed this with a comment on the town’s uninteresting social environment. According to Nicole: “Lincoln is so boring. . . I could never live out there.”

Nicole’s association of wealth and whiteness in her condo complex came through again in her discussions of Lincoln. Not only did she imagine that the residents were all rich, they were also, in her mind, completely oblivious to their privilege: “They don’t even know that they’re lucky to have such a beautiful house.” This image of a white, exclusive society gave Nicole a sense of social outsidership in this environment, similar to her experiences as a low income white resident in St. Paul’s Crossing.

Although Nicole did not feel she belonged in Lincoln, her image of its natural and built forms was decidedly idyllic. When asked how she thought someone would know they were in this town, she referred to her experiences with the rural landscape in New Hampshire that she had seen on visits to her grandmother’s house. “It would be a lot like New Hampshire—valleys and barns and really nice houses with a lot of acres.” Her image of the natural realm was “green, lush and plentiful.” This juxtaposition of a beautiful physical environment with an unwelcoming social one was reminiscent of her sense of her own neighborhood. Nicole appreciated the high quality built form of these places but lacked a sense that she could really belong there.

Roxbury

Despite having never visited Roxbury, Nicole started the program with a negative perception of its physical environs. Her explanation stemmed from her belief that its residents lacked financial resources:

I think my neighborhood differs from Roxbury because it’s probably more expensive in Brookline than Roxbury and so there are nicer places, which is sort of wrong. I wish that they [in Roxbury] had like nicer buildings.

¹⁰The town of Lincoln, which was incorporated in 1754, is named for Lincoln England, a town with a beautiful cathedral.

Like, even their apartments, like the projects, making sure that there isn't trouble there and um, keeping it clean.

Nicole had a clear sense of the built realm of Roxbury but had trouble articulating an image of its natural one. This was reflected in her non-specific, short description that it was "okay looking." Interestingly, after participating in The Food Project program, the growing areas became the definitive feature of this place for Nicole.

As discussed above, Nicole associated poverty with social dysfunction. Her sense of the social scene in Roxbury followed this pattern:

Things might go down there that you don't want to be in... Like gangs and some things like that... I imagine it [Roxbury] to be a nice place, some parts not as nice and you just have to know where to go and be safe.

She contrasted this with Egmont where "I never really got to feel unsafe because I was so used to it." Her expressed sense of security in Egmont was due to her familiarity with the environment, not a lack of any hazards.

Another one of the dominant elements of Nicole's image of Roxbury was its racial composition. When I asked her to compare Roxbury residents to those of her own neighborhood she focused on the differing racial makeup of the two places:

I mean Brookline, I guess it's mostly White but it has a lot of Black people and Chinese and it's supposed to be diverse but in Roxbury, I think there's more Black people there.

This comment, which suggested that she imaged both places as having significant black populations was interesting in light of the fact that Brookline is approximately 80% white, 13% Asian and 3% of black. In contrast, Roxbury is nearly 65% Black or African American and only 5% white (City of Boston, 2002). Nicole's heightened sense of the diversity in Brookline was the result of her place repertoire. That is, her Egmont experiences provided her with an image of Brookline as a place of color.

It was difficult to determine whether Nicole was, at some level, using race as a proxy for social dysfunction. That Nicole imaged Roxbury as poor, black and dangerous was certainly notable, particularly in light of the fact that it was in direct

contrast with her sense of Lincoln as white, rich, boring and beautiful. The literature suggests that this may indeed be the case. The tendency to associate people of color in a neighborhood with disorder was documented in a study by Sampson and Raudenbusch (2004). This perception seemed to hold across racial categories. That is, black people were as likely to see more disorder in places with high concentrations of blacks as their white peers. This suggests that despite Nicole's identification with people of color, she was not immune to the tendency to use race as a signal of disorder.

Given that Nicole had never visited Lincoln nor Roxbury prior to the summer, it is interesting to compare her sense of these two places. Her image of the former was a boring town with abundant greenspace, beautiful homes, and white, wealthy residents whom she could not relate to. Roxbury was essentially the opposite: a socially dysfunctional neighborhood comprised of decaying buildings inhabited by poor, black folks whom she believed were more like herself than anyone who lived in Lincoln. These images suggested that Nicole bundled race, physical environment, and class together as a single place attribute.

4.2.2 Nicole's Sense of Places: Post Program

Brookline/Neighborhood

As when I first met her, Nicole continued to spend a great deal of time at Egmont, the public housing project where she formerly resided. This place continued to be a primary part of her place repertoire; she used it as a metric to judge other places, including her new neighborhood, St. Paul's Crossing:

I think a lot of them [her neighbors] are really nice. But, it's like I wish we were more a community. Like because in the Projects, I knew like ALL of the people down there. HERE, I know a COUPLE... Because like over there, I could go outside and make friends, and everybody was all together. And here it's like - it's secluded. Like everybody's in their own house, and they are doing their own thing. You're not together, really.

Nicole's sense that her neighborhood was socially deficient existed prior to participating in The Food Project, but naming it as a lack of "community" was learned at

The Food Project. The term “community” was a part of the lingo of the program. It is central to The Food Project’s mission statement: “to grow a thoughtful and productive community of youth and adults from diverse backgrounds. . .” The term was used during the summer to refer to positive, functional social units, including “The Food Project Community” and the community in Roxbury who fought the city’s plan for urban renewal. On the second day of the program there was an hour-long workshop in which the crews worked together to define a community. Our crew’s definition was “a group of people with common values and goals.”

Although Nicole used new language to discuss what was lacking in her neighborhood’s social environs, there was little notable change in her overall sense of the place. Her emphasis on her family’s relatively low socioeconomic status and lesser quality unit continued to be a central component of her image of this place.

That her father influenced Nicole’s attitudes about Brookline and her neighborhood became increasingly clear over the course of the summer. The value that she placed on home ownership almost certainly reflected paternal influence. The extent of his influence was evident during a brief conversation that I had with him at the end of the summer in which he sang the praises of Brookline: “you get the benefits of good schools, a small town feeling. . . and real diversity.” He lamented the academic achievement gap between the students of color and white students and suggested that addressing this required a “retraining of the teachers” in terms of their attitudes toward people of color. Nicole’s core place values, such as the importance of racial diversity, social cohesion and school quality appeared to be direct echoes of her father’s value system rather than Food Project influence.

Lincoln

Nicole’s image of Lincoln did not undergo any major shifts as a result of her summer experiences. In fact, she finished the program with a sense that her initial image of the town was accurate: white, boring and beautiful.

Her walks between the farm and the train station served to confirm Nicole’s pre-existing sense of the physical form of the town: “Trees. You’re gonna see a lot of

trees. And you're gonna see big houses, grass, and - it's pretty. Very pretty." Her observations of the landscape also confirmed her pre-existing image that there was a lack of commercial land use. For Nicole, this meant a boring environment:

In Lincoln the stores aren't really CLOSE to where some people live. All I have to do is walk ten minutes, and I'm where all the stores are, and everything. And THERE, it's like you have to travel 30 minutes to get to a Starbucks! There's like nothing to do.

Although Nicole had limited contact with Lincoln residents, it seemed that these experiences reinforced her image that it was a Caucasian town:

They're [the people] gonna be probably white. All white. Really. And it's like I hate it, 'cause the name's so stereotypical, Lincoln. You're in Lincoln! Because like I knew right away when they said Lincoln, I was like, okay. I had a feeling it's not gonna be that open. People there, it was mostly one race, white. I didn't see any Hispanics, Chinese, ANYTHING, other than white people there.

Not only did Nicole seem to sense a lack of diversity, she continued to associate this trait with exclusivity and an inability to relate to people unlike themselves. Her contact with the non-urban youth at The Food Project reinforced this belief. For example, she believed, based on her observations, that Julie entered the program with greater racial biases than she did and that this was due to the difference in their place experiences:

Living in the projects I was hanging out with like all African American people—that helped me [to learn that] you can be friends with everyone. It doesn't matter. And I think if I lived in Lincoln, I mean, I wouldn't have that, just from knowing Julie, like she didn't HAVE that many outside of her race, friends outside of her race, and she can only go by the stereotypes of what people said.

During a workshop on communities near the end of the summer, Nicole observed: "The people mostly have houses in Lincoln, they don't have apartments that I have seen and so it doesn't even give poor people a chance to go to the good schools." The assumptions underlying this statement were that Lincolnites were exclusive *and*

that poor people live in apartments. Clearly, the Upper West Side of Manhattan was not a part of Nicole's place repertoire!

Nicole's contact with the non-urban youth at The Food Project did not impact her sense that the residents of these locales were exclusive. This may have been because she did not form particularly strong bonds with these youth. That is, she focused her time and energy on being accepted by Kiara, Emmanuelle and other urban youth who were not on our crew. She consistently requested to work with Emmanuelle, Kiara or myself and most often walked from the farm to the commuter rail station with those girls, and Zania, Beth, Jeremy, Paul or Justin (all urban youth of color). After the summer ended she explicitly noted her lack of any real conversations with Julie or Pete. She found Steve easier to talk to as the summer progressed ("he loosened up"), but given Steve's lack of fit in Lincoln, he did not represent a viable source for altering Nicole's negative stereotypes about Lincolniters. If anything, Steve reinforced her image that it was "boring."

Despite her intimate experiences with the land and her positive experiences with the non-urban crew workers, Nicole's sense of Lincoln was not significantly impacted by her Food Project experiences. This was not the case with Roxbury. Her work in the city had a strong effect on her sense of this inner city neighborhood.

Roxbury

Nicole's experiences at The Food Project had a positive impact on her sense of Roxbury's natural, built and social realms. This was the result of two main factors, intimate contact with the urban land and learning the history of the neighborhood.

After participating in the Summer Program, Nicole's image of the natural environment of Roxbury went from "okay looking" to "green and lush." This was a significant change, which was further demonstrated by her identification of The Food Project Growing areas as representative of Roxbury as a whole:

Well, I would say [to someone who was trying to find Roxbury] look for the heart of it...I would say go to Food Project, 'cause right there, it's

like people know Food Project land. People have seen it, and that gives you the history of Roxbury. And I think that's what Roxbury really IS.

That The Food Project's three growing areas dominated Nicole's image of Roxbury was not surprising, given that most of her neighborhood experiences occurred at these 'event places'. Her place repertoire expanded through her work on the land, driving her image from a physically and socially disordered environment to one centered on the green spaces. Although Nicole's Roxbury experiences were limited to The Food Project growing sites, they altered the way that she imaged all of Roxbury. It is also notable that the program did not have this effect on the images of all of her peers. For example, her crewmate Pete's sense of Roxbury continued to be dominated by physical and social disorder after the Summer Program ended.

Nicole's image of the social environment of Roxbury was also altered as a result of her Food Project experiences. It went from being centered on violence and social disorder to social cohesion:

I actually really *like* it there [in Roxbury]. 'Cause I like how like they're a community, and people know each other around there. Like they step outside, say hi to tons of people.

This image mirrored the image of Roxbury portrayed by some of her urban counterparts, such as Justin and Kiara (who considered herself a Roxburian). Nicole considered Kiara one of her closest friends on our crew and she confided in me that she had a crush on Justin (after Justin was fired, her attention shifted to Paul). These two youth often spoke of the fun they had at a neighbor's cookout and also talked about hanging out on the street corner with their friends. Their influence on Nicole's image revealed the importance that these relationships played in expanding Nicole's place repertoire. Her new image of a socially cohesive Roxbury also reflected Nicole's experiences on the land in Roxbury where multiple times each day residents would walk or stop their cars and ask the youth about their work.

A contributing factor in this shift was her new knowledge of the neighborhood's history. Her narratives were no longer framed by the residents' lack of resources. Instead, they were informed by her knowledge of the Dudley Street Neighborhood's

history, which she generalized to all of Roxbury. She was also acutely aware of its strong sense of “community”, which was reinforced by participation in workshops where the youth learned about the successful struggle of the neighborhood residents against arson, a city plan for urban renewal, and illegal dumping. That Nicole absorbed this message was evident by her comments following a tour of the Dudley Street neighborhood given by a Food Project staff person: “I am very impressed with the way that this community gives back.” She specifically cited the example of the Albion Food Project lot, which was owned by a resident who allowed the organization to farm on it for free (turning down lucrative offers from real estate speculators in favor of seeing it used for agricultural and youth development purposes). Nicole felt that she shared the lower class status of the residents of Roxbury, which contributed to its social cohesion. The combination of her historical and community framing of Roxbury gave her a positive sense of its social environs:

I think they're [in Roxbury] more of a community, 'cause they're class is - it's mostly like the SAME. So, they can ALL relate to each other, and there's no differences, and they're all working to make it a better place, *after what had happened* [illegal dumping and arson]. And it's like really working out for them.

Nicole's sense of Roxbury changed as a result of reframing her image of decay and social disorder to one of history and community.

This is not to suggest that Nicole's sense of this neighborhood was entirely transformed by her summer experiences. Her image of Roxbury still included some physical decay:

I feel kind of sorry, because their buildings, like some of them weren't stable. You could see that from the OUTSIDE of them... And it's like I think that they actually DESERVE better than that, after all they have to go through with the trash transfer stations.

She also observed that the natural environment was “polluted” but these poor quality environmental attributes were no longer the product of poverty or lack of care by residents, they were due to historical forces that the community was fighting against, such as illegal dumping and arson.

Nicole's new attachment to Roxbury came through when I asked her how she would spend her last day if she had to move out of Massachusetts. Her first response was that she would want to visit Roxbury. That being said, her residential preference remained the same as before the summer. She was clear that even if she won the lottery, she would remain a Brookline resident in order to access its excellent public school system. She added that she hoped to raise her own children there.

4.2.3 Conclusions

Nicole started the Summer Program with a strong sense of fit with her old neighborhood, Egmont. This was rooted in her sense of belonging to its social realm and the value that she placed on racial diversity. Her sense of her new home environment, St. Paul's Crossing, a gated condo complex, centered on the lack of cohesion that she so valued in Egmont. Nicole's identity as a multi-racial, lower income individual was a better fit with Egmont than St Paul's resulting in a more positive sense of the former place.

Nicole emphasized the quality of her town's school system as a positive attribute of her home environment, which was reminiscent of the discussions of her non-urban peers. That being said, her image of Lincoln was that it was nothing like Brookline, particularly Egmont. She drew on her place repertoire to generate her image of this town, particularly St. Paul's and rural New Hampshire, where her paternal grandmother resided. This resulted in an image of Lincoln as white, wealthy and boring. Unlike her urban peers who presented a 'Brady Bunch stereotype' of social relations in Lincoln, her image centered on the fact that the residents would not know how to relate to the 'Other', of which she considered herself a part. This was a reflection of her feelings about the social relationships in the condominium complex where she lived.

The Food Project Summer Youth Program had uneven impacts on Nicole's sense of places. Its effect on her images of her neighborhood and Lincoln were subtle. The most evident change was not in her actual sense of these places but rather in the language she used to talk about them, particularly her use of the term "community"

to describe socially cohesive neighborhoods. More notable was the transformation of her sense of Roxbury. Learning the history of this neighborhood gave Nicole a new narrative frame through which she spoke about, and ultimately sensed this environment. Her friendships with the urban youth, particularly Kiara and Justin, also contributed to the development of her more positively valenced sense of Roxbury.

In contrast, by the end of her summer at The Food Project Nicole had not garnered an understanding of the history of either Lincoln or Brookline. Whether this information would have led to a shift in her sense of either of these places is impossible to know, but is worth considering.

4.3 Emily: The Sophisticate

Waiting on the train platform on the first day of work, Emily's red curly hair and fair complexion immediately caught my eye. As it turned out, the bright tresses were not Emily's only stand out feature. Being a Jewish white girl from the inner city distinguished her from the other 'City of Boston' youth in the program.¹¹ She was ambivalent about her home environment. On the one hand she felt a sense of comfort and emotional attachment to the people and the physical environs and she appreciated its diversity. At the same time, there were aspects of this place that did not fit with her identity as a sophisticate. That is, someone who appreciated the finer aspects of urban living, including upscale restaurants and cafes.

Emily lived in Dorchester, a Boston neighborhood adjacent to Roxbury, with her parents and her two-year-old brother. She had lived in this area for her entire life; the first four years in a condominium and then in the single family home where she was living when I met her. While my contact with her parents was limited to a few brief conversations, my impression was that they were liberal, urban pioneer types. Prior to getting pregnant with Emily, her mother resided in Jamaica Plain, a neighborhood that, though now quite gentrified, was at that time considered quite blighted. When

¹¹Andre, a young man from South Boston, and Chesapeake who was from Roslindale were the other white urbanites. Andre was fired at the end of the summer and Chesapeake and Emily became each other's best friends.

she got pregnant, she moved in with Emily's father, who was living in a condominium that he owned in Dorchester, also a blighted area at that time. Her mother was a public school teacher until she got pregnant with Emily's younger brother and decided to work at home full time. Her father was a web designer and computer network manager. One afternoon out in the fields I overheard her describing her home to Julie and Kiara. She told them that she thought that her parents could make a lot of money if they sold their house as prices in Ashmont Hill had gone way up since her parents purchased it. Emily's awareness of neighborhood change was heightened by her work with The Food Project, which gave her a deeper understanding of the complex socio-political forces underlying urban decline and renewal.

During the workshop on personal identities Emily identified the arts as a central aspect of her self. She attended a Boston public high school that targets youth with an interest in the arts¹². Emily was involved in theatrical productions at school as well as independent 'work'. For example, over the July 4th weekend she busked as a statue in a busy downtown commercial area. She reported to the crew that she made over one hundred dollars at this activity. This piece of information came out during a water break in the fields in the second week of the summer. Our crew leader asked us to share what we had done for the long weekend. Emily's description of painting her face white and then standing completely still until passersby's gave her money elicited lots of questions from the youth, mostly about the money rather than the logistics, costumes or even her training. For example, Steve wanted to know if it was legal and Justin asked whether she got to keep the money. Later in the summer she traveled to Rhode Island with her parents to put on a repeat performance for WaterFire, a weekly summer festival in Providence. The fact that Emily's parents drove her all the way to Rhode Island to busk illustrated their commitment to supporting her artistic endeavors. That they left her to do her own thing for the afternoon indicated what I believe is a significant level of trust in her judgment. The combination of parental support and trust facilitated Emily's active exploration of her own identity and new

¹²In order to gain access to the school the youth have to do an audition in their area of interest. Emily's focus was on the dramatic arts.

places.

Attending a public school and living in the city meant that Emily came to the program with a variety of prior interracial experiences. Her high school was approximately 75% black and Hispanic (Boston Public Schools, 2006). During a workshop on diversity she explained that one challenge of being part of the white minority was that her black friends were constantly mocking her about being white. She observed that, for non-white students, “making white jokes is cool” but complained that sometimes she has had enough of being teased, especially given that she could not make jokes back to them because “making a black joke is racist.” Her interracial social network extended beyond school to the neighborhood. Her family’s best neighborhood friends were a black family that had recently moved out of state. The strength of their bond was illustrated by the fact that Emily’s family had already traveled to Maryland to visit them in their new home. It was notable, however that Emily’s two best neighborhood buddies, Liza and Sarah, were both white. Despite emphasizing the value of racial diversity, Emily’s strongest bonds in her home environment were with people who were most ‘like’ her. This was true of the new social networks that she forged at The Food Project, where she tended to hang out with the white, ‘urban’ youth. For example, Emily’s best friend during the summer was Chesapeake, an artsy white girl from Roslindale, a neighborhood in Boston. Chesapeake was a practicing Quaker, which resonated with Emily’s own experiences at the private Quaker school that she attended from Kindergarten until eighth grade.

Emily’s overall knowledge of the city was much greater than most of the other youth on our crew. This was not surprising given her extensive use of public transportation and the far-flung geographic nature of her social network. For the year before I met her, Emily had been using the subway to commute to her high school, which was located in the center of Boston. Because her school attracted youth from all over the city, Emily had also made solo trips to a variety of neighborhoods to spend time with friends. She and her friends used the shops and parks in downtown Boston as hangouts. Her competence in navigating the city was evident when our crew traveled to The Boston Children’s Museum to run a farmer’s market; Emily was

the only one who knew how to get there from the subway station.¹³ In fact, as she led the way from the Subway station, she laughingly corrected our crew leader, who kept saying that we needed to go toward the “Four Point Channel” : “It is the *Fort* Point Channel. . . I can’t believe you live in Boston!” Emily’s obvious pleasure that she possessed this body of knowledge reflected her pride, which increased over the summer, at identifying as a city kid.

Emily also had significant non-Boston place experiences. Her Quaker middle school was located in Cambridge. After graduating, she stayed in touch with friends that she had met there, often going to their homes or to the local commercial districts. For example, on summer weekends Emily would meet these friends in Harvard Square, a bustling commercial area in Cambridge. Some of her other place experiences were in non-urban environments. For the five summers before we met, her family rented a house on Cape Cod for a week. The area around Northampton (a college town 90 miles west of Boston) was close to her heart “It’s beautiful, and it’s just got a nice feeling to it.” The family had also taken vacations to more distant locations, including Italy and Mexico. While Emily had not actually lived in a non-urban environment, she had spent time outside of the city on a regular basis. This differentiated her from the urban youth on the crew who had few, if any, experiences outside of Boston.

4.3.1 Emily’s sense of places: Pre-Program

Neighborhood

Emily initially identified her neighborhood as all of Dorchester, but reflecting on its heterogeneous nature led her to shrink its boundaries:

My neighborhood is Dorchester... but I mean, it’s a-that’s a broad area. So I mean like Dorchester, saying won’t really tell you what my neighborhood is like ‘cause Dorchester is very different all over different parts.

¹³Even our crew leader and assistant crew leader did not know the way. That no one else knew which direction to walk was somewhat surprising given they had all (except for Paul) previously visited The Museum.

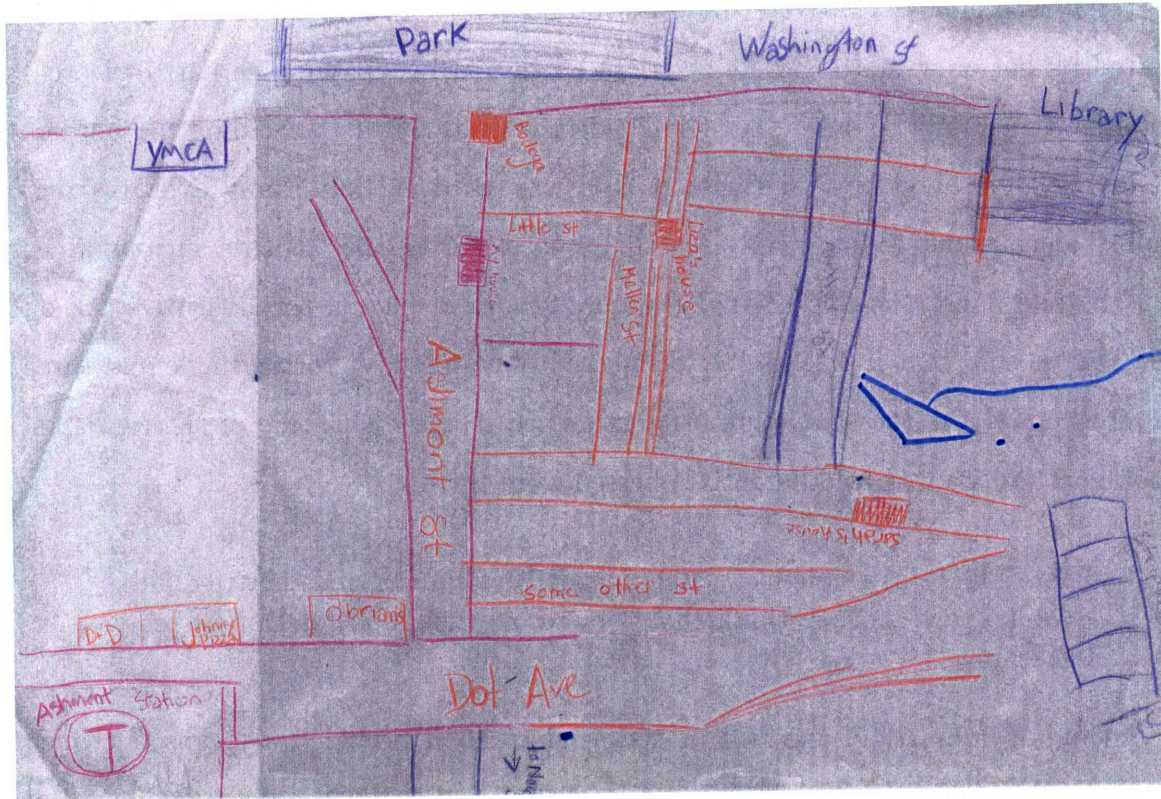


Figure 4-1: Emily’s cognitive map of her neighborhood. The boundaries of her neighborhood extend beyond the ‘official’ boundaries of this gentrified enclave to include her route between her home and the subway station.

When I asked if her neighborhood had its own name, Emily immediately replied that it was known as “Ashmont Hill.” That this area had a distinct identity is evidenced by the existence of the Ashmont Hill Association, an organization of the area’s residents that has been in existence since the 1970s. The organization meets monthly in residents’ homes, maintains a website and distributes a monthly newsletter, *The Ashmont Outlook* (Ashmont Hill, 2007). The Association is responsible for a sign that marks the beginning of this area, but Emily’s mental map extended beyond this physical marker (Fig. 4-1):

They have like a little sign but like I would describe my neighborhood as going past to Ashmont Hill like down into Codman Square. Codman Square kind of goes down a little over there. But I would say like I wouldn’t really consider anything after the Y like my neighborhood.

That this area is relatively well known and thought of by Bostonians was illustrated by her crew mate Kiara's response, "Oh, you live in the *nice* part of Dorchester," when Emily told her that she lived in Ashmont Hill. Extending the borders of her neighborhood beyond Ashmont Hill was one way that Emily expressed her ambivalence about living in an area that was more upscale than its surroundings. On the one hand, she appreciated the quality and beauty of the housing stock on the Hill, noting that it was largely comprised of restored Victorian single and three family homes. At the same time, she expressed distaste for some of the residents' snobbery and wanted to differentiate herself from them:

There's like this whole like, "Ashmont Hill" whatever and they're all like, I don't know... they think that they're like too good for Dorchester or something.

Including more than the Hill in her neighborhood provided a means by which Emily could distinguish herself from what she referred to as "the uber Ashmont Hill people" ; unlike them she was not ashamed of being from Dorchester.

Although Emily was proud of being from Dorchester, she was cognizant of the negative stereotypes that outsiders had of this place. Her response was to defend it. For example, when I asked her to describe the neighborhood she started with the disclaimer: "It's like a lot nicer than like people's image of Dorchester." She went on to describe a high quality built environment comprised of "Beautiful Victorian houses that have been pretty well kept, especially like on like Ashmont Street." Her sensitivity to stereotyping emerged a number of times in her interactions with Food Project peers. One example was when Emily proposed having the crew over to her house for a BBQ. Julie's response to the invite was "your place in *Dorchester*?" Emily quickly countered, "Yes, *Dorchester*." My sense that Emily was annoyed by the tone of Julie's voice was confirmed the following day when she commented, "it was pretty funny how Julie said the word *Dorchester*" as if she was scared of the neighborhood.

I was not the only person who noted this exchange. The following week our crew leader gave Emily a 'delta' for not voicing her opinions enough. He cited the conversation with Julie as one example as well as an interaction with Steve who,

during a workshop, stated that he doubted there were many Farmers' Markets in the city. Emily responded to this statement with a roll of her eyes and whispered to our crew leader: "There are *lots* of farmers markets in the city." This second incident illustrated that there were times when her defensiveness extended to the entire urban realm. It seemed that being at The Food Project gave Emily a feeling of ownership over the city and consequently she felt the need to defend it from the stereotypes of the non-urban youth.

Emily valued racial diversity. That she felt her neighborhood had this characteristic was evidenced by her description of what she liked about where she lived:

It's not as segregated as other neighborhoods. It's like there's a lot of different kind of people. . . I feel like a lot of Dorchester's grouped by like race and I feel like there's like a lot of different ethnicities in my neighborhood.

Emily made similar statements during the summer, such as the time we were weeding and I overheard Julie asking Emily whether she liked living in Dorchester. Emily replied that although there were things that she did not like, she was partial to the fact that it was diverse.

Although Emily was a staunch defender of her neighborhood, there were things about it that bothered her. Foremost in her mind was the lack of appealing hang-out places. While she appreciated having her two best friends within walking distance, she felt that their local entertainment options were limited to hanging out at their own homes. There were commercial land uses within her neighborhood, such as the "bodegas¹⁴ and liquor stores", but they were not aligned with Emily's image of what was necessary to make a good hang out:

I don't really like hang out like at the stores in my neighborhood or anything. . . 'Cause there's not really much to do around my house. . . I mean there's like, there's like, a liquor and convenience store, a pizza shop and a store a Store 24 and a Y and a park and not really like any shopping or restaurants or anything fun to do.

¹⁴It was interesting that Emily used the term "bodega" to describe the corner stores in the area given that later in the interview she noted the lack of Hispanic residents in her area.

These comments were particularly interesting in light of what some of her urban peers had cited as positive attributes of their neighborhoods. For example, Paul explicitly noted the local pizza shop and bodegas as good places to hang out in Jamaica Plain. This difference underscores the importance of the 'fit' of a place with an individual's identity and perceived needs in shaping the way that it is sensed.

Emily contrasted the lack of commercial amenities in her neighborhood to the plethora of hangouts she saw in central Boston. This reflected her sense that her neighborhood was cut off from the action of the city. This frustration was amplified by the fact that few of her friends from middle school or high school lived nearby. Her sense of isolation because of the location of her neighborhood, came out in a vignette about having to get a ride home from an evening out rather than take the Subway ("the T") with her friends:

I hung out with most of my friends from my middle school, like last Saturday, and we were in Kenmore Square and um, afterward it was almost twelve at night and they all took the T home, cause they live in Cambridge and well, my mom had to come and get me 'cause it is so much longer for me to get home...even though they all live in Cambridge. It is like a lot easier for them to do that than for me just cause I am like far away...you feel like you are not so much a part of things...you live in the city, but not like really...

Emily did not explicitly cite danger as a reason that her mother came to pick her up, but it was likely that her parents felt uneasy having their fifteen-year-old daughter take the subway alone at night. Although Emily walked home from the Ashmont subway stop after school each day, she noted that during the winter, when this walk was in the dark, she felt much less safe, particularly around the commercial spaces that she felt were undesirable:

When I walk back from the T at night. I am always just like careful when I walk back. Like if it is dark. Some stuff happened at the T, like a year ago someone got raped there um, but... Over here, when I am walking by over here...like I don't know, I am like nervous, there is like a liquor store and like a bar.

Overall, Emily had an ambivalent sense of her neighborhood. She simultaneously felt a strong emotional attachment and a desire to leave it. Familiarity with the environment gave her a sense of security, but she was dissatisfied with the lack of appealing recreational and commercial amenities. Her feelings were captured in her discussion of a proposed family move:

I always feel like I wish I lived somewhere there was like more to do but, then my dad was talking about maybe moving like last year to Brighton or something and like I really didn't *want* to... even though like if I lived there there'd be like so much more to do than in Dorchester. Like I don't know. It's [Dorchester] just so familiar to me and I'm like, a lot of my closest friends live there. And I don't know. I just didn't really *want* to move... especially cause like I think it's more like since being in high school last year. So much is already changing... it's like I wouldn't want my neighborhood to change. It's like one thing that always been like I could always like run to.

This statement suggested that intimate knowledge bonded Emily to her neighborhood. Like most adolescents, her peer relationships were particularly important to her. The primary importance of social networks to this teen was highlighted by her description of what she would do should her family move out of the Boston area.

Um, I think maybe what I would do is like go to The Commons¹⁵ and like hang out with my different friends, like all of my different friends... And just like go to the park or the commons and just kind of *be* with people without like being distracted by like shops and other stuff. And like if I wanted to remember stuff from Boston I'd probably like want to remember my friends and not necessarily like one place.

Lincoln

Prior to entering The Food Project program, Emily had not spent significant time in Lincoln. Her experience was limited to a visit with her family to an educational farm run by the Audubon society. Despite this lack of exposure, Emily had a clear mental picture of Lincoln, particularly in terms of its racial composition. When I asked her

¹⁵Despite Emily's knowledge of Boston and the names of landmarks (as illustrated by her correction of Pete's "Four Point Channel" error), she referred to the Boston 'Common' as the "Commons", a common mispronunciation.

to describe her image of the town, her first response was: “ Well, I think of Lincoln as being predominantly White.” It was striking that Emily, a white person, still imaged this non-urban environment in these terms, indicating that she considered white a race. Her perceptions of these Caucasian residents, “spoiled kids” and “snooty” were reminiscent of some of her comments about the “uber Ashmont People.” She believed that the residents, both adults and youth, were “not aware [of the world outside of Lincoln]”, which was one reason she gave for not wanting to live there. Her belief that people who lived in the suburbs could not relate to those outside their enclave mirrored the sentiments of some of the other youth in the program, such as Nicole.

Along with a paucity of diversity and open-minded residents, Emily imagined that Lincoln lacked interesting activities. In fact, she believed that the situation was even worse than in her neighborhood due to Lincoln’s physical form and location. She estimated that the entire town of Lincoln *might* have the same number of shops as her neighborhood, but that its low density would inhibit accessibility. The town’s distance from the city also loomed large in her mind, reflecting her concerns about access to the action of the urban realm:

Dorchester is more compact and stuff, whereas Lincoln is really like spread out... you’re not like near a of like different areas. Like it’s kind of like all one thing. It’s not like you can go to Dorchester, Cambridge, you can go to downtown... ‘cause all of the different areas are so different, but kind of one place.

Later in the conversation Emily commented that another reason that she could never live in Lincoln was the lack of subway. Emily equated the subway with access to amenities.¹⁶

Emily described the physical form of Lincoln as mostly “forests and well groomed lawns.” While she was clear that the aesthetics of this “suburban” landscape did not appeal to her, she differed from many of her urban peers as a result of her attraction to more rural, low-density environments. For example she noted her attachment to the

¹⁶The high value that Emily placed on public transit may diminish upon attaining her driver’s license and access to a car. Her comments underscore both the importance that mobility has on a youth’s sense of place as well as the transient nature of some of the factors that serve as determinants at this stage of development.

area around Northampton multiple times during her first interview. It was one of her favorite places to visit, however not to live: “I don’t think it [Northampton] would be like somewhere I would’ve wanted to like grow up ‘cause I wouldn’t want to grow up out in the country or whatever. It’s just like too. . . removed.” Emily’s place repertoire included both suburban and rural environments, allowing her to make distinctions between these types of environments that were absent from the discussions of most of her fellow crew workers. After the summer, Emily’s image of Lincoln shifted from being a “suburb”, complete with McMansions, to a more rural environment. Her sentiments about the town were similar to what she expressed about Northampton: a beautiful place to visit but a boring place to live.

Roxbury

Prior to entering the program, Emily had spent minimal time in Roxbury. Her image was that it was similar to Dorchester, including its heterogeneity, which made it difficult to describe as a single unit:

There’s like a lot of different parts of Roxbury, so like you can’t necessarily characterize the whole area. . . but I guess it’s a little more, it’s not quite as busy as Dorchester. Like it’s not, like as busy, like with traffic. . . More, I think there’s like maybe like, yeah more foot traffic and it’s more like little stores around and stuff. It’s not like a lot of like businesses, like maybe just a couple of small ones.

When asked to describe her image of the built form of Roxbury, Emily responded that it was compact and comprised of “projects and townhouses.” Unlike her suburban peers, she did not link density with social disorder. In fact, when I asked her questions about the social environment of Roxbury, she answered that she did not really have a sense of it. Her only concrete statement about the residents was that she imagined a lot of folks dressed in “gangsta styles.” Unlike her discussions of her own neighborhood and Lincoln, explicit racial identifiers were not a part of her description of Roxbury. While my data do not enable me to provide a definitive explanation for this difference, I hypothesize that Emily was consciously avoiding the stereotypes

often associated with Roxbury, including a concentration of people of color (the comment about “gansta styles” may in fact have been racially encoded), violence and a decaying built environment. This may have stemmed from her sensitivity about negative stereotyping of Dorchester. Alternatively, her identity as an urban liberal may have prevented her from articulating an image that conformed to these stereotypes. Regardless of the mechanism, she articulated a very limited picture of her sense of this Roxbury. Interestingly, after participating in The Food Project program, Emily’s image of Roxbury shifted from emphasizing the similarities between it and Dorchester to highlighting the differences between these two urban environments.

4.3.2 Emily’s Sense of Places: Post-Program

Neighborhood

Participation in the Summer Program did not have a major impact on Emily’s sense of her own neighborhood. Her definition of, and stories about, this area remained strikingly similar to what they were during the pre-program interview. Pride about the area’s diversity, concerns about neighborhood snobbery and feeling removed from the city and its amenities still dominated her sense of Ashmont Hill. One change was that Emily seemed less concerned about negative stereotyping of Dorchester by outsiders and more ready to acknowledge, and even embrace, the social dysfunction that existed in her environment.

At the end of the summer the boundaries of Emily’s neighborhood remained “Ashmont Hill, and then also Codman Square.” But traveling from her home in Dorchester to The Food Project land in Roxbury challenged her image of Dorchester’s boundaries. Moving between these contiguous places on a daily basis, Emily realized that drawing a distinct border between these two places was difficult and somewhat arbitrary:

I don’t know. Sometimes I’m not sure what area is technically belongs to Dorchester or Roxbury. . . .they are somewhat similar, Roxbury and Dorchester. . . about 75%. . . you just get to know the areas so that I know when I go by like Eggleston that I am in Roxbury.

After the program, Emily continued to use race as a primary means of describing her neighborhood, with an emphasis on its diversity compared to the rest of Dorchester:

There are places [in Dorchester] that are mainly like white Irish, or parts that are like, like Fields Corner where it's almost all like Black. I find that [Ashmont Hill] it's a lot more diverse than most other areas.

The major change in her racial description was that Dorchester lacked a Latino population. This came out in her comparison of its residents with the strong "Spanish" presence in Roxbury, discussed in more detail below.

Emily's annoyance about the snobbery of her neighbors remained after the summer: "Because they think that like they are so perfect...and that they live in the nicest place in Dorchester." Rather than just being annoyed by their pretentiousness, the stories that she told emphasized the fact that these folks shunned the 'realities' of living in the inner city.

A couple of years ago this guy either got stabbed or shot on this corner here and like some people made like signs, like some people made like memorials or something and teddy bears or whatever...writing like so and so died on this block...RIP, teddy bears, whatever that kind of stuff. And like they were like "Oohhh, we can't have all of this on our precious corner. People will know that this happened here." And I'm like, someone died, and they are being like "oh people are going to know that someone got shot here" and it's like, you live in DORCHESTER. It's like, don't make yourself so blind to the fact that you...that even though you are in like your own special land in Dorchester, it is in a place where crime still exists.

Emily projected a sense of pride about living in a bona fide urban environment, social disorder and all.

This is not to suggest that Emily now wanted to live in the 'hood. She maintained her sense that there was a lack of things to do in her neighborhood. The local pizza shop and bodegas were not, in her mind, acceptable places to hang out:

I want a place, like a fun place for me and my friends to go and hang out that would be some place, cool. Like, a place that we could go and hang

out without it being like a teen center. . . maybe like a coffee shop. I guess I would like, you know like the Trident [an upscale bookstore café in the center of Boston], like the bookstore, it's like a café and you can get like lunch and stuff. And you get good books there.

Despite Emily's increased sense of pride at being a "city kid", tensions remained between her interests and identity as a sophisticate and the activities afforded by her neighborhood environs, specifically the lack of what she deemed acceptable hangouts and cultural amenities, such as upscale cafés and bookshops.

Lincoln

Emily prefaced her discussion of Lincoln by noting that she did not really think she had seen all of Lincoln over the summer: "Like it's so spread out that you don't get to see like all of Lincoln." Despite this caveat, she proceeded to present a very clear sense of the town, drawing on her interactions with the non-urban youth in the program as evidence for her statements. Emily's experiences in Lincoln confirmed much of her pre-existing sense of that place, particularly her feeling that the town lacked racial diversity and that its residents were unaware of their privilege. This came in part from her observations of the place, and from her contact with the non-urban youth in our crew. Her image of the physical environs shifted from a typically suburban to a more rural place. For Emily, this represented a positive change in her sense of the town.

Emily's summer experiences affirmed her pre-existing image that Lincoln was "white." She attributed this image to the fact that she did not see any Lincolnites of color on their walks from the farm to the train station. She also cited the fact that the Food Project participants from Lincoln were all white: "Also, like going from The Food Project, like the people who were from Lincoln, I didn't meet people who weren't white from Lincoln." While this observation accurately reflected the demographics of the town, the fact that Emily, a white person, framed this as a negative place attribute underscored the value that she placed on diversity in assessing the quality of an environment. This tendency was heightened by her experiences at The Food Project, where racial integration was both an implicit and an explicit goal. For

example, over the summer, Julie, Steve and Pete all received 'deltas' for segregating themselves from the rest of the youth on our crew. Our crew leader also doled out a delta to Kiara and Emmanuelle, black females on our crew, for "clumping together" rather than mixing with the entire group.

Emily labeled all of the non-urban youth in our crew as Lincolnites, even though Pete and Julie were not from Lincoln. She also generalized the attitudes of these youth to all the residents of the Lincoln. When asked to describe the people in Lincoln, she used the descriptor "stoner kids." This reflected the portrait that her crewmate Julie painted of these youth. For example, during a water break one afternoon our crew leader asked us all to share something "risky" about ourselves. Julie told the crew that she was on probation at her school for being caught with drugs. Emily's feeling that Lincolnites were "snooty" reflected her impressions of Pete. She described her reaction to his comments during a workshop on diversity in which he shared that he came from a privileged background:

Pete, he was like. . . I remember how he said like, "Oh, I am upper class¹⁷ and I don't know. . . I know that I am well off and so are most people who I am friends with but like. . . like I don't really like to talk about that stuff because it makes me like feel bad. . . and most other people who I met are like I've met they don't want to be like, oh, I am rich. I just never really met people who were like that before.

Emily's prior belief that Lincoln residents were closed minded and not inclusive was reinforced by her experiences at The Food Project. She did not feel that her non-urban peers were able, or wanted, to connect with the kids from the city. This was particularly bothersome to her given that one of the goals Emily shared at the beginning of the summer was to meet people who live in the "real suburbs", which she contrasted with places like Cambridge. This did not happen:

There was a lot of separation between like the city and suburban kids. . . it was like always so obvious when we were going to Pine Street Inn. . . like

¹⁷Actually, during this workshop Pete referred to himself as "upper middle class." Emily's misstatement underscores the fact that her experiences with the non-urban youth served to heighten her pre-existing stereotypes of them, rather than to break them down. Emily wished to project an image of Pete as someone who saw himself as upper class.

the suburban kids were like all together. I don't know. I guess it's like they relate to each other easier or something...it was just really annoying...they just always kind of went together and that kind of annoyed me. Cause it felt like you couldn't get to know them.

Emily's comments reflected her disappointment about not forging friendships with suburban youth and her displeasure with their insularity.

Emily differed from most of her peers in that her sense of the landscape of Lincoln was positively affected by her Food Project experiences. She was particularly surprised at the lack of development in the area:

I didn't realize how that they were like preserving stuff. I imagined that it was going to be like more like McMansions. And I didn't see those. That was the main thing that I was really expecting. So you see like a lot more like nice little modest houses ...

Another difference between Emily and her peers was that though she mentioned The Food Project Farm in her discussions of Lincoln, it did not dominate her image. The train station and the adjacent 'mall' where Donelans, a small grocery store, was located was the feature that she used to define the town:

Well I would say that it's hard to really know when you get to Lincoln until you get to like Lincoln center. I'd say look for the railroad tracks, and look for the Donelans [the grocery store near the station].

The importance of the town center highlighted how important commercial areas were to Emily's image of a given place.

Roxbury

Prior to participating in The Food Project, Emily was unable to articulate a very clear image of Roxbury. This may have been due to a lack of a clear image or due to limitations set by her conscious avoidance of negative stereotypes. In any case, after the program Emily readily expressed a vivid, positively valenced sense of this inner city neighborhood, which highlighted the differences between it and her home neighborhood.

At the end of the program, Emily articulated a racialized view of Roxbury. Her descriptions came from her experiences at the Food Project, which were mostly comprised of contact with local gardeners who would come by to work on their plots that were located on The Food Project's land and with customers at The Farmers' Markets. She described the residents as "nice black and Latino families", noting the absence of the latter group in her own neighborhood:

I'd say there's a lot more like Latino stuff like right around Dudley. Like there's not a lot of that like right where I live, even in Codman Square...it's a lot more I think like Haitian than like Dominican or Puerto Rican. Like there is not really a lot of that near where I live.

Whether Emily's discussion of race in Roxbury was the result of new knowledge or increased comfort verbalizing it is impossible to know. What is clear is that at the end of the program she was both aware of, and comfortable expressing her image of Roxbury's racial composition, emphasizing how it differed from Dorchester.

Another major shift in Emily's sense of Roxbury was that it was dominated by the presence of gardens. Her description emphasized residents' gardens, not the Food Project land. Emily saw this landscape as an indicator of local care and ownership:

What surprised me was all the little gardens. Like I didn't know how much like people had done in the rest of the neighborhood [other than the Food Project]. Like that wasn't like just like an urban neighborhood where there was a farm. They were really like spread through the neighborhood and you could really see it like in the neighborhood like people were really affected by it. Like people were really trying to make their neighborhood like really pretty and stuff.

Interestingly, this positive sense did not transfer to her neighborhood, where there were also gardens. The difference lay in her new understanding of the connection of the social and environmental history in Roxbury. By learning the history of Roxbury, she saw the gardens as acts of community activism—residents fighting “redlining and that mortgage thing.” In contrast, Ashmont Hill's gardens remained as a symbol of snobby neighbors maintaining their yards, trying to convince themselves they did

not live in the city. It was also striking that she did not cite Lincoln's land as a key feature of her image of that town. This reflected the fact that there was no story of conservation or preservation of that land. It was just *there*.

4.3.3 Conclusions

Participation in The Food Project impacted Emily's sense of her neighborhood, Lincoln and Roxbury in very different ways. Her concern about negative stereotyping of Dorchester diminished. This change was due to an increased sense of pride about being from the city. One source of this shift was The Food Project's categorization of 'city' versus 'suburban' youth. Rather than trying to fend off negative stereotypes of Dorchester, she saw them as a part of city living. The social problems in the urban realm were not something that she felt the need to deny or explain. She was proud of being a city youth and not a suburban youth.

A corollary to being proud of her urbanity was the sense that the social environment of Lincoln was unappealing. Emily's pre-existing image of the residents of Lincoln was reinforced by her experiences at The Food Project, particularly her interactions and observations of the non-urban youth on our crew. The characteristics of these youth that fit with her preconceptions became exemplars of the nature of Lincolnites, such as Julie's stories of using drugs. In the meantime, incidents and interactions that countered her stereotypes did not seem to have registered. For example, during her final interview she spoke about the self-segregation of the non-urban youth and did not mention the friendship that developed between Kiara and Julie.

Emily gained a clearer sense of Roxbury as a result of her work with The Food Project. Her new image focused on the features that she did not observe in her own neighborhood. Specifically, she viewed the social and physical environment of Roxbury as a product of social and political forces, whereas her own neighborhood just *was*. When she spoke about decay in the physical realm of Roxbury it was in the context of redlining and discrimination. In her neighborhood, some of the houses were 'just crappy'. Renewal in Roxbury was also framed as a socio-political

process. The gardens were a result of community cohesion and activism, whereas the gardens in Ashmont Hill were just flowers in people's yards. It was striking that she did not transfer her new ability to read the landscape of Roxbury to her own neighborhood. One explanation for this is that the reading of a neighborhood's social history from its landscape is not necessarily transferable from place to place. An alternative hypothesis is that Emily had simply not textit yet learned to analogize from the Roxbury case and that a further broadening of her place repertoire might lead to this ability.

4.4 Crossover Youth: Discussion

There were commonalities and differences in the way that Kiara, Nicole and Emily sensed their immediate neighborhoods, home environments and the unfamiliar environments of Lincoln and (in the case of Nicole and Emily) Roxbury. Like the urban and non-urban youth, these girls all used their existing place repertoires to generate their sense of places. The historical narrative of Roxbury that these crossover youth learned at The Project had a positive influence on their sense of this environment. All three crossover youth entered and exited the Summer Program with a perception that the residents' of Lincoln were close-minded and rich. They believed that their summer experiences provided material evidence for these images, even where this was clearly not the case. This indicated the 'stickiness' of their prior beliefs about this environment. Like their urban and non-urban crewmates, the environmental fit of Kiara, Emily and Nicole moderated the effects of their repertoires on their sense of places. Both class and race emerged as important determinants of these youths' 'fit' with their neighborhoods.

The control group included two youth, Liz and Eric, both of whom had lived in two different types of environments, one relatively urban and one relatively non-urban. (See Table 4.1 for some demographic characteristics of their neighborhoods). When I first met Liz, a Latina who lived with her mother and younger sister, she had recently moved from Chelsea to Malden, which she characterized as a move from a

denser environment with “more things to do” and more “Spanish people” to one that was “all white. . . quiet. . . and . . . nothing to do.” The area of Malden where she lived was a newer development of single-family homes. Liz lived at the end of a cul-de-sac, giving the area she identified as her neighborhood a distinctly suburban feel. Despite having similar total populations, Malden’s lower density and relative whiteness give the town a less urban feel than Chelsea (Table 4.1). Liz’s single mother had moved her and her little sister to the town to access better schools and a safer environment.

The second control youth was an Asian American male, Eric, who lived in Lincoln, but had one year of experience living in Boston. The year before I met Eric, his family temporarily moved him to the city so that he could attend one of Boston’s most elite exam schools.¹⁸ Monday to Friday he stayed in an apartment with his mother in the centrally located Fenway neighborhood, a densely populated area near the famous stadium. He differed from the other crossover youth in that the majority of his lived experience was in Lincoln, a semi-rural environment. That Eric referenced his urban residential experiences when describing his image of other urban environments set him apart from the ‘non-urban’ youth discussed earlier in the thesis. Neither of the control youths’ sense of places changed during the period that the participants were engaged in the Summer Program. This was in contrast to the participants’ senses, which did shift (particularly their sense of Roxbury), suggesting that these changes were a result of the program and not some other external variable. Table 4.1 contains a summary of some of the demographic characteristics of the towns and home environments of the cross over youth (both Food Project participant and control youth). Where applicable it includes data on both the *relatively* urban and non-urban environments that these young people had lived in.

While the crossover youth were similar in that they had broader place experiences and/or lived in places that were more difficult to classify than their peers, placing them in a group obscures some important differences that impacted the way they ex-

¹⁸Students compete for places in the three city exam schools through a standardized test. In order to enroll in one of these schools the student must have a Boston address. Eric’s parents were ‘gaming’ the system by having him stay in the city during the week with his mother in order to secure a place at Boston Latin School. When the school discovered what was going on, Eric moved back to Lincoln full time and enrolled in the Lincoln Sudbury High School.

Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics of the towns and home environments of the crossover youth (Selverajah, 2002; *Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2007).

Name	Neighborhood	Density (person/square mile)	% Black	% White	% Asian Pacific Islander	% Latino
Kiara	Roxbury Norwood*	14 380 2739	64 2	5 91	1 5	24
Nicole	Brookline*	8 059	3	80	13	4
Emily	Dorchester	15796	42	30	10	10
Eric	Lincoln* Fenway	533 28711	6 6	89 70	5 14	>1 7
Liz	Chelsea* Malden*	13110 10586	7 8	38 72	5 14	48 4

perienced places. For example, the youths' cross place experiences varied in intensity i.e. Nicole's regular *visits* to her grandmother in New Hampshire were categorically different than Kiara's *residential* experiences in Norwood. There was also a distinct difference between the place types that the girls had experienced. Although both Roxbury and Dorchester are considered inner-city Boston neighborhoods, the gentrified enclave of Dorchester where Emily lived was not an environment comparable to the Warren Street area of Roxbury, the site of Kiara's urban residential experience. Similarly, the 'projects' where Nicole lived were located in the predominantly wealthy white 'urban' town of Brookline, which has an entirely different demographic profile and character from Boston. Eric had only a brief, part-time stint as a city resident, whereas Liz had lived much of her life in the dense, urban environment of Chelsea. Moving to Malden meant living in a more suburban environment, but one with a different landscape and character than Eric's low density, semi-rural Lincoln.

Despite bringing a range of place experiences to The Food Project, there were some consistent patterns in how and what the crossover youth sensed about a given place. The place repertoires of the crossover youth emerged as a mediating variable that explained the development of their sense of places. The effect of their repertoires, in turn, was moderated by their environmental fit i.e. the extent to which their personal identity was aligned with their home environment. Ethnicity and class

also emerged as important components within this moderating variable. Implicit and explicit messages that were conveyed by The Food Project staff out in the fields and during workshops fostered a sense of urban pride amongst the crossover youth participants, resulting in a tighter fit between their identities and their home environments and Roxbury.

Except Emily, all of the crossover youth had lived in more than one place. In general, I use the term environmental fit in reference to the match between the youth's identity and their current residence. This is because the youth are at a stage in their lifecycles where their identities are in flux; how a place 'fits' is also therefore changing and evolving with their development. That being said, the youths' perceptions of their prior living environments are relevant in determining their environmental fit in their current place. In particular, there may be a tendency to have an idealized sense of a former living environment. This is discussed further in the concluding chapter.

The Summer Program had the strongest impact on Kiara, Emily and Nicole's sense of Roxbury. This change was largely driven by their increased urban pride and their acquisition of knowledge about the history of the Dudley Street Neighborhood, which they generalized to all of Roxbury. All three girls finished the summer with a more positively valenced sense of Roxbury than they possessed prior to entering the program. A summary of the variables that I suggest impacted the cross over youth sense of places and examples of their effects in the context of The Food Project are shown below (Table 4.2).

4.4.1 Place Repertoires

As described in the discussions of the non-urban youth (Sect. 2.4.1, page 118), a place repertoire includes an individual's lived and virtual experiences in a set of places. The crossover youth described their home environments in relation to other places that they had intimately experienced. Kiara's image of Norwood was that it was the polar opposite of Roxbury. Residents of the aesthetically pleasing town of Norwood were unfriendly and biased, while residents of the physically decaying Roxbury were friendly and socially connected. Similarly, Nicole described her new, wealthy con-

Table 4.2: A Summary of the *mediating* and *moderating* variables that operated on the crossover youth participants' sense of places.

Concept	Type	Meaning	Example of Observed Effect at The Food Project
Place Repertoire	Mediator	Mental bank of place experiences (lived and virtual) that an individual draws upon to make an assessment of other places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Exposure to Lincoln expanded youths' place repertoire. Finished program with a higher resolution image of this environment, but still conformed to initial image of white and rich. -Addition of historical knowledge/interpretive framework of Roxbury to repertoire leads to more positively valenced sense of this place.
Environmental Fit (with home neighborhood)	Moderator	Alignment of personal identity with home environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tight fit heightens awareness of what other neighborhoods lack i.e. more aware of environmental attributes that were lacking in Lincoln, such as lack of commercial areas -Poor fit heightens awareness of attributes in new places i.e. heightened awareness of Roxbury's positive attributes, particularly social cohesion. -Fit between racial, ethnic, and/or class identity and place results in positive sense of place.
Cross Place Friendship	Moderator	Relationships with people from outside of one's home environment.	-None.

dominium development in contrast to her experience living in "the projects"; her sense of the quality of the built form of her St. Paul's development was heightened due to its *relative* newness. Emily contrasted the lack of commercial amenities in her neighborhood, which was a feature that she disliked to the plethora of 'good' hangouts she experienced in central Boston and Cambridge.

Comparing two youth with very different senses of a particular place further illustrates the important mediating role of place repertoires. One of the case control youth in my sample happened to live in Brookline in Egmont, the same project where Nicole formerly resided. When I interviewed Rob, a Haitian American male, he had recently moved to Egmont from Mattapan, a predominantly black, low-income neighborhood of Boston¹⁹. Unlike Nicole, his place repertoire did not include experiences in non-urban environments nor in places where his neighbors were wealthier than his family. The result in this difference in repertoires was that he and Nicole had completely different senses of Egmont, particularly its built form. Rob had a very positively valenced sense of his building and the area immediately surrounding it, which he considered his neighborhood. He specifically noted how "nice and clean" the buildings were and that it was "calm, quiet and safe". In contrast, though Nicole appreciated the diversity and social cohesion of Egmont, when she compared it to her new residence in St. Paul's Crossing she highlighted the fact that the buildings in the former were of poor quality, danger zones existed and there was a lot of noise. This sense was the result of her expanded place repertoire due to her move: "I didn't know like how bad it [Egmont] *was*, compared to this [St. Paul's Crossing]..." Nicole's ambivalence about Egmont's environment contrasted with Rob's unequivocally positive sense, he could not think of anywhere he would rather live, even if he were to win the lottery²⁰. It is possible that the match between Rob's race and those of his fellow

¹⁹Rob was not classified as a crossover youth as his place experiences were limited to Mattapan and the Egmont neighborhood of Brookline, which has a distinctly urban feel as it is comprised of apartment buildings and is one block over from a commercial district on Commonwealth Avenue, a main street that runs across Boston. This is very different from Nicole who regularly spent time outside of the city and her Brookline experiences included Egmont and St. Paul's Crossing, which is in a far less dense and commercial area of the town.

²⁰My own sense of Egmont was distinctly negative. On both visits to Rob's home I was struck by the fact that the front door of his building was propped open, the intercom was broken and

Egmont residents also played a role in determining his positive sense of Roxbury, although this same ‘fit’ was certainly present in Mattapan, a neighborhood that is over 77% Black (Selverajah, 2002).

Safety and Security

The crossover youth all identified danger zones in the relatively urban environments that they had experienced and none in the non-urban environments that they spoke about. For example, Kiara could not think of any unsafe spaces in Norwood but had a sense that danger existed in Roxbury. Nicole stated that area around her new condominium complex was completely secure but identified the basketball courts as a dangerous space in Egmont. Yet, both girls felt insulated from these potential hazards. Kiara believed she possessed a particular “attitude”, which kept her safe in Roxbury. Her strong sense of safety in Roxbury was an expression of her positive sense of this place. Nicole felt secure in Egmont because of the clarity of her mental map, which allowed her to navigate around dangerous places and times.

Emily differed from her two crossover peers in that she felt that there were times and places where her personal safety was at risk in her Dorchester neighborhood. Specifically, she imaged the area between her house and the subway stations as a danger zone and expressed anxiety about her walks between these locations after dusk. Emily was unable to avoid this walk during the winter months as her subway ride home from school got her to the Ashmont station after the sun was down. My data do not enable me to say with certainty whether Emily’s lack of social connectedness to this part of her neighborhood explained this feeling of danger (the ‘bodegas and bars’ along this route were not places that she or her friends frequented and they did not know the proprietors or the customers). Yet, comparing her sense of danger in this area with her urban peers, Emmanuelle, Justin and Paul’ sense of security in the commercial strips in their home environments provides support for this hypothesis. That is, these

the hallways were “dark and dirty.” This image is further evidence of the importance of one’s place repertoires in mediating their sense of place. My negatively valenced sense of the physical environment was a product of my own place repertoire, which includes upscale, well-maintained urban apartment buildings.

three urban youth described feeling secure walking around after dusk in places that they recognized held potential hazards because they counted on the protection of their social networks, something Emily lacked. Other possible explanations are that Emily's greater sense of anxiety stemmed from her lack of ethnic fit with this area of Dorchester, which she indicated was predominantly black, or simply that this strip of neighborhood was a particularly hazardous one, regardless of networks or race.

The pattern of identifying dangerous areas in the urban environments they had experienced, held for the two youth in the control group. Eric, who spent one year living in the city, felt that it was a dangerous environment, particularly after dark. This lack of security was the reason he gave for staying in at night. Unlike his urban counterparts who felt safe in the city, Eric did not have any friends in his urban neighborhood; he described the residents as "unfriendly," and noted the destructive tendencies of the "the teenagers" in the area, i.e., on baseball game nights they had to park their car away from the stadium in case the Sox won as "teenagers would roll cars." Liz, who moved from Chelsea to Malden, felt that there were no unsafe areas in her new suburban environment, whereas in Chelsea people from the "outside" might find themselves in danger. She added that she never felt threatened in her former neighborhood due to her relationships with the other "Spanish" residents.

Roxbury

The crossover youth's image of Roxbury varied based on their place repertoires. For example, Emily described it as similar to Dorchester, including its heterogeneity and existence of danger zones. Nicole focused on Roxbury's relative poverty compared to Brookline. She felt that it would be most similar to Egmont, the projects in Brookline, but was explicit that the buildings would not be as nice nor as safe. Kiara's lived experiences in Roxbury and her mother's narratives about her experiences there, led her to have a positive sense of this environment, particularly the social realm. She imaged the physical environment as decaying and neglected, which she attributed to the residents' lack of economic resources and racial bias by the city.

Neither of the control youths had ever visited Roxbury, yet they both articulated

a clear image of this place. They both drew parallels between it and the more urban environments where they had lived, but emphasized that both the physical and social environments were worse in Roxbury. Liz noted that she had never been there but she imagined that “It’s bad.” Her image of the social environment focused on social dysfunction, the people were “Gang related. . . a lot of people out there are always like starting problems with you.” She noted that the buildings were “broken down and dirty.” Eric also articulated a negative sense of Roxbury. The people were “dangerous and intimidating” and the buildings “cracked and old.” This was compared to the Fenway, where the buildings were “either like apartments or houses that’s kind of like – it’s medium sized to small, and that’s not as good upkeep as here [Lincoln]” and his image of the social environment focused on raucous teenagers (probably college students) who held parties and made noise at night. Interestingly, neither of the control youth referred to the race of Roxbury’s residents. Whether this reflected the fact that race was not a part of their image of this place or whether they were consciously avoiding racial indicators (and even using social disorder as a proxy) is not discernable from my data, but highlights the importance of further investigating the relationship between images of the racial composition and youths’ sense of a place, particularly those where they lack lived experiences.

Although Kiara, Nicole and Emily entered the program with distinctly different senses of Roxbury they all exited with a more positively valenced sense of this environment. This was due, at least in part, to their new knowledge of its history, which caused them to sense the social and physical realms differently than they did prior to the program. Their perceptions of the physical environs changed from poor quality due to neglect to a sign of community action and struggle against racial bias. For example, after completing the Summer Program Emily still spoke about decay in the physical realm of Roxbury, but this was in the context of redlining and discrimination rather than urban decay. This differed from her description of her Dorchester neighborhood where some of the houses were “just crappy”. Similarly, Kiara’s image of the deficits in Roxbury’s physical realm went from being framed as the product of poverty to the manifestation of a neighborhood oppressed by the racial bigotry of

the city. Nicole's Roxbury narrative shifted from being about the effects of poverty on a neighborhood to the story of a successful struggle of local residents against arson, a city plan for urban renewal, and illegal dumping. The broadening of these girls' place repertoires to include both lived experience in Roxbury and a historicized understanding of the landscape resulted in a more positively valenced sense of this place.

My data does not allow me to untangle the relative effects of time spent working in Roxbury versus learning its history. I speculate that both of these 'inputs' to their repertoires impacted their overall sense of this environment. A greater understanding of the contribution of each represents an interesting area for future inquiry. Another area for future research is to explore why the crossover youths' sense of Roxbury was more obviously impacted by learning about its history than their peers. One hypothesis is that youth who enter the program with a broader place repertoire are cognitively 'primed' to integrate a historical aspect into their sense of a given environment. An analogy might be the increased ability of multi-lingual people to learn new languages. They have more existing language pathways (a broader repertoire) that they draw upon to integrate a new set of linguistic information.

Lincoln

The crossover youths' sense of Lincoln mirrored their sense of the non-urban environments they had experienced themselves. Prior to the summer Kiara had never been to Lincoln and so her sense of it was built upon her experiences in Norwood, the one non-urban environment she was familiar with. She imaged both places as socially isolated, white, and well maintained. Nicole described the landscape of Lincoln as similar to rural New Hampshire, where her grandmother lived. The social environment was the same as that in St. Paul Crossing, the luxury condominium complex where she lived: white, upper class and snobby. Emily's perception of the Lincoln residents' attitudes were reminiscent of her comments about the "uber Ashmont People", they were white and uppity.

All three girls entered The Food Project Summer Program with a belief that the

white residents of Lincoln would be unable to relate to people from the city. Kiara attributed this barrier to the racial biases of white suburbanites. Nicole and Emily, on the other hand, couched their beliefs in terms of the residents' inability to relate to people who were different from themselves. I hypothesize that this explanation reflected the belief system transmitted to them by their parents. Their liberal white parents valued racial diversity. Their residential choices were a manifestation of this value system. The implicit (and possibly explicit) message being relayed to Emily and Nicole was that white people who live outside of the city (in white environments) did not share their value system and did not develop the ability to relate to people who were different from themselves.

Liz, the non-Project participant from Malden, was the only youth I spoke to who had never heard of Lincoln. When I asked about her image of this town she responded that she had never heard of it and had no image whatsoever. I proceeded to inquire about her image of surrounding towns including Concord, Sudbury, Carlisle, and Wellesley. Her response: "I don't know any of these places" illustrated her limited non-urban geographic knowledge and experience. When I noted they were all outside of the city, she asked, "Are they all [like Malden] like more peaceful, too?" This response demonstrated her use of her limited non-urban place repertoire in developing her image of 'similar' environments. Eric's sense of Lincoln, the town where he lived was that it was beautiful, rich and "not diverse." As discussed below, his Asian American identity was a poor 'fit' with the town's predominantly white environment, producing a negative sense of its social realm.

None of the crossover youth who participated in the Summer Program exhibited a major shift in their image of Lincoln. In fact, they all finished the program with a sense that their initial image of the town was accurate: white, boring and beautiful. Emily's image showed the greatest change. After completing the program she had a more positive sense of the landscape, which she now imaged as rural rather than suburban. Her ability to sense the difference between these two types of landscape reflected the breadth of her non-urban place repertoire. She was attuned to the difference between an environment of "McMansions", green lawns and a street layout

of loops and lollipops versus the farmland and acreage that she observed in Lincoln. That being said, her summer experiences affirmed her pre-existing image that Lincoln was “white.” She attributed this image to the fact that she did not see any Lincolnites of color on their walks from the farm to the train station and that the Food Project participants from Lincoln were all white. Kiara’s image emphasized the racial attitudes of Lincoln residents, which she perceived as biased against people of color: “they be looking at you different when you are walking back [from the farm to the train station].” Nicole felt that her walks between the farm and the train station confirmed her pre-existing sense of the physical form of the town; an abundance of trees, big houses, and grass. She interpreted the fact that she did not see any apartment buildings in the town as a signal that Lincoln was, as she had expected, a socially exclusive environment, a place that lacked accommodations and was unwelcoming to lower income families, such as her own. The youths’ statements were intriguing in light of the fact that they did not actually walk or drive by any large homes while working in Lincoln (the buildings that they passed between the farm and the station were an old farmhouse that is now a museum and a small gas station) and rarely saw any Lincoln residents even at the train station. Their descriptions of Lincoln’s built form and social environs was largely based upon their pre-existing, albeit correct, assumptions rather than what they actually observed. This conforms to Bruner and Potter’s (1964) notion of confirmatory bias, which indicates that individuals tend to disregard observations that counter preconceived beliefs and magnify those that support them.

4.4.2 Cross Place Friendships

Identifying cross-place friendships amongst the crossover youth participants was more difficult than it was for their ‘straight’ urban and non-urban peers. This is because, by definition, Kiara, Nicole and Emily had larger place repertoires and more complex place identities. That being said, since the three girls all self-identified as urbanites, when I looked at my data for evidence of cross place friendship amongst this group, I looked for friendships with non-urban youth. This definition was aligned with one

of the goals that Emily articulated for the summer, which was to make friends from the “real suburbs.”

Interestingly, Kiara was the only one of the three crossover participants who felt she had forged a friendship with a non-urban peer. She became friends with Julie, her white crew mate from Sudbury. While The Food Project program gave Kiara the opportunity to bond with a white non-urban female friend, along with the chance to participate in communal white and black tasks, and to have sessions in which people could talk openly about race and their feelings about it, these relationships and experiences were not enough to overcome her negative sense of the racial attitudes of the majority of white non-urbanites, whom she believed were inherently biased against people of color, illustrating the ‘stickiness’ of these beliefs. It was also notable that she did not mention Julie as one of the Summer Program youth that she wished that she had stayed in touch with or include her on the list of Food Project friends that she would include if she were to have a party.

Kiara’s friendship with Julie did, however provide support for her belief in the contact hypothesis. That is, she thought that *white people* could overcome their negative stereotypes of people of color and urban environments by experiencing the city and its residents. Reflecting on her summer experiences, Kiara noted that she saw the program’s impact on some of her peers, like “Julie, like how she changed”, but two weeks in Roxbury was not enough time for white suburbanites to unlearn negative notions about the city and people of color. She noted that the best way to reduce the racial bias of white non-urbanites was to expose them to the environment of the ‘Other’. Her ideal scenario for improving Norwood was to educate its residents about the city:

I would bring all the people from here [Norwood] who really don’t know about Roxbury to Roxbury. They think my hood is like gun shots and gangs. It’s like are you kidding me? You should come and chill with me and my friends in Boston, mostly like the white boys.

Interestingly, she did not see the need for city youth to go out to the suburbs to overcome their stereotypes. In fact, she characterized the Food Project’s learning

objectives for each place quite differently: “So like going to the suburbs [Lincoln] is more like learning about the land. But Roxbury is learning about diversity. . .” This comment highlights the importance of the implicit messages that the youth receive from The Food Project staff about the place characteristics and learning objectives of each environment. This issue is discussed in greater depth in the concluding chapter.

Emily and Nicole did not bond with any of the non-urban youth in the program. Emily’s closest friends were with other *white* youth who resided in urban environments. Nicole worked hard to bond with the city youth of color, who were in her mind, most like herself. Both girls interpreted the attitudes and actions of their non-urban crewmates as confirmations of their pre-existing notions that Lincolnites (white, non-urbanites) were unable to relate to people who were different from themselves. That is, the negative class stereotypes that they brought with them about the close mindedness of Lincolnites were reinforced, rather than over-turned, by their interactions with their non-urban peers.

4.4.3 Racialized Repertoires

The crossover youth articulated racialized images of places, although the prominence of these identifiers was less than amongst their urban peers. For example, none of these youth used race a means of describing the boundaries of their neighborhoods, a common trait amongst the urban youth. Eric, the non-Food Project participant from Lincoln described the people in Lincoln as “Just like of the same race. Like you hardly find any Asians or like Black people here²¹.” Liz, also a control youth, noted that Malden was “white” and her former town Chelsea was “Spanish.” Neither of these youth mentioned race in their discussions of Roxbury, but as noted above both referred to its social disorder.

Prior to participating in The Food Project, the crossover participants used racial identifiers when talking about places, although to a lesser degree than they did after

²¹This comment was interesting in light of the fact that Ellie, an African American youth who was also a part of the control group lived around the corner from Eric. That being said, his perception that the population of the town was overwhelmingly white was, by all means, correct.

the program. At the beginning of the summer, Emily and Nicole used the term “diverse” when describing their neighborhoods. Both girls used this term to convey a sense of pride about where they lived, reflecting the value that they placed on racial diversity. Kiara never spoke directly about the whiteness of Norwood, although her awareness of the lack of people of color came through in her descriptions of the residents’ racial biases and her emphasis on the *lack* of black people in the town.

Nicole was the only one of the crossover youth who spoke explicitly about race in Roxbury both before and after the program, specifically that it was black. Prior to the program, Kiara emphasized the *lack* of black folks in Norwood, but never explicitly named the race of Roxbury residents. After the program her description of Roxbury shifted to include racial indicators such as “nice black” and “nice Hispanic” residents. After completing the Summer Program Emily spoke explicitly about Roxbury’s racial makeup describing the residents of Roxbury as “nice black and Latino families”, noting the absence of the latter group in her own neighborhood. While my data does not allow me to pinpoint the cause of this change, there are at least two plausible hypotheses. The first is simply that the experience of working in Roxbury heightened the crossover participants’ awareness and sharpened their image of the racial characteristics of Roxbury. This may have been further heightened when they compared it to their perceptions of ‘white’ Lincoln. The other plausible hypothesis is that this increase in racialized language reflected greater comfort naming race when speaking about an environment where most of the residents are people of color, a result of the diversity-training component of The Food Project program.

As noted above, all three of the crossover participants came to the Food Project with the image that Lincoln was a white town. Kiara put it bluntly: “White. There’s nothing else.” Emily shared this image: “Well, I think of Lincoln as being predominantly White” and Nicole noted that she thought the town was “white,” but hoped to discover there was more diversity. If anything, their sense of this feature of the town was heightened by their summer experiences. Their interactions with Lincolnites at the farm, all of whom were white and their other observations, which they felt they made while walking to the train station after work, confirmed their preconceptions of

the race of this place.

4.4.4 Environmental Fit

The extent to which the youths' personal identities were aligned with their home environment moderated their sense of their home environments. Their racial, ethnic and class identities emerged as important determinants of environmental fit. The effect of fit was highlighted in the cases where the youth had lived in two very different environments. For example, the tensions between Kiara's identity as an African American in the white environment of Norwood were highlighted when compared to her fit with Roxbury, where the environment matched with her identity as a black, urban youth. Nicole's identity as "multi-ethnic", contributed to her tighter fit with the largely black population in 'the projects' versus the tensions that she felt in her new white condominium complex. This mismatch contributed to her negatively valenced sense of the latter environment, despite the high quality of its built form. An additional tension in her St. Paul's environment was between her lower economic class identity and her perception of the relative wealth of her neighbors. The difference in the quality of her unit compared with the other residents was material evidence of her lower economic class status. Emily's identity as a white, middle-class urbanite meant that there were aspects of her neighborhood environment that 'fit' with her self perceptions and other aspects that were at odds with it. The mismatch stemmed largely from the conflicted nature of her identity. On one hand, Emily saw herself as a social liberal who embraced racial and economic diversity. This identity caused tensions with her perception that her Ashmont Hill neighbors were wealthy snobs who saw themselves as better than the rest of Dorchester. At the same time, the bars and bodegas that comprised the commercial amenities in her neighborhood catered to the lower income, Black residents whose interests and incomes differed from her own, creating tensions between the activities afforded by her environment and her identity as an urban sophisticate.

Liz, the control group youth who lived in the suburban area of Malden, epitomized the importance of ethnic fit in moderating sense of place. While she felt Malden was

quieter and had nicer houses than Chelsea, her strong “Spanish” identity was at odds with her surroundings: “The majority here [in her Malden neighborhood] are white people and so you feel like if you make one noise they complain real quick, they like call the cops on you real quick or whatever...” She shared an example of the type of conflict that arose when she pursued an activity that she saw as quintessentially “Spanish”, preparing for her sweet fifteen:

Well, usually every week, I have a sweet fifteen practice, because I’m turning fifteen in June and like Spanish people go all out on it. It’s like dance and ballroom dancing. And it was just so hot one night that we tried to go out just to have a fun time and they started throwing balls like at us—like at the people and then we started just like pushing people around and they called the cops on us. . . they like the quiet, so if you make loud noise, like that time, they don’t like it and they complain. And it was like - we’re like the only Spanish people that live here...Sometimes, I feel - like when we do something, like when we put the music up or whatever, like they complain about it. It is weird, though, because it is more peaceful here, but it’s like harder to like talk to people in this neighborhood.

This tension was in contrast to Chelsea, where Liz felt comfortable due to her shared “Spanish” identity. The neighbors shared her definition of ‘fun’ and so did not call to complain about loud music, or noise. She noted, “I liked Chelsea better, because that had like - there was like more things to do. Here [Malden] people just stay in their houses.” Liz’s cognitive map of her new neighborhood reflected the lack of ‘hang out’ spaces and social networks in this new, white environment. The map suggests that she did not have a very vivid image of this place. After five minutes of working on her drawing, she noted that she was done as she could not think of anything else to include. Initially her map included her home, and her school (which was actually several miles from her home). During the interview she added a bowling alley that is in the town as that was the one place she could think of where she spent time outside of school (Fig. 4-2).

Liz also alluded to the role that shared language played in determining her sense of place through a description of her greater level of comfort and happiness in the Chelsea school system, where the students conversed in Spanish in order to avoid

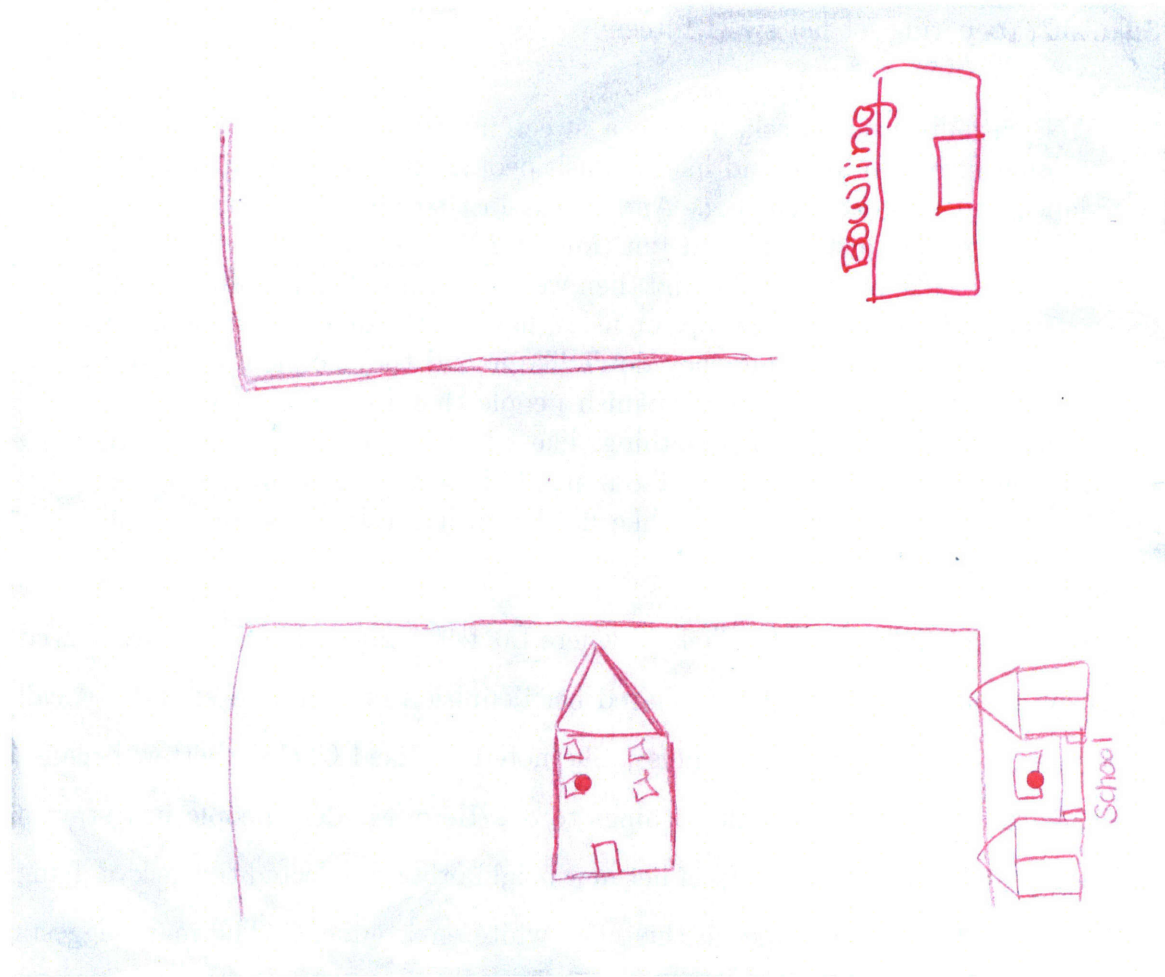


Figure 4-2: Liz's cognitive map of her neighborhood, which she produced in under five minutes. It's lack of detail and focus on her home reflects her lack of a strong image of this environment.

being understood by their teachers. This was despite her statement that her Malden high school was a less socially chaotic place (less fighting and gang activity) and a better learning environment. Liz noted that her mother moved to a less urban environment to access what she believed were better schools. It is plausible that Liz's sense that her new school was less hectic was, at least in part, a reflection of her mother's perceptions of the school's quality.

Eric, the other non-Food Project participant also felt tensions between his ethnic identity as a Chinese American and his largely white Lincoln environment. Though less extreme than the case of Liz, he described avoiding neighborhood activities, such as the annual Halloween party even though the neighbors were "Very inclusive. . . They keep on trying to invite us to events and stuff, but, sometimes, we're busy, or a lot of times we just don't feel like it." He stated that he preferred to hang out with his friends from Chinese school, which was located in an adjacent town or to just stay in his house and play video games.

4.4.5 Increased Urban Pride

Like the urban youth who participated in the program, the three crossover youth garnered a greater sense of urban pride through their Food Project experiences. This produced a tighter fit with their home environments, which they all identified as urban in character. Both explicit and implicit messages that the youth received over the course of the summer contributed to their increased identity and pride, including the urban and suburban categorizations employed by The Food Project staff. The youth picked up on these categories, and increasingly identified themselves in these terms. This phenomenon was strengthened by the train ride to and from Lincoln; the time that the youth bonded and socialized most freely. The rides facilitated their development of an urban group identity. The emphasis on the extraordinary history of the Dudley Street Neighborhood, which the staff generalized to Roxbury, contributed to the youths' feeling that the city was a special place that they were proud to belong to.

For Emily, one manifestation of this increased pride was the reduction of her

concern about negative stereotyping of Dorchester. This change was related to an increased sense of pride about being from the city. By the end of the summer, Kiara's belief that she 'belonged' to the city was so strong that the thought of not living there (or admitting to this) threatened her identity as an urbanite. Even while she was physically in Norwood, she spoke about Roxbury as her home. Nicole finished the program with a heightened awareness and pride of the 'urbanity' of Brookline, where she could just "walk ten minutes, and I'm where all the stores are, and everything." She felt that Lincoln, where you would have to "travel 30 minutes to get to a Starbucks" was a lesser living environment.

4.4.6 Conclusions

The crossover youths' place repertoires mediated their sense of places. As the youth participants moved through The Food Project program, their place repertoires expanded. This expansion included an heightened awareness of the Dudley Street neighborhood's history, which led them to reframe their images of Roxbury's social and physical realms as products of community activism and racial bias. While my data do not provide a definitive explanation as to why learning this history appeared to impact their sense of Roxbury more than their peers, I propose that it reflects the fact that their broader place repertoires facilitated a greater appreciation of outstanding place characteristics, including Dudley's history. This heightened their awareness of the 'mythology' of Roxbury, which resulted in their finishing the program with a more positively valenced sense of this environment. Participation in the program also increased the youths' use of explicitly racial indicators to describe Roxbury. My data do not allow me to say whether this change reflected a new awareness of the racial composition of this place due to the crossover youths' experiences working there, a greater comfort speaking about due to the diversity education component of the Summer Program, or some other mechanism. What is clear is that over the course of the summer the non-urban and crossover youth participants' use of racial indicators to describe their place images increased; their language converged with that of their urban peers. The significance of this convergence for planning practice is discussed

in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

Working in Lincoln and meeting youth from the suburbs resulted in the reinforcement of the crossover youth's pre-existing sense of these environments. In some respects, this meant the corroboration of negative stereotypes, including a belief that the residents were racist and exclusive. Their failure to encounter youth of color from this town and their interactions with their non-urban crewmates led Kiara, Nicole and Emily to finish the program with an overwhelming sense that this environment was white and was not a place to which they belonged. For Kiara, this sense was rooted in her belief that the residents were, in general, biased against people of color. For Emily and Nicole this sense of being an outsider was based on a feeling that their values were not aligned with the town's population.

The extent to which the crossover youths' personal identities were aligned with their home environment, what I term their environmental fit, emerged as an important moderating variable. The tighter the youths' fit with their home environment, the less likely they were to positively sense new and different environments. The youths' ethnic, racial and class identities influenced their sense of fit in their home environment. They tended to have more positively valenced senses of places where their identities were tightly aligned with the environments' activities and demographic characteristics. The importance of fit was highlighted in cases where the youth had lived in places in which their personal identities were tightly aligned with their environmental context followed by another environment where this was not the case, such as Kiara's experiences in white Norwood versus black Roxbury.

I am tentative in making broad generalizations about the crossover youths' images of places. Their unique identities, values and social skills influenced their sense of places as did the variation in the extent of their place repertoires. Despite these many differences, the notions of environmental fit and place repertoires offer strong explanatory power for their overall sense of places. These variables, with an emphasis on the role of the learning of history, provide a useful framework for thinking about how young people with a range of place experiences sense places (Fig. 4-3).

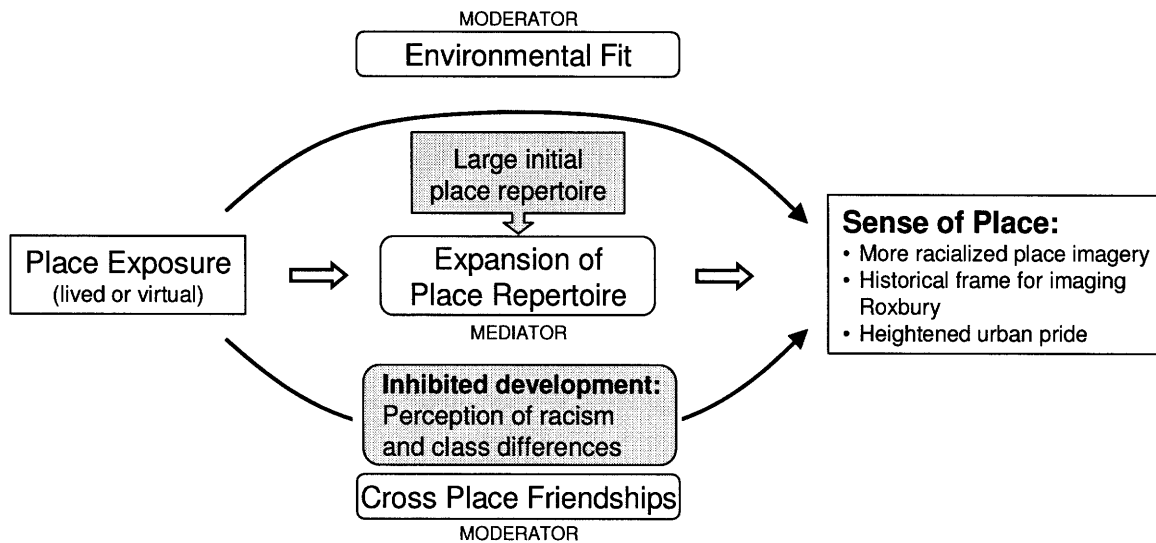


Figure 4-3: A diagram illustrating the model that emerged from my research with the crossover youth. Place repertoire mediates the effect of place exposures on the outcome variable, sense of place. The direction and strength of the effect of place repertoire on sense of place is moderated by environmental fit. Perceptions of racism and class differences amongst the crossover youth inhibited the development of cross-place friendships. Some of the changes that I observed in the non-urban youths' sense of places after participating in the Summer Youth Program are listed. Particularly noteworthy is the incorporation of Roxbury's history into their sense of this environment.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The *sense of place* literature is rife with descriptions of what people feel about particular places. This often includes a rich description of their affective connection or narratives at a particular time, but does not elucidate the processes by which their sense of place developed. My work begins to address this gap. Using the Food Project as a case, I examined how youth developed new senses of familiar and unfamiliar environments. The youth who participated in The Food Project Summer Program experienced intense, albeit spatially bounded, exposure to two new environments over a two-month period. The Food Project Summer Program can be thought of as an accelerated version of more mundane place experience; without the focused intervention that this type of program provided, repeated exposures to new, non-residential places tend to occur over a longer period of time than the two months spent with The Project. Studying an accelerated place experience such as that enabled by The Food Project's Summer Program provides a window into how youth develop relationships to places over longer periods of time.

5.1 An Analytic Framework

Although the sense of places of the youth in this study reflected their individually unique identities, values and social skills, the results of my research led to the development of a general framework that has utility to guide future research questions

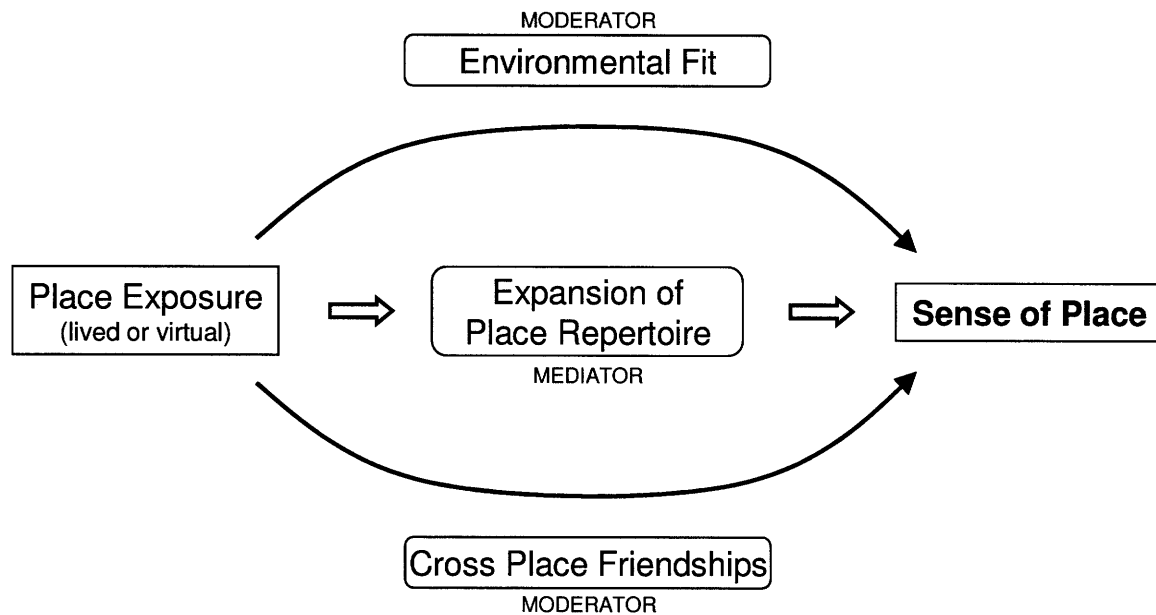


Figure 5-1: A diagram illustrating the general model that emerged from my research. Place repertoire mediates the effect of place exposures on the outcome variable, sense of place. The direction and strength of the effect of place repertoire on sense of place is moderated by environmental fit and cross-place friendships.

in this area. This framework includes the mediating variable I call place repertoires, which was moderated by the youths' environmental fit, and cross place friendships (Fig. 5-1).

The Food Project program expanded the youth participants' place repertoires by providing them intense lived experiences in the environments of Roxbury and Lincoln. Their expanded repertoires impacted their initial sense of Lincoln, Roxbury and, in some cases, their neighborhoods and home environments. The impact of expanded place repertoires was tempered or moderated by a pre-existing strong identification with the perceived superiority of a particular type of home-place i.e., a tight environmental fit. The impact of an expanded repertoire was diminished if the acquisition of a broader place repertoire remained a physical/aesthetic experience, rather than a socially immersive one i.e., when cross-place friendships were not formed.

5.1.1 Place Repertoires

A place repertoire includes an individual's lived and virtual experiences in a set of places. Lived experiences vary in intensity, from being a resident of a place to a one-time exposure. Virtual experiences come from outside sources, such as the media, peers and family. In making assessments or discussing places, all of the youth drew on these repertoires, mentally comparing and contrasting features of places with one another. My observations indicated that lived experiences generally provided higher resolution images of places than those that came from ephemeral contacts or virtual sources. The contribution of virtual place experiences to the youths' images and perceptions of places represents an interesting area for future inquiry.

The youth participants entered The Food Project with a range of repertoires. The non-urban youth had little or no experience in urban environments and many of the urban youth had rarely left the city of Boston prior to participating in the program. In fact, most of them had little experience traveling within the city itself. The crossover youth were those that had experience in places that were urban and non-urban and/or lived in environments that were difficult to classify due to their 'hybrid' nature.

As noted in the literature review of this thesis, the use of the term sense of place is widely accepted to have a positive connotation—both by academics and by those involved in practice (such as planners and architects). The results of my work suggest that rethinking this assumption is an important part of truly understanding the individual's experience of a place. Most of the youth expressed ambivalence about some aspect of their environment. The youth from the city of Boston expressed both a strong emotional attachment to their neighborhoods, largely due to their social networks and/or ethnic fit, while simultaneously expressing concerns about social pathologies, such as crime, drug dealing and safety. This was aligned with Vale's (1997) notion of empathological emotions with respect to place. It also indicates that Chawla's (1992) framework for analyzing place relationships that included Affection, Transcendence, Ambivalence and Idealization, is a more accurate characterization of

the complex nature of the way people experience places than much of the existing sense of place literature acknowledges.

The expansion in the youths' repertoires that resulted from their participation in the program did not necessarily lead to a more positive sense of a given place. For example, the urban and cross over youth's repertoires were expanded through their exposure to Lincoln, but most of these youth finished the program with a negatively valenced sense of the social realm of this environment. The stickiness of this image is discussed in greater depth below, but reflects the importance that race and class (two variables that are not often considered in writings on sense of place) play in determining the different ways in which people experience the same place.

One of the interesting differences that emerged across the three groups was the greater tendency for the crossover youth to reframe their image of Roxbury using the historical narrative that was conveyed to them by The Food Project staff. That is, after the program Nicole, Emily and Kiara all framed their image of Roxbury in terms of its grass roots revitalization. Other youth, including Steve and Emmanuelle acknowledged the history of this area, but it did not become the focus of their Roxbury narrative, as was the case with their crossover peers. In Mario Paul Small's (2002, 2004) study of Villa Victoria, a subsidized housing project in Boston's South End, he argued that the neighborhood narrative frames of the residents generally reflected their cohort positions. That is, the 'first cohort' who engaged in the revitalization efforts framed their narratives about the development as a "beautiful place" whereas the second cohort residents framed their narratives through more 'negative' lenses, such as "the projects." While Small notes that there were exceptions amongst the second cohort, namely those had family members who were involved in the grassroots action of the 1970s, he does not explore other possible pathways, which might lead to the reframing (in a more positive light), of the second cohort's narratives. My data illustrates that this type of reframing is possible, particularly amongst youth with broader place repertoires.

While my data does not allow me to draw conclusions about what caused the greater tendency amongst the crossover youth to take up a historical frame for Rox-

bury, I hypothesize that it was related to the broader place repertoires that they brought with them to the program. Their larger bank of place experiences facilitated a greater appreciation of outstanding place characteristics, including the Dudley Street Neighborhood's history, which they generalized to all of Roxbury. Their new awareness and appreciation of this 'story', resulted in their finishing the program with a new place narrative and a more positively valenced sense of this environment. While this finding requires follow up research, it suggests that people with broader place repertoires are better able to integrate an understanding of sociopolitical processes into their understanding of places than those with little outside experience.

In terms of planning practice, this finding highlights the importance of the nature of the interpretive frames that people have access to and utilize in determining their sense of a particular place. That youth with broader repertoires were more 'primed' to take up the historical frame of Roxbury indicates that providing young people with opportunities to experience different types of environments may give them a greater capacity for learning about place.

Racialized Repertoires

There was systematic variation across the three groups of youth in terms of their use of racial indicators to describe places. Prior to the program all of the urban youth readily used race to describe their home environments, as well as Lincoln and Roxbury. There was a tendency to use race as a means of delineating the boundaries of their neighborhoods and home environments that was not apparent amongst the youth in the other two groups. The crossover youth all spoke about the race of their home environment (in the case of Kiara this was in reference to the lack of black people in Norwood) and Lincoln but were less likely to talk about the race of Roxbury. The non-urban youth used racial language sparingly in their discussion of places, avoiding it completely in their descriptions of Roxbury.

After the program the non-urban youth participants employed racial indicators in their discussions of their home environments, neighborhoods, as well as Lincoln and Roxbury. Whether this was an indication of a higher resolution of these places or a

greater comfort in using this language is an interesting question that deserves further investigation. What is clear is that after the summer, *all* of the youth participants spoke in more *similar* terms about the racial characteristics of Lincoln and Roxbury than they did prior to the program (Fig. 5-2). The urban youths' use of racial indicators did not change post program but at the end of the program they still employed these descriptors more readily than the other two groups.

The convergence of the youth participants' place language with regard to race has important planning implications. That is, a lack of a shared language of place, presents a major obstacle to collaborative planning efforts that aim to build consensus amongst people from different backgrounds and/or across regions. As Briggs (1998) points out, planners who are able to *decode* the speech of their various constituents as well as use language that is understood by these folks can avoid conflicts and misunderstandings that inhibit the community building process. This is because the lack of a shared language can be a barrier to planning, inhibiting effective communication across stakeholder groups. This is particularly relevant in planning for contested places, such as gentrifying inner city neighborhoods or regional planning efforts, which often bring together folks who represent a broad range of geographic, economic and racial backgrounds. Although no *fully* common language or understanding of a place can be arrived at, the ongoing, self-conscious search for achievable levels of a shared vocabulary by planners contributes to what Healey (1992) terms 'communicative' planning and action. Practitioners who are alert to the fact that there are situations where stakeholders do not share a place vocabulary can better facilitate the type of dialogue that results in a common language (or at least acts as a 'translator' between groups) and possibly even a shared vision of place. In the words of Healy (1992), communicative planning promotes our understanding of what we have to do to "live together but differently (p. 249)." This understanding is particularly important and difficult to achieve in racially and culturally diverse environments.

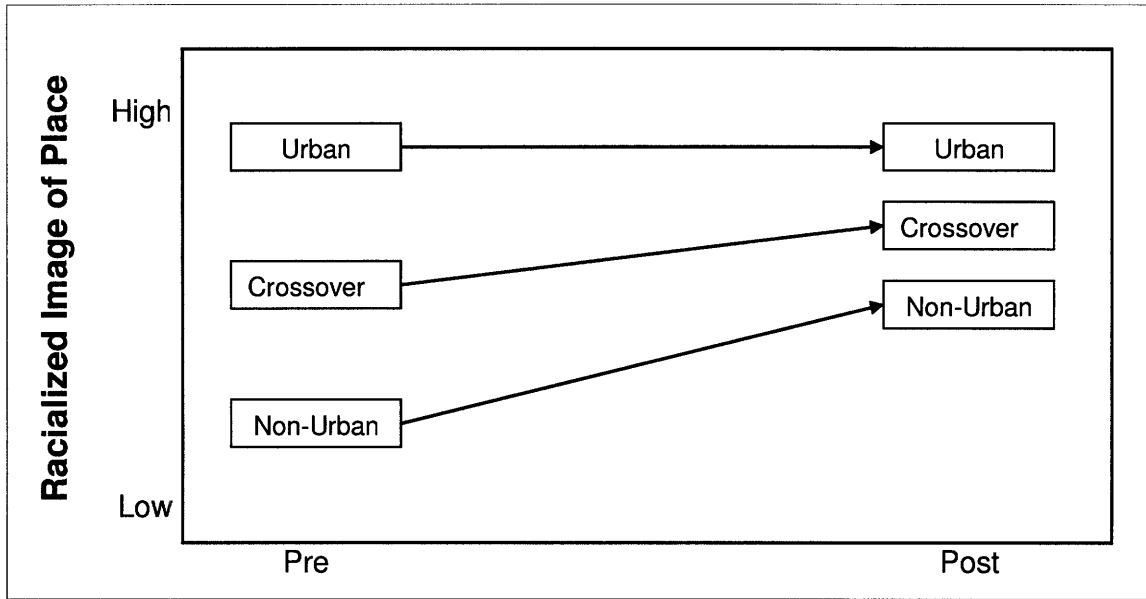


Figure 5-2: A schematic diagram charting the change in the use of racial indicators in The Food Project participants' descriptions of places as they moved through the program.

5.1.2 Environmental Fit

Youth whose personal identities were a tight fit with their home environments tended toward a more positive sense of these locales. Their fit moderates the direction and magnitude of changes in their sense of place that resulted from their expanded place repertoires. For example, a tight fit with a non-urban place inhibited the non-urban Food Project participants' ability to see positive attributes when they worked in Roxbury (and expansion of their repertoire), an environment very different from their own. An example was Pete, the tight fit between his boy-scout identity and his home environment gave him the sense that environments with different physical forms were undesirable. This nature lover could not see the gardens of Roxbury as a positive attribute. In contrast, tension between a youth's identity and their home environment resulted in negative charges on their sense of their home environment. This critical eye, in turn, facilitated their ability to see positive attributes in new places. For example, Emmanuelle was 'primed' to notice the commercial amenities in Roxbury, something she felt was lacking in her home environment.

Ethnic fit emerged as an important mediating variable for the urban and cross over youth, but did not appear to be a factor amongst the non-urban youth. That racial fit factored into the sense of places of the white cross over youth and youth of color, indicates that it was not simply an issue of being a member of a racial minority. Both Emily and Nicole's racial identities as white youth impacted their sense of fit in their home environments. Both girls had lived experience where they were part of the racial minority; Nicole as a resident of Egmont and Emily as a resident of Dorchester. This was not the case for any of the white non-urban youth. I propose that living in a place where they were a part of the racial minority heightened Emily and Nicole's own racial identities. In the case of Nicole this resulted in a tight fit with Egmont as she self-identified as a social liberal who valued diversity. There was a match between her identity and environment. In the case of Emily, the strong value that she placed on diversity fit well with her environment, but the tensions between her identity as a sophisticate and the commercial amenities of her neighborhood countered this effect. This resulted in an ambivalent sense of this environment.

Interestingly, the two black non-participating youth who lived in Lincoln (that I interviewed after the program ended) did not reference their racial identities in our discussion of their towns. My data does not provide an explanation for this difference. One hypothesis is that having lived their entire lives in a predominantly white community, their minority status was a non-issue for them in terms of their relationship with their home environment and hence did not emerge during our discussion. Another plausible explanation is that the girls, with whom I spoke only once, felt inhibited about speaking to a 'stranger' about perceptions of racial bias in their town. It is also possible that this lack of race talk was a reflection of difficulties or even discomfort related to verbalizing their own complex racial identities. Both girls identified as African American, but one had a white father and the other a multi-racial mother.

None of the non-urban participants gave any indication that the race of their neighborhood had an impact on their experience of place. My hypothesis is that for these three white youth, Steve, Julie and Pete, race was not a strong feature of

their neighborhood. This is not to suggest that they were race blind, but rather that being white folks in white communities, race was a non-issue for them in reference to their home environments. After the program, all three youth expressed a heightened awareness of the whiteness of their towns, particularly in comparison to Roxbury, but they still did not make statements that suggested their racial identities were a factor in shaping their connection to their home environments. That being said, it is plausible that if the youth were to move to a place where they were a part of the racial minority, their own racial identities would take on much more saliency and directly impact their experience of place.

While sociologists such as Charles (2005) have shown that racial groups prefer to live with 'their own' (the degree of integration that they find optimal varies across these groups), they have not studied whether residing in a place where they are in the racial minority inhibits their development of a positive sense or emotional attachment and investment in that place. Research that explicitly addresses the role that racial fit plays in determining sense of place represents an important area for future research.

5.1.3 Place Idealization

Not surprisingly, many of the youth with whom I spoke had lived in more than one environment. In fact, an alternative organizational structure for my cases was to divide the youth into two groups, 'movers' and 'stayers.' In general, the youth who moved from one environment to another described their former living environment in more positive terms than their current one. In his discussion of individuals displaced during urban renewal, Fried (1966) noted that moving undermined their established interpersonal relationships and group ties, which threatened their group identity. Moving is likely even more difficult for adolescents as their individual and group identities are works in progress (Erikson, 1950). Given the tenuous nature of an adolescent's sense of self, it is not surprising that the 'movers' I spoke to craved their former environments. Their relationships in these places were established and/or they felt more 'at home.'

Paul, Kiara, Nicole and Julie all had very positive senses of prior places that they

had lived. Paul' ethnic fit with the 'Spanish' environment of Jamaica Plain was lacking in his new Roxbury residence; Kiara felt that Roxbury was socially cohesive and vibrant, unlike the socially isolating, racially biased Norwood; Nicole, while recognizing that the built form of her new condominium complex was of higher quality than the Egmont projects, expressed a sense of longing for the social cohesion of the latter; and Julie felt that her former neighborhood was a true "community" and her current residence lacked a sense of social cohesion. This pattern held amongst most of the control group 'movers', such as Liz, the "Spanish" youth who moved from Chelsea to Malden. The exceptions included Rob, whose move from Mattapan to Egmont meant a move from what he perceived as a more dangerous environment to a safer one. Brianna, the "Spanish" female who moved from Albuquerque to Eggleston two years before I met her had a more positive sense of her current neighborhood, which was due to its overwhelmingly "Spanish" character, a tight fit with her ethnicity.

It may be that the youths' preference for their former environments reflected an idealized image of that place or even a sense of grief over a lost 'home'(Fried, 1966). The tendency to reimage prior living environments in a more positive light is found amongst immigrant groups, such as the tendency of Jews to idealize the shtetl. Gans (1962, pg. 16) warns against this tendency to "romanticize the slum" in his study of The West End, but also reminds us that places that outsiders perceive as unappealing environments may, in fact, be "by and large a good place to live (pg. 16)." Teasing out whether the qualities of a former living environment were fact or fiction cuts to the heart of the difficulties involved in relying on a purely phenomenological approach to understand people's sense of places. It also underscores the utility of Gieryn's (2000) more holistic framework for studying human-environment relationships, which advocates simultaneous consideration of: 1) geographic location; 2) material form; and 3) meaningfulness. That is, an assessment of the conditions of the physical environment combined with an individual's expression of its meaningfulness provides a more complete picture of the experience of a given place.

The literature suggests that time explains the youths' preferences for their former living environments. For example length of residence was found to be one of

the predictors in the development of neighborhood attachment by sociologist Robert Sampson (1988). This literature does not, however, consider the role of fit in mediating an individual's sense of their home environment. While it is beyond the scope of my data to determine whether the youth would develop more positive relationships with their home environments over time, I speculate that tensions between the youths' racial, ethnic or class identity present a particularly strong barrier. I further hypothesize that this barrier is compounded in cases where language of the individual differs from the community where he or she is residing. This theory comes from the observation of Paul and Liz's very tight fit with their former "Spanish" living environments, which included a shared language combined with their strong feelings of being outsiders in their new, non-Spanish neighborhoods. Clearly these two cases do not provide enough evidence to make definitive statements about the role of ethnicity in determining sense of places, this observation is sufficient to justify further exploration of this area. A longitudinal study would be necessary to understand the relative roles of time versus ethnicity (or race) in determining a youth's sense of their home environment.

5.1.4 Cross Place Friendships

The *contact hypothesis* states that exposure to and interaction with other racial groups results in the modification of exaggerated or broad stereotypes and undermines justifications for racism and prejudice (Allport, 1954). One of the questions that I brought to this research was whether contact with a new environment, or with residents from places different than one's own, might reduce negative stereotypes of that place. The answer to this question was 'sometimes'. That is, some youth's images were pliable, while others were more 'fixed'. Where youths' images did show major shifts, it tended to be in the way that they perceived Roxbury. The urban and crossover youths' images of Lincoln were most static. While there is almost certainly a multi-modal explanation for this observation, the one that emerged most clearly from my data was the variation in perceptions of crossplace friendships across the sample.

The youth on my crew, Steve and Julie, who felt that they had made meaningful

crossplace friendships over the course of the summer also showed changes, in a positive direction, in their senses of Roxbury. Both youths' image of this neighborhood directly reflected the stories and images transmitted to them from their peers, youth who they felt they had made close friendships with. In the case of Julie, this was Kiara, and in the case of Steve, this was Paul and Joe, a Puerto Rican youth from Roxbury who was not on our crew. Observing Steve and Julie's obvious desire to speak with their urban peers about what it was like to live in the city indicates that these relationships contributed to their more positive sense of Roxbury post-program. It was striking that the urban and crossover youth did not perceive that they had made close friendships with the non-urban youth; their prior images of Lincoln were reinforced and in some cases heightened, by their Food Project experiences.

The asymmetrical perception of friendships garnered by the youth participants came through most clearly when the youth commented on whom they bonded with over the summer, remained in touch with after the program, and their responses to my question regarding which five Food Project youth they would invite to a party at their house. Steve's party list included three urban youth, and Julie's had two. Although Kiara noted that she had bonded with Julie, she did not include her name on her party list. In fact, none of the urban or crossover youths said they would invite a non-urban youth. This finding is striking in light of the sociological literature on social networks, which indicates that for the poor and socially disadvantaged, relationships with people who are unlike themselves i.e., have different resources, represent an important source of social capital. These relationships are useful in terms of helping them to 'get ahead.' In contrast relationships with people who are more like themselves do not tend to provide the same opportunities for social advancement. That is, "those who help me get by can sometimes do relatively little to help me get ahead" (Briggs, 1998 p.179). Planners who are interested in creating opportunities for economic development in low income communities need to be cognizant of the barriers to creating situations in which low income individuals and communities are able to create meaningful ties with higher resource partners. No doubt these 'bridging' ties are valuable, but my observations of the youths' social interactions highlighted some of the barriers to their

creation.

There are a number of possible explanations for the asymmetrical perceptions of friendships. The first was that the urban youth spent extra time together each day traveling on the commuter rail to and from Lincoln, giving them more time to bond on the train. However, given the intense time the youth spent with their crew every day, which included between 3 and 4 non-urban youth, this is not a satisfactory explanation. A second hypothesis, which was proposed in the discussion of the urban case studies, is that the urban youth felt that the greater wealth of the non-urban youth was a barrier to bonding. While this was certainly a factor, it did not explain why wealthy urbanites or crossovers, such as Emily, did not bond with their non-urban crew mates. Another partial explanation may be found in the well-studied sociological phenomenon of homophily, the idea that people form strong bonds with people who are most 'like' them on multiple dimensions (McPherson et al. 2001). The urban and non-urban youths' self-segregating behaviors that I described in their narratives is likely a reflection of this phenomenon, although it does not explain the non-urban youths' belief that they had formed strong bonds with the urban youth, who were unlike themselves along race, class and place lines. A final hypothesis relates to the implicit and explicit message regarding urban pride that is imbedded in The Food Project program. In an effort to ensure that all of the youth leave the program appreciating the assets of Roxbury and that they know the narrative of Dudley's grass roots revitalization efforts, the staff tended to 'sell' the city. This contributed to the 'outside of Boston' youths' desire to be friends with the cool urbanites, which ultimately translated into an asymmetric perception of them. There was no indication during the week-long training session for the Summer Youth Program staff that promoting the city over Lincoln was a program goal.

Regardless of the mechanism that led to Steve and Julie's perception that they had forged meaningful crossplace friendships, this phenomenon was interesting in light of the fact that both of these youths' negative prior assessments about Roxbury were shifted into a much more positive light over the course of the summer. This brings up the question of whether meaningful cross place friendships that are combined with an

intervention program that emphasizes place and race education, are a necessary or important condition for place based education programs to overturn negative place stereotypes. Teasing out the relative importance of the program content, the nature of these relationships as well as the predictive value of the other identified factors represents an important area for future research. That is, if urban planners are interested in reducing bias and stereotyping of places, it is important to understand whether contact with residents of these unfamiliar environments is an essential part of an effective strategy. My perception is that it is. This is rooted in my observation of the frequency with which Steve and Julie referenced their contact with their urban peers as triggers for changing their image of Roxbury.

5.1.5 An Alternative Theory: Confirmatory Bias

There are alternative theories that I have not looked at that might further elucidate the manner in which young peoples' sense of places develops. Exploring them all is well beyond the scope of this dissertation, but an example of such a theory, i.e., confirmatory bias, is explored here. The Food Project participants all entered the program with images of places that they had not directly experienced. For example, none of the non-urban youth had ever been in Roxbury (other than for their Food Project interview), yet they all entered the program with a sense that Roxbury's social and physical environments were disordered. Similarly, none of the urban youth had ever been in Lincoln, yet they all shared the image that the residents were racist and rich. Finally, all three crossover youth (who self-identified as 'city kids' not 'suburbanites') entered and exited the Summer Program with a sense that the residents' of Lincoln were closed-minded; Kiara's emphasis was on the racial bias' of these folks and Emily and Nicole's on their inability to relate to those from the outside. Other than Steve and Julie, all of the youth believed that their summer experiences provided material evidence for their prior images of these unfamiliar places, even where this was clearly not the case. For example, most of the youth noted that the houses in Lincoln were, as they had expected, large. While generally an accurate perception, the youth did not in fact garner physical evidence for this belief through

their Food Project experiences. Their walks between the train station and the farm did not expose them to the homes, just the woods and a playground.

One plausible explanation for the strength of these initial images is found in the psychological notion of confirmatory bias. A range of research in this area reveals that once people have formed strong hypotheses about something, they are often inattentive to contradictory evidence. Rabin (1998) describes Bruner and Potter's (1964) ingenious work in this area. These psychologists showed subjects blurry pictures that were gradually brought into sharper focus. Different subjects began viewing the images at different points in the process (some more blurry than others), but all ended looking at an equally focused image. Those subjects who started viewing the image at the blurriest stage were the least likely to identify the final picture correctly. Bruner and Potter (1964, p.424) concluded that this was due to the "difficulty of rejecting incorrect hypotheses based on substandard cues." That is, they were 'married' to their initial beliefs about what that image contained. Similarly, the youths' images of the less familiar environments were based on virtual and imagined imagery, making them 'blurry.' They had trouble rejecting this sense, despite the fact that they did not have any experiences that supported this hypothesis.

5.2 Program Recommendations:

Enhancing the youths' experience of place

While this thesis is not meant to be a program evaluation, my deep immersion with The Food Project's Summer Youth Program over a two year period provided me with some interesting insights with respect to how the organization might enhance the youths' experience of places. For example, the uneven treatment of the social forces that shaped the landscapes that the youth encounter in Lincoln and Roxbury resulted in most of the youth finishing the program with a much 'flatter' sense of the former. Roxbury was dynamic and Lincoln 'just was.' In addition, the rules regarding where the youth were free to explore in each environment sent implicit messages about

the attitudes of Lincoln residents toward people of color from the city.

5.2.1 Interpretive Frames

Dolores Hayden's (1995) suggestion that attaching a historical narrative to a place is an essential component of developing a positive sense of that location was borne out by my observations of the Summer Youth Program. The Food Project's emphasis on the social history of Roxbury and the lack of an equivalent narrative for Lincoln influenced the way that the youth participants' experienced these places. As noted above, this difference provides at least a partial explanation as to why the majority of program participants' exited the program with a more positively valenced sense of Roxbury than they started with, but exhibited little or no change in their sense of Lincoln. That the youth learn the story of how Roxbury residents fought to save their landscape juxtaposed to the lack of any historicizing of Lincoln, implies that the former is a product of hard work by residents and the latter simply exists. In reality, both are 'contested' landscapes. The residents of Lincoln, who made a series of decisions, in the 1950s, to acquire one third of the town's area (1600 acres) and introduced the town's conservation oriented zoning policies, shaped the landscape. Without these land management policies, it is almost certain that developers would have bought up and subdivided most of the town's farms. It was striking that over the two summers I spent with this organization, I never heard the summer staff refer to the Lincoln land by its actual name, 'Bakers Bridge Farm'; naming it might provide (or at least imply) some historical context to the land. In fact, Lincoln is in some senses the contemporary equivalent of Roxbury in the mid-1800s: a landscape comprised of active farms and gentlemen's estates with a high degree of garden and landscape intervention.

Providing the youth with the history of both landscapes, particularly the crossover youth, who appeared primed to integrate new information into their image of place, would give them a new interpretive frame through which to view Lincoln. Even if it did not change their overall sense of this environment, it seems safe to speculate that this history would give them a greater understanding of Lincoln's social and environ-

mental history, and would move the youth toward a more generalized understanding of the dynamic nature of landscapes. This is, they would grasp the way that landscapes are the products of social, historical and natural processes. This represents the first step toward developing what Harvey referred to as a 'geographic imagination'. That is, the ability to see connections between their own identity and Roxbury and Lincoln and how the situation in one place (e.g. the desire of urbanites to move out of the city into big homes) is related to one's experience of another place (e.g. the subdividing of farms).

Historicizing Roxbury's landscape resulted in some convergence in the youth participants' image of that environment. I suggest that the same would occur if Lincoln's landscape was given a similar treatment by the program. The promotion of shared narratives has important implications for planning practice. Hayden (1995) argues that it is "shared public meanings that contributes most to an American sense of place" (p.227). Historical and cultural stories increase a place's legibility to both inhabitants and visitors (Frenchman, 2001), thereby leading to a greater emotional connection to that environment. Building shared narratives of particular locales represents a potentially useful strategy for building consensus across stakeholder groups, a challenge that is often faced by practicing planners. This is not to suggest that a shared narrative is a 'silver bullet' for planning in contested spaces, but it does highlight the role that finding common stories can have for planning practice.

5.2.2 Place Stereotypes

An implicit goal of The Food Project Summer Program is to reduce negative stereotypes about places, particularly Roxbury. Yet there were programmatic features that appeared to reinforce place stereotypes about both Roxbury and Lincoln, particularly through inconsistencies in the regulation of the youths' mobility in each environment. For example, the staff emphasized the physical dangers that the youth faced in Roxbury (recall the site supervisor's warning to the youth about not wearing "bling" because people in Roxbury were more apt to rob you). These warnings were accompanied by rules about moving around the neighborhood: the youth had to be

accompanied by a staff member when they walked between growing sites and to the Common for the weekly farmer's market. This was in contrast to Lincoln's woods and quiet roads, which the youth walked along to get to the train station after work each day. The implication was that the town was safe enough for the youth to travel unsupervised. While Roxbury is certainly 'statistically' more dangerous than Lincoln, the differences in the rules in each of these places heightened some of the youths' prior negative assumptions. In the case of Justin (and the youth from previous summers who were caught stealing ice cream sandwiches and drinks from the local grocery store), Lincoln was a tempting environment. These youth were drawn into illegal activities in this place. In some senses they required protection from themselves in this unfamiliar, unmonitored environment. In order to protect from future incidents such as these, the organization might reconsider what constitutes 'safe' and 'dangerous' spaces for the youth, and staff these places accordingly.

Yet the message being relayed was more complex than the simple stereotypes that the inner city is dangerous and the countryside is safe. Youth's freedom to explore non-Food Project social spaces in Lincoln was actually more restricted than it was in Roxbury. This was because the youth were not allowed to enter the shops in Lincoln (unless they were accompanied by a parent before or after work). This restriction only affected the urban youth because they spent time waiting for their train to arrive to this area each day after work. In contrast, there were no explicit restrictions on the youths' access to the commercial venues around the Andrew subway station in North Dorchester, the meeting point for all of the non-urban youth and some of the city youth when we worked on the Roxbury land. The result was that the youth often visited a nearby Dunkin Donuts before and after work. There are several ways of interpreting these restrictions. The first suggests that there was a greater level of trust in the non-urban youth's ability to stay out of trouble in the environment of the 'Other', and a simultaneous lack of trust in the urban youth. The second proposes that the social environment of Roxbury is tough enough to protect itself from the rebellious/trouble making urban teens. Regardless of the reasons for their development, these incongruities in the rules sent messages to the youth participants

about how welcome they were in each of these environments and these messages impacted their sense of these places. In general, the youth finished the program with a belief that Lincoln was safe and boring and the residents in Lincoln were closed-minded, as they had expected. This image was aligned with the restrictions that The Food Project enforced in terms of entering the residents' social spaces.

The program did not promote opportunities for spontaneous, positive social interactions with Lincolnites that might have countered the youths' negative stereotypes of these folks, such as entering the grocery store to buy drinks after a day out in the fields (even if it was with staff supervision) or taking a tour of the town's landmarks, including their innovative affordable housing development, Lincoln Woods, located just behind the grocery store that is adjacent to the train station. This may have countered the widely held stereotype that everyone in Lincoln lived in single family detached homes. The youths' freedom to explore the MBTA station around Dorchester, on the other hand, appeared to have contributed to the non-urban youths' sense that this neighborhood was more secure and friendly than they imagined prior to the program. Clearly the amount of freedom that the youth are given must reflect the organization's capacity to ensure their safety and not disrupt the security of each environment. That being said, a more equal treatment of the historical, social and physical landscapes of Lincoln and Roxbury would enhance the youths' experience of these places and help the organization meet one of its goals, i.e., breaking down stereotypes.

5.3 Closing Comments

My interest in the concept of sense of place is related to my desire to understand the processes that connect people to places and cause them to act as stewards of that environment. This is directly linked to the notion of sustainable communities. That is, places that people are willing to invest in and maintain over time. Caring for a place can take many forms. In the case of wilderness, it might mean lobbying for policies that protect land from development; for farmland, it might mean buying locally

grown produce; and in the case of urban neighborhoods, it might mean participating in park cleanups. These actions are all rooted in an individual's emotional investment in a place. By studying the way that youth develop their images, perceptions and ultimately sense of different types of places, I developed a framework that can be used by academics and practitioners from a variety of fields and disciplines to focus on the multiple factors that connect people to different sorts of places, including their place repertoires, environmental fit, and cross place friendships. This framework is of great importance to urban planners, community organizers and environmental educators with interests in developing strategies for engaging youth in the stewardship of their environments. The results are also relevant for scholars, planners and decision makers interested in how people in a diverse and segregated society develop a *racialized* sense of places. The shift in the youth participants' place language and interpretive frames underscores the importance and possibilities for planning practitioners to work with their constituents to build common (or at least convergent) understandings and visions of places. The results of my work also highlight important areas for future research, including comparative studies that elucidate the roles of place exposure versus program content in reducing place stereotypes, and the impact of virtual versus lived experiences on an individual's place repertoire.

My hope is that this work will encourage urban planners to look beyond the traditional sense of place literature that emphasizes 'natural' environments, home, and what I argue is a romanticized notion of the positive relationship between time spent in a place and one's sense of that place. The results of my research indicate that there is a need for planners to consider an individual's attributes, such as race, class, biases and stereotypes, in understanding how people develop their sense of a given place. These variables are traditionally the domain of sociologists who often deal in placeless units, such as census tracts. As planners we should 'emplace' these variables in order to unveil their meaning for the way in which people experience their environments.

Chapter 6

Epilogue

Sustainability Planning and Sense of Place

This dissertation started with the stories of Bill and Lisa, the 'idealized' Food Project participants. Many of the experiences and outcomes of these two fictional youth came directly from observations of Program participants over the course of the two summers I spent with this organization. The youth I observed learned about race, social justice, and to varying degrees, forged relationships with individuals who were unlike themselves in terms of race, class and place of residence. Lisa and Bill gained all of these things from their experiences. In addition, both of these 'ideal' types garnered a strong connection to the land and a desire to continue learning about sustainable food systems. This outcome was one that was less common amongst the actual youth participants.

While recognizing the normative nature of my comments, I wish to close my thesis by suggesting that The Food Project Summer Program is missing an important opportunity to engage youth in a very real way in sustainability education. This issue is rooted in the organization's 'mission drift' from its stated focus on building sustainable food systems to an emphasis on diversity education and personal growth. In fact, there were times over the course of my work with this organization that I found myself wondering whether there were any tangible benefits to using agriculture versus a sport or music as a tool for bringing youth of different backgrounds together to learn

about themselves and each other. My conclusion is that there is, but The Food Project is not fully tapping its potential. As I noted in the introduction to this document, farming serves as a leveler. None of the youth, regardless of their backgrounds come to the program with 'expertise' in farming. It is, for most participants, a challenging new experience. This is not the case with sports or music programs where youth arrive with different levels of training and past experience. Food systems also differ from these other activities in that everyone requires food; it is a natural connector. These features do make farming an unusually good vehicle through which to bring youth together. It also offers an entry point into sustainability education, an opportunity The Food Project Summer Program did not take full advantage of.

I was initially attracted to study The Food Project because of its inherent link to ecological education, an area that I have extensive experience in as both a practitioner and a researcher. By engaging youth in organic agriculture in different environments, I assumed that the youth would gain a strong connection to the land, a sort of Aldo Leopold type land ethic over both urban and rural environments. I believed that through the act of farming there would be tacit learning about natural processes and an increased desire to engage in pro-environmental behaviors. While some of the youth, such as Pete, Julie and Paul showed and verbalized an increased appreciation of agriculture, most of the youth seemed to be most engaged during the workshops that dealt with issues of race, class and diversity. There was less interest and excitement during the agricultural workshops and only Pete and Julie expressed a desire to return to The Food Project in the context of an agricultural intern. The rest said they would prefer to be diversity interns. No doubt this reflected the peer focused developmental stage of these adolescents, but I believe it also reflected programmatic features, including the emphasis on diversity training and the core interests of many of The Food Project's Summer Youth Program's staff.

The Summer Program offers an obvious entry into sustainability education. American's food currently comes from across the globe; it is estimated that the average American meal travels about 1500 miles to get from farm to plate (Spector, 2000; Center for Urban Education and Sustainable Agriculture, 2007). This translates into

an enormous amount of energy, most of which is drawn from non-renewable sources. The situation is unsustainable over the long term. Because American's food comes from all over the globe, and is often highly processed, most people are completely disconnected from the production of their own sustenance. Consequently they take little responsibility for the land it was grown on. The Food Project program counters these trends. Because farming is inherently tied to places, seasons, and cycles, the Summer Program offers opportunities for hands on learning about human environment relationships and resource management.

This is not to suggest The Food Project program does not understand or acknowledge these issues. There were weekly workshops that dealt with issues related to food systems and the organization's mission statement reflects its desire to promote knowledge with regards to sustainable agriculture. Nevertheless, there was an overwhelming sense amongst the youth that the main goal of the organization was personal growth and promoting an understanding across racial and class lines. Steve summarized this sense in his comments during an interview after the program had ended: "The Food Project's goal is kind of self improvement and cultural understanding..."

My own observations indicated that this perception reflected the core interests and emphasis of the Summer Program staff. For example, each summer that I worked with the organization there was a (different) black, female crew leader who balked at the sight of compost and wore gloves to protect her manicured fingernails. Both of these young women had strong backgrounds and interests in youth development, but neither appeared to have an interest in environmental issues, nor to enjoy farming. Given the attitudes of many of their leaders, it was not surprising that the majority of crew workers treated fieldwork as if it were drudgery rather than a learning opportunity. Even Mark, my own crew leader who had a strong interest in ecological issues, often initiated conversations about race and class while working in the fields, but outside of giving us instructions on how to weed a particular row or how to harvest a given crop, there were few occasions where he spoke to us about issues related to food systems. The role of ecological education at The Food Project was largely delegated to the agricultural staff, most of whom were too busy trying to complete their own rigorous

work schedules to have time to engage in education with the youth beyond the formal workshop setting.

Whether or not The Food Project *wants* to place a greater emphasis on sustainability into the Food Project program is a decision that needs to be made by the organization. Doing so would require rethinking some basic procedures, including refocusing their hiring efforts to find program staff and crew leaders who are more interested and enthusiastic about farming than many of those who I met during the course of my research. A greater emphasis on ecological education during the staff training process might also serve to enhance this element of the program. For example, training staff to utilize unexpected 'teachable moments' to engage the youth in thinking more ecologically is an important part of any environmental education program. An example of such a (missed) opportunity occurred on one of the first days of the Summer Program. As we sat under the tent, a field mouse appeared. Most of the youth and three of the six crew leaders started screaming and stood up on their chairs. An assistant crew leader tried to swat it with a shoe. None of the staff spoke about the role that this critter might play in the farm ecosystem or the importance of the farm in terms of habitat for other species. Instead, after calming the youth we immediately returned to our group discussion on the meaning of community.

This should be read as only a partial critique of this organization. As noted in the Introduction, the program's outputs are stunning. Over 250, 000 pounds of food were produced during the summer and fall, over half of which ended up in shelters where the summer youth volunteered. As volunteers, the sixty youth participants provided over 2, 000 hours of service. Many of the youth participants' leave the program with a greater sense of self-confidence and develop tangible skill sets, such as improved skills in public speaking and personal communication. Finding the balance among all of the different goals in a multi-service organization is a daunting task. The Food Project's impressive list of deliverables as well as its continued growth and expansion over its fifteen-year history are testaments to its efficacy.

Appendix A

Food Project Standards Sheet

(Gale, 2004)

Summer Program (8 Weeks)

Standards Sheet and Violations Chart

Our Community The Food Project Summer Program is based on core values of community, responsibility, service, initiative, commitment, hope, and courage. All participants and staff work together to promote these values. We recognize that this work is a struggle and that it requires us to hold ourselves and each other accountable. Each of us signs a Standards Sheet, which commits us to upholding the core values.

Standards In order to reach our potential as a community, we expect the following from each other:

- to be role models
- to work hard and be motivated
- to have a positive attitude
- to be honest
- to arrive on time for work
- to handle **all** food and equipment properly
- to respect the land and not litter on it
- to act responsibly and appropriately on all public transportation
- to wear The Food Project T-shirts to work and bring our notebooks
- to not use headphones, pagers, cell phones, or sunglasses at work
- to not leave work without notice
- to not steal, vandalize, fight, or commit verbal abuse
- to not have, deal, or be under the influence of drugs
- to not have a knife or gun

Scope of the Standards The Standards are in effect for all staff and workers from the time they get on public transportation to come to The Food Project to the time they leave public transportation to get home.

Earning Pay Youth program participants earn money for their field work and full participation in our programs.

Losing Pay Youth program participants will receive warnings for violating the expectations of the Standards Sheet. Continued Violations will result in lost pay. The number of warnings before pay is lost depends on the Standard that is violated. There are a few violations that result in immediate loss of pay or immediate firing. The variations in warning and Violations are explained on the back of the Standards Sheet.

Earning Back Lost Pay Youth may earn back lost pay from certain Standards Sheet Violations. In order to do so, they must work for two weeks from the day that they learn of the Violation, without committing the same Violation. They will then earn back the amount of money that the step they are on is worth and move one step to the left on the Violations Chart.

Absence and Lateness Youth are paid only for time worked. Any pay lost for Violations due to unexcused absence or lateness is in addition to pay lost for time not worked. Excused absences are not considered Violations, but must be arranged by a parent or guardian before 9:00 a.m. on the day of absence, or evidenced by a doctor's note within one week of the absence. Extended absences are not allowed except in the case of illness or family emergency.

Reapplication Policy If a youth is fired, he or she can apply to be rehired by:

- 1) Working as a volunteer with The Food Project for two days without any violations on the Standards Sheet.
- 2) Writing a statement about why he or she wants to rejoin The Food Project.
- 3) Reading the statement to a rehiring committee of The Food Project youth and staff.
The rehiring committee will decide whether to accept the reapplication.

Violations of the Standards The following chart is used to track Violations of the Standards Sheet and explain their consequences. Each Violation moves a crew worker one step further to the right and results in an additional consequence.

Use of the Violations Chart Each week when the crew leader gives Straight Talk, he or she will use this chart to determine whether the crew worker has acquired any earnings or lost any pay.

Irrevocable Violations Money cannot be earned back for the more serious Violations that appear in the no earnback section of the chart.

1. Unexcused Absence: If you call before 9:00 a.m. to let us know you will be absent, you move one step on the Violations Chart. If you do not call before 9:00 a.m., you move two steps on the chart.

2. Lateness: If you call before 9:00 a.m. to let us know you will be late, you move one step on the chart. If you do not call before 9:00 a.m., you move two steps on the chart.

3. Payment for Days You Arrive Late or Leave Early:

- If you arrive after 11:00 a.m., you will be paid for a half day.
- If you arrive after 1:00 p.m., you will not be paid for that day.
- If you leave before 11:00 a.m., you will not be paid for that day.
- If you leave after 1:00 p.m., you will be paid for a half day.

WORKER'S SIGNATURE

DATE

Appendix B

Violations Chart

(Gale, 2004)

The Food Project Summer Youth Program Violations Chart

Consequences for violating the terms of the contract may include warnings, lost pay, and being fired. Each step on this violations chart corresponds to the number of days pay lost.

Embarks possible for these violations:

(PW) = Pre-Warning, (W) = Warning - No pay lost

	Pre-Warning	Step 0	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Unexcused absence	→	(W)	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	Fired
Arriving late	(PW)	(W)	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	Fired
<i>(Absence or lateness without a phone call prior to 9:00 AM moves two steps)</i>							
Poor attitude, poor role-model	(PW)	(W)	1 day	2 days	3 days	Fired	
Being unmotivated	(PW)	(W)	1 day	2 days	3 days	Fired	
Not wearing T-shirt or issued work uniform	→	(W)	1 day	2 days	3 days	Fired	
Missing notebook or materials	→	(W)	1 day	2 days	3 days	Fired	
Misuse of food or equipment	→	(W)	1 day	2 days	3 days	fired	
Wearing sunglasses (w/o medical cause)	→	(W)	1 day	2 days	3 days	fired	
Using a walkman, pager, cell phone	→	(W)	2 days	3 days			
Smoking	→	(W)	1 day	2 days	3 days	Fired	
Littering	→	(W)	1 day	2 days	3 days	Fired	

No embarks or warnings possible for these violations:

	1	2	3	
Inappropriate behavior on the train	→	1 day	2 days	Fired
Lying	→	1 day	2 days	Fired
Leaving without notice	→	1 day	2 days	Fired
Vandalism	→	1 day	2 days	Fired
Verbal or physical abuse	→	1 day	2 days	Fired
Being high or intoxicated	→	1 day	2 days	Fired
Stealing	→	1 day	Fired	
Fighting	→	Fired		
Having or dealing drugs or alcohol	→	Fired		
Having a knife or a gun	→	Fired		



Appendix C

Consent Forms

**Acknowledgment of Voluntary Participation
for Children Under Age 18**

By signing below, I agree for Lianne Fisman, a doctoral student in Urban Studies at MIT to collect fieldnotes, photos and audiotapes of my child's work at The Food Project. I will receive a photocopy of this form for my own records.

I understand that:

- The researcher on this study will keep all of the information completely confidential.
- Any information that my child provides during interviews or any language or behavior that is recorded during observations will never be linked with his/her or my name in any reports or papers.
- Inclusion in the study is completely voluntary, and the child may choose to skip any questions he/she wishes or refuse to participate completely at any time.
- The interviews may be audio recorded.
- I can withdraw permission by calling the number of the office that oversees research at MIT on the

General Information Sheet that I am keeping at home.

If I am willing for Lianne Fisman to contact me, I will say so in the space provided below.

Signature: _____

Date _____

Yes you can contact
me: _____

Name (please Print): _____

Phone: _____

**Consent Form for Participant in The Summer Youth Program
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Summer Youth Participant:

My name is **Lianne Fisman**. I am a student at MIT and I am asking you to take part in a research study. I am trying to understand the way that youth feel about their neighborhoods and other places in the Boston area.

If you agree to be in this study I will ask to interview you before and after you participate in The Food Project. During the interview, I will ask you questions about where you live and I may ask you to draw a picture of your neighborhood. I may tape record your answers but anything that I write will be anonymous (your name will not be on any reports).

Please talk this over with your parent or guardian before you decide whether or not to participate. I will also ask them for their permission for you to take part in this study. But even if they say "yes" you can still decide not to do this. If you don't want to be in this study, you don't have to participate. Remember, being in this study is up to you and no one will be upset if you don't want to participate or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.

If you have a question about the study, you can call me 617-661-5329.

Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. I will give you a photocopy of this form to keep for your records.

Signature

Date

Youth Respondent Name (please print)

Parental/Guardian Consent Form, Summer 2005
General Information Form for Parents or Guardians to **KEEP AT HOME** for Reference

Lianne Fisman, a graduate student in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, wants to study how youth learn about the environment and their neighborhoods through their work at The Food Project. She is particularly interested in the way that they view their home environment (neighborhood) and whether the program has an effect on their ecological values.

Lianne will be around The Food Project sites for the entire summer. She will ride the commuter rail out to Lincoln with many of the youth and the subway to the Roxbury/Dorchester sites. She will spend most of the time working as a member of one crew. She will ask the youth to fill in some surveys and to draw maps of their neighborhoods at the beginning and the end of the summer. She will audio record the interviews and will keep the maps that the youth produce. She will also observe, take notes and talk informally with the participants throughout the summer.

None of the information that she collects will be linked to the names of the participants. In her dissertation and any papers that result from this work, the youth's name will not be used.

It is essential that you understand that your child's participation in this research is entirely voluntary, and, if at any time, he or she decides not to take part, please call the telephone number below. If you want to ask any questions about this work, you can call Lianne directly.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. This work will help us to better understand the impacts that the food project has on the youth participants. Remember to keep this page so if you have any questions or concerns, you can call the numbers below.

Lianne Fisman
1-617-661-5329

Office of Research
1-617-253 6787

Parental/Guardian Consent Form

Acknowledgment of Voluntary Participation for Children Under Age 18

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a graduate student in the department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT. I am writing to inform you about a research study I am conducting about youths' perceptions of their neighborhoods. The information gathered in this study will be useful for advocating the government and local agencies for neighborhood resources and programs that engage youth in neighborhood stewardship activities.

In order to carry out this study, I am interested in interviewing youth who applied to work with TFP in 2005. This study will help us to understand whether or not The Food Project impacts youths' understanding of their neighborhoods. I would like to invite your child to participate in this study. The youth who participate will be asked to complete a short survey about the environmental attitudes, draw a map of their neighborhood and a short informal interview. These activities will occur twice: once in June and once in September. The survey and interview should be completed within two hours. Your child will receive a payment of twenty dollars upon completion of the second interview.

As you probably know, many more youth apply to work with The Food Project each year than they can accept. This year was particularly competitive. While I would greatly appreciate it if your child participates in this study, their participation has no bearing on whether or not they are called up from the wait list to participate this summer.

There are no physical or psychological risks associated with participation in the study. I will ask your child to identify him or herself on the assessment forms, but once study involvement is complete, names will be removed from all forms and replaced with an identification number. Enclosed is a consent form for your child. Should you and he/she decide to participate, please return one signed copy of each form in the envelope provided and keep one copy for your own records.

I understand that:

- The researcher on this study will keep all of the information completely confidential.
- Any information that my child provides during interviews or any language or behavior that is recorded during observations will never be linked with his/her or my name in any reports or papers.
- Inclusion in the study is completely voluntary, and the child may choose to skip any questions he/she wishes or refuse to participate completely at any time.
- The interviews may be audio recorded.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your child may refuse to participate in the study, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time. Should you decide to allow your child to participate, I will call you to set up a time that I can come and interview your child.

If you have any questions research, you may contact Lianne Fisman at 617-661-5329. You can also call the office that oversees research at M.I.T. at 1-617-253 6787 if you have concerns about this study. Again, please keep one copy of this consent form for your own records and send the other one back in the envelope provided.

Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

Child's Name (please print)

Youth Acknowledgment of Voluntary Participation

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is **Lianne Fisman**. I am a student at MIT and I am asking you to take part in a research study. I am interviewing youth who applied to work with The Food Project this summer. I am trying to understand how youth use different neighborhoods in the Boston area.

If you agree to be in this study I will ask to interview you in June and September of 2005. During the interview, I will ask you to fill out a survey and answer some questions about where you live and I may ask you to draw a picture of your neighborhood. The survey and interview should be finished within 2 hours. Upon completion of the second interview you will be paid twenty dollars.

Please talk this over with your parent or guardian before you decide whether or not to participate. I will also ask them for their permission for you to take part in this study. But even if they say "yes" you can still decide not to do this.

If you don't want to be in this study, you don't have to participate. Remember, being in this study is up to you and no one will be upset if you don't want to participate or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. Being in this study will not affect whether or not you are called up from the wait list to participate this summer. Please keep one copy of this consent form for your own records and send the other one back in the envelope provided.

If you have a question about the study, you can call me *617-661-5329*.

Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study.

Signature

Date

Youth Respondent Name (please print)

Appendix D

Visioning Exercises

Imagining your Neighborhood.....

Your Name: _____

Close your eyes and picture your neighborhood. Think about the people, nature and the buildings that are there. I am interested in knowing how you would describe these different parts of your neighborhood to someone who has never been there. When you open your eyes, write down the words that best describe the people, nature and the buildings in your neighborhood.

People

Nature

Buildings, sidewalks, etc.

Imagining Lincoln.....

Your Name: _____

Close your eyes and picture Lincoln. Think about the people, nature and the buildings that are there. I am interested in knowing how you would describe these different parts of Lincoln to someone who has never been there. When you open your eyes, write down the words that best describe the people, nature and the buildings in Lincoln.

People

Nature

Buildings, sidewalks, etc.

Imagining Roxbury.....

Your Name: _____

Close your eyes and picture Roxbury. Think about the people, nature and the buildings that are there. I am interested in knowing how you would describe these different parts of Roxbury to someone who has never been there. When you open your eyes, write down the words that best describe the people, nature and the buildings in Roxbury.

People

Nature

Buildings, sidewalks, etc.

Appendix E

Mapping Protocol

This exercise will be performed with all of the summer youth participants (approximately 60) as well as the control group (approximately 10). Each youth will be given a large sheet of paper and a pencil and eraser. The exercise will begin by asking the youth to put their names in the top right corner of the map. I will then give the following instructions:

Imagine that your neighborhood covers most of this piece of paper. By making a map I hope to find out more about what the neighborhood is like for you. By neighborhood, I mean the area around your house where you spend time on your own, with friends, and your family. Other than that, I want you to draw all of the things and places that make up your neighborhood. You will have about 15 minutes to complete this exercise. I would like you to start your map with the red pencil. After ten minutes, I will ask you to switch to a orange pencil, then after ten more minutes to the purple pencil. Please make sure that you only draw with the red pencil until I ask you to use the next color. Please work quietly and independently. If you have any questions, raise your hand and I will come over and speak with you. Tomorrow I may ask some of you to discuss your map with me.

During the mapping exercise, I will circulate around the youth. If a youth is having trouble, I will use the following example to help them get going:

Try to include the places where you spend most of your time.

Appendix F

Interview Guides

Introduction Prior to Commencing Semi-structured Interviews

Hello. My name is Lianne. I am a student and I study cities and the people who live in them. I am doing a research project on the way in which youth see their own neighborhoods as well as other places in and around the city. I am planning to interview lots of youth about this topic and then write up some papers about it. I was hoping that you would be willing to talk to me today about your thoughts and feelings about particular places. I have brought the map that you drew yesterday and hope that you will feel free to use it. I have placed a clear plastic sheet over the map so that you can draw on it without changing the original map.

During the interview, please remember that I am interested in your experiences and opinions; there are no right or wrong answers. I hope you'll feel comfortable talking with me. If at any time I ask you a question and you don't feel comfortable talking about the topic, feel free to say so.

With your permission, I would like to tape record the interview to make sure I have your thoughts and experiences recorded accurately. Nobody other than a typist and myself will be allowed to listen to the tapes and they will be destroyed at the end of the study. Anything that gets written about your experiences will not use your

name so no one will know what you say during our conversations.

Do you have any questions or comments before we continue?

I am going to turn on the tape recorder now, and we can get started.

Interview Guide

Can you say your name into the tape recorder?

Where do you live?

- (If they respond with an address): Does this area have a name?

How long have you lived here?

- How many other places have you lived?
 - How were these other places similar/different?
-

Looking at Map

Can you mark on the map:

- where you spend most of your time (with red marker);
 - where you go to see friends and family (with green marker)
 - where you hang out (with blue marker)
 - where you might go if you were looking for a job (in black marker)
-

How would you describe your neighborhood to someone who has never been there?

How do you know you are in your neighborhood?

How do you know when your neighborhood ends?

Can you show me this on your map?

What are some of the things you like about the neighborhood? (probe for parks, cultural amenities, recreational opportunities)

What are some of the things you dislike? (probe for physical and social aspects)

- How does this neighborhood compare to other places you've lived?

Tell me about your neighbors (probe for information on gender and ethnicity)

Do you know any of them?

- What are they like?
- Do you spend time with your neighbors?
 - (if yes) What types of things do you do with them?
 - (if no) Why don't you spend time with them?

Where does danger reside in your neighborhood?

How would you say your neighborhood differs from Roxbury (an inner city neighborhood)?

- In terms of Physical Environment (Parks, buildings, etc).
- In terms of the social environment (for example, people, dangers, the way people get along)

If I was visiting you from another country and I said I wanted to visit Roxbury and I asked you "how will I know when I am in Roxbury?" What would you say?

How would you say it differs from Lincoln (a suburban neighborhood)?

- Physical Environment (Parks, buildings, etc).
- In terms of the social environment (for example, people, dangers, the way people get along)

If I was visiting you from another country and I said I wanted to visit Lincoln and I asked you “how will I know when I am in Lincoln ?” What would you say?

Suppose you won the lottery and could afford to live anywhere in the Boston area (city or suburbs). Where would you live?

- Why would you pick that place?

Suppose you were about to move out of the Boston area, and had a chance to take only one last walk through the city or suburbs. Where would you go?

Added Questions for Post Program Interview of Food Project Participants

What made you want to apply/not apply to DIRT crew?

What do you think was the most important thing that you learned this summer?

Can you tell me about a time that you used this knowledge?

In the program?

Outside of the program?

Is there anything that you learned this summer that really surprised you?

Can you tell me a bit more about that?

What was your favorite workshop?

Why?

What was the most important thing that you got out of it?

Did you observe things about Lincoln that surprised you?

Did you observe things about Roxbury that surprised you?

If you could change anything about SYP, what would it be?

Why?

If you could have invited one person to be on our crew, who would it have been?

Why would you choose him/her?

If you could have taken someone off of the crew, who would it have been?

Why would you choose him/her?

If you were going to have a party with 5 friends from TFP, who would you invite?

Who are you in touch with from SYP?

How do you communicate?

Why do you think you have lost touch with a lot of folks from our crew?

(probe for information regarding location, race, gender)

Appendix G

Bibliography

- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, MA : Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.
- Ashmont Hill (2007). The Ashmont Hill Association, Retrieved April 25, 2007, from <http://www.ashmonthill.org/Association.html>
- Babbie, E. (1992). *The Practice of Social Research : Sixth Edition*. Belmont California : Wadsworth, Inc.
- Basso, Keith H. (1996). *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Beatley, Timothy. (2005). *Native to Nowhere: sustaining home and community in a global age*. Washington DC: Island Press.
- Blaut, J.M. (1999). Maps and Spaces. *Professional Geographer*, 51(4), 510-515.
- Bobo, L. (2001). Racial attitudes at the Close of the Twentieth Century. In N.Smelser, W.J. Wilson, & F. Mitchell (Eds.), *America Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences, Volume 1* (pp 264-301). Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Bobo L. & James Kleugel. 1997. Status, Ideology and Dimensions of Whites' racial Beliefs and Attitudes: Progress and Stagnation. In S. Tuch & J. Martin (Eds.), *Racial Attitudes in the 1990s: Continuity and Change* (pp 93-120). Greenwood, CT.: Praeger.
- Boston Public Schools (2006) Boston Arts Academy. Retrieved April 20, 2007, from

<http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/schools/RC607.pdf>
 Boston Public Schools (2007) Introducing the Boston Public Schools 2007: A Guide for Parents and Students. Retrieved April 20, 2007, from
<http://www.boston.k12.ma.us/schools/assign.asp\#prog>

Briggs, X. d. S. (1998). Brown Kids in White Suburbs: Housing Mobility and the Many Faces of Social capital. *Housing Policy Debate*, 9(1): 177-221.

Briggs, X. d. S. (1998). Doing Democracy Up-Close: Culture, Power and Communication in Community Building. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 18: 1-13.

Brower, S. (1990). *Good Neighborhoods: A Study of In-Town and Suburban Residential Environments*. Westport CT: Praeger.

Bruner, Jerome S. & Potter, Mary C. (1964). Interference in Visual Recognitions. *Science*, April 24. 144 (3617): 424-25.

Center for Urban and Sustainable Agriculture (2007). How Far Does Your Food Travel to get to Your Plate? Retrieved April 25, 2007, from
http://www.cuesa.org/sustainable_ag/issues/foodtravel.php

Charles, Camille Zubrinsky (2005). Can we live together? Racial preferences and neighborhood outcomes. In Xavier de Sousa Briggs (Ed.), *The geography of opportunity: Race and housing choice in metropolitan America* (pp. 45-86). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Chawla, Louise. 1992. Childhood Place Attachments. In Irwin Altman & Setha Low (Eds.), *Place Attachment* (pp. 63-86). New York: Plenum Press.

City of Boston. A City of Neighborhoods. Retrieved April 20, 2007, from
<http://www.cityofboston.gov/neighborhoods/neighborhoods.asp?id=6>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Retrieved April 20, 2007, from
<http://www.mass.gov/>

Derr, Victoria (2002). Children's Sense of Place in Northern New Mexico. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 22:125-137.

Downs, R. M. & Stea, D. (1973). Cognitive Maps and Spatial Behavior. In R.M. Downs & Stea (Eds.), *Image and Environment* (pp. 8-26). Chicago: Aldine.

- Fisman, L. (2005). The Effects of Local Learning on Environmental Awareness in Children: An Empirical Investigation.. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 36 (3): 39-50.
- Fried, M. (1966). Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation. In J. Wilson (Ed.), *Urban Renewal: The Record and The Controversy* (pp. 359-379). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Eaton, Susan (2001). *The Other Boston Busing Story*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Eisenhauer, Brian W., Krannich, Richard S. & Blahna, Dale J. (2000). Attachments to Special Places on Public Lands: An Analysis of Activities, Reason for Attachments, and Community Connections. *Society and Natural Resources*, 13:421-441.
- Erikson, Erik H. (1950). *Children and Society*. New York: Norton.
- Frenchman, D. (2001). Narrative Places and the New Practice of Urban Design. In Warner, Sam Bass & Lawrence J. Vale (Eds.), *Imaging The City: Continuing Struggles and New Directions* (pp. 257-283). New Brunswick, New Jersey: Center For Urban Policy Research.
- Gale, G. (2004). *Growing Together*. Massachusetts: The Food Project.
- Gans, H. (1962). *The Urban Villagers*. New York: Free Press.
- Gieryn. T. F. (2000). A Space for Place in Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26: 463-496.
- Hanscom Airforce Base. Retrieved April 26, 2007, from <http://www.hanscom.af.mil>
- Harvey, D. (1973). *Social Justice and the City*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hayden, D. (1995). *The Power Of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Healey, P. (1992). Planning Through Debate: The Communicative Turn in Planning Theory. *Town Planning Review*, 63(2): 143-162.
- Jackson, J.B. (1994). *A Sense of Time, A Sense of Place*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Jencks, C. & Meyer, S. (1990). The Social Consequences of Growing up in a Poor Neighborhood. In L Lynn & M. McGahey (Eds.), *Inner-City Poverty in the United States* (pp. 111–86). Washington DC: National Academy of Sciences.
- Jiven, G. & Larkham P. (2003). Sense of place, Authenticity & Character: A Commentary. *Journal of Urban Design*, 8(2): 67-81
- Kaplan, R.l & Kaplan, S. (2002). Adolescents and The Natural Environment: A Time Out? In P. Kahn, & S. Kellert (Eds.), *Children and Nature: Psychological, Sociocultural, and Evolutionary Investigation* (pp. 227-258). Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press
- Kitchin, R.M. (1997). Exploring Spatial Thought. *Environment and Behavior*, Jan. 29 (1): 123-140.
- Krysan, Maria. (2002). Community Undesirability in Black and White: Examining Racial Residential Preferences through Community Perceptions. *Social Problems*, 49 (4): 521-543.
- Lin, N. (2001). Building a Network Theory of Social Capital. In Nan Lin, Karen Cook & Ronald S. Brurt (Eds.), *Social Capital* (pp. 3-29). New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Lofland, J. and Lofland, L.H. (1995). *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis, 3rd Edition*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Low, S.M. (1992). Symbolic ties that bind: place attachment in the plaza. Attachment to the ordinary landscape. In: Irwin Altman & Setha Low (Eds.), *Place Attachment* (pp. 165-185). New York: Plenum Press.
- Low, S.M. & Altman, I. (1992). Place Attachment: A Conceptual Inquiry In Irwin Altman & Setha Low (Eds.), *Place Attachment* (pp. 1-12). New York: Plenum Press.
- Lynch, Kevin (1960). *The Image of the City*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Lynch Kevin (1981). *Good City Form*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- McLaughlin, M.W., Irby, M., & Langman, J. (1994). Urban sanctuaries: Neighborhood organizations in the lives and futures of inner-city youth. San

Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L. & Cook, James M. (2001) Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27:415-444.

Medoff, P. & Sklar, H. (1994). *Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Merriam, Sharon B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merry, Sally E. (1981). *Urban Danger: Life in a Neighborhood of Strangers*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press

Mesch, Gustavo & Orit Manor (1998). Social ties, environmental perception and local attachment. *Environment and Behavior*. 20(4): 504-516.

Michelson, William & van Vliet, Willem (2002). Theory and the Sociological Study of the Built Environment. In Riley Dunlap & William Michelson (Eds.), *Handbook of Environmental Sociology* (pp. 33-69). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Miles, B. M. & Huberman, A.M. (1984). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods*. Beverly Hills, CA:SAGE Publications Inc.

Milgram, S. (1976). Psychological maps of Paris. In Harold M. Proshansky, William H. Ittleson, & Leanne G. Rivlin (Eds.), *Environmental Psychology: People and Their Physical Settings (Second Edition)*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Orfield, G. (1997). *City-suburban desegregation: Parent and student perspectives in metropolitan Boston*. Cambridge, MA: The Harvard Civil Rights Project.

Norberg-Schulz, C. (1980). *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli.

Ouf, A. M.S. (2001) Authenticity and the sense of place in urban design. *Journal of Urban Design*, 6 (1):73-86.

Proshansky, Harold M., Fabian, Abbe K. and Kaminoff, Robert. (1983).

Place-Identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 3:57-83.

Rabin, M. (1998). Psychology and Economics. *The Journal of Economic Literature*, 36(1): 11-46.

- Relph, E. (1976). *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion Press.
- Riley, R. (1992). Attachment to the ordinary landscape. In Irwin Altman & Setha Low (Eds.), *Place Attachment* (pp. 13-36). New York: Plenum Press.
- Sampson, Robert J. (1988). Local Friendship Ties and Community Attachment in Mass Society: A Multi-Level Systemic Model. *American Sociological Review*, 53:766-779.
- Sampson, Robert J., Raudenbush, Stephen & Earls, Felton (1997). Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy. *Science*, 277:918-24.
- Sampson, Robert J. & Raudenbush, Stephen (2004). Seeing Disorder: Neighborhood Stigma and the Social Construction of "Broken Windows." *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 67(4): 319-342.
- Selverajah, E., Perkins G. & Goetze R. (2002). Boston's Population-2000. Retrieved April 20, 2007 from Boston Redevelopment Authority's Website: http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra/PDF/ResearchPublications//pdr_554.pdf
- Small, Mario Luis (2002). Culture, Cohorts, and Social Organization Theory: Understanding Local Participation in a Latino Housing Project. *American Journal of Sociology*, 1:1-54.
- Small, Mario Luis (2004). *Villa Victoria: The Transformation of Social Capital in a Boston Barrio*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Sobel, E. (1998). *Map Making With Children. Sense of Place Education for the Elementary Years*. Portsmouth, NH: Heineman.
- Spector, R. (2002) Fully Integrated Food Systems: Regaining Connections between Farmers and Consumers. In Kimbrell, A. (Ed.) *The Fatal Harvest Reader: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture*. Sausalito, CA: Island Press.
- Stedman, Richard C. (1999). Sense of Place as an Indicator of Community Stability. *The Forestry Chronicle*, 75(5):765-770.
- Town of Lincoln. Retrieved April 24, 2007, from <http://www.lincolntown.org/depts/conserv.htm>
- Tuan, Yi-Fu (1974). *Topophilia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. (1977). *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis:

University of Minnesota Press.

Tversky, B; Baurer-Morrison, J., Franklin, N, Bryant, D.J. (1999). Three Spaces of Spatial Cognition. *Professional Geographer*, 51(4): 516-524.

United States Air Force (2006). Service demographics offer snapshot of force.

Retrieved April 26, 2007, from

<http://www.af.mil/news/story\print.asp?id=123027385>.

United States Census (2000). American fact Finder. Retrieved April 24, from

http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

Vale, Lawrence J. (2002). *Reclaiming Public Housing: A Half-Century of Struggles in Three Public Neighborhoods*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vale, Lawrence J. (1997). Empathological Places: Residents' Ambivalence Toward Remaining in Public Housing. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 16:159-175

Vaske, Jerry J. & Kobrin, Katherine C. (2001). Place Attachment and Environmentally Responsible Behavior. *Journal of Environmental Education*, 32(4):16-21.

Warner, Sam Bass & Lawrence J. Vale. (2001). Introduction: Cities, Media and Imaging. In Warner, Sam Bass & Lawrence J. Vale (Eds.), *Imaging The City: Continuing Struggles and New Directions* (pp. xiii-xxiii). New Brunswick, New Jersey: Center For Urban Policy Research.

Weiss, Carol. H. (1998). *Evaluation: methods for studying programs and policies. Second Edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ : Prentice Hall

Wheeler, Stephen (2000) *Planning Sustainable and Livable Cities*. In LeGates, Richard T. & Frederic Stout (Eds.), *The City Reader, Second Edition*. London and New York: Routledge

Whyte, William Foote (1943). *Street Corner Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Williams, Daniel R. & Stewart, Susan I. (1998). Sense of Place: An Elusive Concept That Is Finding a Place in Ecosystem Management. *Journal of Forestry*, 96(5):18-23.

Wood, P B. & Sonleitner, N. (1996). The effect of childhood interracial contact on adult anti-black prejudice. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 20 (1): 1-17.