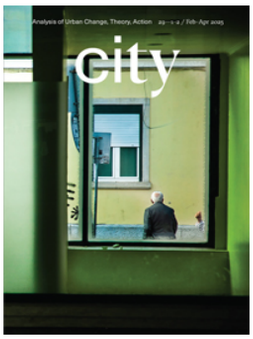

City

Analysis of Urban Change, Theory, Action

ISSN: 1360-4813 (Print) 1470-3629 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/ccit20

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To cite this article: Hillary Angelo, Kian Goh & Kasia Paprocki (24 Jun 2025): Climate change and urban-agrarian solidarities, City, DOI: 10.1080/13604813.2025.2512623

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2025.2512623

Published online: 24 Jun 2025.

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Climate change and urban-agrarian solidarities

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As climate change has heightened the significance of urban-agrarian material entanglements and intellectual and political oppositions, the need to speak across them has become more urgent. Scholarship in agrarian and urban studies is concerned with specific social processes and political demands in agrarian and urban contexts, respectively. These processes and demands are often articulated in opposition to one another, despite the fact that the places and people each studies are materially and politically connected. This paper argues that scholars in these fields should not only work to understand how these dynamics across space are materially interconnected, but also where and how their politics converge, in order to move from a position of opposition to one of solidarity. We trace entanglements across urban and agrarian studies and spaces through the lenses of food, energy, and water to identify: (1) relational material and political dynamics and (2) through the lens of social reproduction, shared demands across differently articulated political claims. We conclude by describing work

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Keywords **agrarian studies, urban studies, climate change, political solidarity, social reproduction**

URL https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2025.2512623

of translation, commensuration, and imagination that scholars might engage in to facilitate understanding and coalition-building across urban and agrarian studies and movements.

> Meeting was not easy, because for quite some time each group imagined that the other, in a general way, was the reason for its struggles.
> —Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*

Introduction

In December 2023, hundreds of farmers from all over Germany converged in Berlin to protest the elimination of tax breaks on agricultural diesel, lining up their tractors in front of the Brandenberg Gate (Figure 1). By mid-January, there were an estimated 30,000 of them. Their counterparts converged in cities across Europe, from Warsaw to Toulouse. Like them, these German farmers represent a self-consciously agrarian movement coming to the urban symbolic center of their country, demanding changes to climate legislation that they perceive to have been designed by (and serving) urban elites. Rural and agrarian dissent across Europe has grown in recent years, specifically in response to green industrial and agricultural policy, from the Dutch livestock farmer protests starting in 2018 to the French Yellow Vest protests starting in 2019. Indeed, these protests in Europe come alongside waves of agrarian protests that have emerged across the Global South and Global North.

The grievances expressed by protestors largely converged around two concerns. First, they stressed how 'green' agricultural policies displace the costs of decarbonization onto farmers. Second, they sought to demonstrate how their own struggles for survival are entangled with the needs of entire publics, including growing urban centers. A press release put out by the Confédération Paysanne, a French peasant union affiliated with La Via Campesina that has participated in the recent protests, declared: 'alors que notre métier est d'utilité publique, nous ne gagnons pas toutes et tous correctement notre vie' (while our profession serves the needs of everyone, we do not earn a decent living) (Le Secrétariat national de la Confédération paysanne 2024). In Berlin, farmers mounted large signboards on their tractors that read 'Wir kämpfen um unsere Existenz!' (We are fighting for our Existence!) and 'Ist der Bauer ruiniert wird dein Essen importiert' (If the Farmer is ruined, your Food will be imported). In speeches, fliers, and social media campaigns targeting national and EU agricultural and climate policy, they drew attention to the struggle for the social reproduction of farming households across Europe and beyond in the face of metropolitan plans for addressing climate change.

Many pundits have accused these farmers of being anti-environmental populists vulnerable to ideological capture by the far-right. *The Guardian's* Europe environment correspondent Ajit Niranjan (2024) calls this wave of protests 'greenlash.' Yet, many farmers' movements insist that they are not right wing climate deniers. Rather, they draw attention to the contradictions in mainstream climate policy that shift the burdens of addressing climate change onto rural

Figure 1: Tractor brought by farmers protesting in front of Brandenburg Gate, Berlin, January 2024 (photo by Kasia Paprocki).

producers. In another press release, the Confédération Paysanne (2024) wrote: 'La demande de la majorité des agriculteurs et agricultrices qui manifestent est bien celle de vivre dignement de leur métier, pas de nier les enjeux de santé et de climat ou de rogner encore davantage sur nos maigres droits sociaux' (The demand of the majority of farmers who demonstrate is to live with dignity from

their profession, not to deny the health and climate issues or to further reduce our meager social rights). These appeals highlight not only the challenges inherent in developing policies for a 'just transition,' but also how these challenges are manifesting in growing tensions between urban and agrarian demands.

Our point is not to valorize or romanticize these European farmer movements. They do often articulate as or with right-wing populist movements; they are often characterized by conservative cultural politics and regressive class politics. Frequently mobilized through and in support of the interests of corporate agribusiness (van der Ploeg 2020), resource nationalism (Ofstehage, Wolford, and Borras 2022), xenophobia (Gort and Loftus 2024), potentially even fascism (McCarthy 2019), this recent wave of farmer protests is politically polyvalent at best. Yet, as Borras has written and the entire field of agrarian studies is organized around demonstrating, 'there is nothing inherently conservative in rural politics' (2020, 3). Farmer movements can manifest in ways that are both revolutionary and reactionary. In a moment of rising authoritarian and agrarian populism, it is more important than ever to understand why they might lean in one direction or another, to consider their claims carefully, and to investigate the kernels of these politics that might provide the grounds for solidarity with a broader progressive movement (Graddy-Lovelace 2019).

As in Gilmore's (2007) account of the meeting of rural activists against prison building on agricultural land and urban activists against the imprisoning of people—each group imagining the other as the reason for its struggles—we seek to demonstrate that these groups' struggles are inextricably linked, ever more so in the current moment of planetary climate crisis and global capitalism. It is necessary to understand *how* they are linked, through grounded attention to their discrete claims and struggles. Gort and Loftus urge an analysis of right wing farmer protests that situates them in relation to the 'contextual specificities within which populist projects are being nurtured' (2024, 4). Such a conjunctural analysis requires attention both to their fundamental interconnections as well as their unique claims and demands. As Baviskar and Levien (2021, 1345) write of recent farmer protests in India: 'it is necessary to locate the current protests in the multi-pronged squeeze on the social reproduction of increasingly diversified households whose livelihoods cross the urban-rural divide.' Contemporary farmer protests tell us not only about agrarian discontent, but also about the relationship between rural and urban ways of life,[1] the common processes transforming them, and the struggles for social reproduction that manifest within and between them.

The farmers' protests also highlight the degree to which actions in response to climate change put pressure on urban-agrarian relations, proffering transition pathways that often protect one set of livelihoods at the expense of the other. Understanding how urban-agrarian conflicts are inflamed by contemporary strategies to respond to climate change highlights how the material impacts of such strategies are unevenly distributed between and within communities. It also suggests challenging paradoxes about the politics of what appear to be progressive visions of climate futures. In particular, the imagination of sustainable futures in cities—and policies that aim to realize them—are proving to threaten the sustainable futures and livelihoods of rural spaces (Paprocki 2020). What rising conflicts suggest, and what is clear from examining these

movements together, is that where justice may appear self-evident from one perspective, it may have unexpected implications from another.

While tensions between urban and agrarian practices of production and social reproduction have much longer histories, the acute challenges of this political and environmental moment demand coalition-building across urban and agrarian communities. Recent demands around the need for a 'just transition' are largely animated by precisely these tensions in trade-offs between the needs of urban and agrarian communities threatened by climate change and responses to it (Newell and Mulvaney 2013; Sharma-Wallace 2016). In the interstices of these tensions, we observe a bifurcation between urban and agrarian demands and the political visions in which they are respectively invested. The future of agrarian social relationships in the time of climate change is largely absent in the political visions of just transition from an urban point of view and vice versa. Rather than seeing these as pro- and anti-environmental or left- and right-wing positions, we draw attention to the importance of understanding these demands on their own terms and in relation to each other.

Lack of understanding across urban and agrarian claims is common not only in political movements and popular media, but also in academic disciplines that have mirrored this bifurcation.[2] Urban studies and agrarian studies operate largely independently from one another, treating the urban and the agrarian as discrete areas of study (notwithstanding some recent attempts to speak across them). Yet more and more scholars have called for greater attention to connections between urban and agrarian movements across space. We are interested here in exploring what this would look like and how scholars of agrarian studies and urban studies can understand and support it. Beyond a general recognition that urban and agrarian dynamics are relational, what might greater attention to these connections look like, particularly in political terms and in the context of climate transitions?

While such a question, and the demand for solidarity, is urgent, it is not unprecedented. Visions of (urban) worker and (agrarian) peasant alliances undergird key lineages of Marxist thinking. One well-known articulation came from Antonio Gramsci who, also writing in a pivotal moment of political transition, amidst rising fascism, calls for alliance-building between Italy's urban proletariat and the peasantry of the country's agrarian south. In his unfinished essay 'Some Aspects of the Southern Question,' he describes the need for the politically mobilized urban proletariat (and the intellectuals aligned with them) to work to better understand the demands of the Italian peasantry, and to align these demands with their own struggles and objectives (Gramsci [1926] 2005). Gramsci's 'Southern Question' urges coalition building between the urban and the agrarian, galvanized by a politics that embraces their shared interests but also acknowledges discrete articulations of urban and agrarian interests. Calls then for solidarities between urban and agrarian studies are not entirely novel in the sense that moments of crisis have often given rise to renewed attention to the need for urban and agrarian intellectual and political alliances.

What Gramsci also highlighted is that even as we discuss differentiations between urban and agrarian demands, there is also significant differentiation *within* these communities,[3] and that one foundation of political solidarity may be found by identifying shared concerns across each. This is particularly important

with regard to climate policies, which are increasingly articulated as targeting either urban or agrarian communities, fracturing potential solidarities across them. As van der Ploeg writes about recent Dutch farmer protests against emerging climate policies, 'nearly all farmers are upset – but their grievances are very different' (2020, 591). In some cases, as he highlights, while protestors may speak as if farmers are a united front, in fact their opposition to certain climate policies may benefit elite and corporate farming interests at the expense of smaller farming households and agrarian working classes. Even as there are multiple class interests and politics reflected in these movements, a shared identity as farmers, and the sense that farming is experiencing a crisis, unites them in their expressions of grievance. This is what Borras (2023b) refers to as a 'merely agrarian' politics, meaning movements that fail to articulate how the demands of specific agrarian producers unite with broader working class and anti-capitalist struggles. Rather than a rejection of agrarian politics, this insight has led several scholars of critical agrarian studies to identify the need for social mobilization that embraces the demands of agrarian movements at the same time as it centers 'rural-urban unity among working people and oppressed groups' (Editors of Agrarian South 2023, 9).

In this paper, we examine entanglements between the struggles and demands of urban and agrarian ways of life in the context of climate change and its associated transitions. We suggest that challenges posed by climate change—to transform food, water, energy, and other systems that span and connect urban and rural space, production, and social reproduction—often result in a situation in which the 'fix' for one (usually urban) problem is displaced onto the (usually rural) other. And we explore how a focus on social reproduction might offer a foundation for forging and articulating the unity that scholars are calling for. The challenge of making these decisions, and their massive consequences for the planet, demand more than ever political solidarity between urban and agrarian movements even as this moment heightens longstanding conflicts between them. In what follows, we first review literature in urban studies and agrarian studies on relationships between the urban and agrarian, their tensions, and relationalities. We then explore concrete material entanglements between urban and agrarian processes of social reproduction that are being transformed by climate change through three specific lenses: food, energy, and water. We end by describing work of translation, commensuration, and imagination that scholars might take, individually and collectively, to contribute to forging solidarities in urban and agrarian research and movements.

On agrarian and urban questions and relationalities

Agrarian and urban questions

Both agrarian studies and urban studies have witnessed moments of uncertainty and crisis from within. Both have engaged and wrestled with existential questions of themselves. In the context of debates around the agrarian question, debates that can be traced back to the turn of the previous century (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010a, 2010b), scholars question the role and condition of the peasantry within processes of capitalist development. These debates continue in agrarian

studies today, a heterogenous field that grapples with the conditions and political agency of diverse agrarian classes (Edelman and Wolford 2017; Paprocki and McCarthy 2024). Agrarian studies scholars are well aware that these identities are anything but static. What it means to be a farmer (including debates over whether the peasantry continues to exist, and who does and should speak for farmers) is both a recurring theme in agrarian studies and is also central to the present analysis. Fundamentally, the question of who should speak for farmers is relevant not only to the nature of agrarian class structures, but more broadly to the entanglements between agrarian and urban. These debates hinge on questions about fundamental processes of agrarian change in the context of intensifying global capitalism, and the salience of particular political identities within. Baviskar and Levien draw on these longstanding debates to contextualize recent farmers' protests in India, which have (like the European farmer protests) been questioned for their leadership by relatively elite farmers (2021). Their analysis suggests the need to consider whether and how the demands of such movements legitimately represent the interests of a broad agrarian class base.

Today, many scholars of agrarian studies have argued that the breakdown of categories between urban and agrarian labor (e.g. through displacement of agrarian labor in the midst of continued reliance on and identification with the family farm) fundamentally confound urban-agrarian binaries (Aga 2019; Harriss-White 2021; Sivaramakrishnan 2021), drawing these movements together (Kumar 2021; Lerche 2021). While earlier debates suggested that the proletarianization of agrarian labor evidenced the complete dissolution of the peasantry,[4] today scholars of agrarian studies find that agrarian communities remain important sites of social reproduction across a range of class categories, and that as such a heterogenous range of farmers and workers continue to identify with agrarian life. Indeed, today, in India and beyond, de-agrarianization has led *not* to the massive predicted demographic shifts out of agriculture; rather, it has led to conditions under which both resource-poor and relatively elite families survive on a mix of farming and non-agricultural labor, with the farm household serving as a social safety net amidst acute crises of social reproduction (Li 2009).

On the urban question, critical scholars interrogate the meaning and status of the urban itself. Castells (1977), notably, assails the ideological nature of urban studies and critiques the lack of specificity of the urban as a research object. Brenner (2000), building on Lefebvre's theories about the spatiality of capitalist urbanization, recasts the urban question as a question of scale, and emphasizes the urban scale as an arena of struggle over the sociospatial processes of capitalism. The recent debates over planetary urbanization follow from these inquiries. Brenner and Schmid's (2014; 2015) theoretical propositions about new (and now planetary) scopes and scales of urbanization raise daunting questions about the bounds of the urban, if there are any at all. Their theories have motivated aligned research into the urbanization of increasingly diverse and seemingly unlikely geographies—the Mediterranean (Brenner and Katsikis 2014), the Amazon (Castriota and Tonucci 2018), planetary-scale extraction (Arboleda 2020b). While some critics argue that the planetary urbanization thesis overly privileges urbanization as the relevant global metacategory on analytical and political grounds (see Angelo and Goh 2021 for a review), the debates regarding the efficacy (and reality) of categories of 'city,' 'urban,' and so

on are ongoing, as are attempts to avoid, overcome, or adjudicate them (see, e.g. Angelo 2017; Ghosh and Meer 2021; Wachsmuth 2014).

Other streams of urban research have taken on parallel projects of interrogating and dismantling inherited or occluding ideas of cities and urbanization. Scholars of urban political ecology (UPE) showed, first, the hybrid socio-nature of cities—that is, that urbanization necessarily involves intertwined and co-productive social and ecological processes (Gandy 2002; Heynen, Kaika, and Swyngedouw 2006; Swyngedouw 1996). They continue to expand and deepen the field's analysis, beyond the hybrid city per se, to include queer, feminist, and abolitionist geographies in urban socio-natural processes (see Angelo and Wachsmuth 2015; Heynen 2016, 2018; Tzaninis et al. 2021 for reviews). Gandy (2022), surveying a quarter century of research on intertwined socio-natures in and of the city, ends up questioning the relevance of a specifically 'urban' distinction in political ecology. Others like Simone et al. (2023) describe the multiple disorientations, expansions, and 'extensions' of contemporary urban life (see also Pickett et al. 2024 on a 'continuum of urbanity').

In our view, these existential questions within agrarian studies and urban studies—of emerging urban geographies, of transforming agrarian ones—are two sides of the same coin of the extent of sociospatial change engendered by globalized capitalism at the turn of the millennium. Rather than prioritizing either category of 'urban' or 'agrarian,' or proposing a new analytical framework that encompasses both, we join others highlighting the analytical importance of seeing them as relational (Jazeel 2017; Mercer 2017). To the extent that we may view these efforts as an emerging subfield or crossfield, we see our collective analytic task as not to invent entirely new categories, or begin new analyses that do not build on and reflect this important prior work. Rather, we point to what we call the *entanglements* between and among the urban and rural produced by underlying 'commonalties of capitalist development' (McCarthy 2023) that are accentuated by accelerated climate change impacts and responses today.

Current literatures in urban studies and agrarian studies agree on the fundamental untenability of binaries of urban and rural when attempting to understand places, people, and transformations in siloes. And yet, much like the category 'peasant' itself, the political importance of urban and agrarian identities remains in the sense that people and political movements continue to identify with them (Thompson, Bunnell, and Parthasarathy 2013, 3). Social movements such as the Right to the City call up the specific context and processes of urban space and the issues it evokes; agrarian movements defending farming livelihoods (even in contexts in which, as described above, such identities are increasingly urbanized) continue to identify as farmers. There are also meaningful differences in the primary uses and activities of particular places (e.g. locations with local economies oriented toward growing food for sale versus locations where most people, employed in other industries, purchase food to consume), even if those don't align neatly with clean demarcations of urban or rural space. Thus, our objective here is not to re-reify an unhelpful binary distinction between urban and agrarian, but to acknowledge that this binary continues to drive salient political identities and functions as an effective (if imperfect) analytical category for demarcating broadly different socio-spatial conditions and practices of social reproduction. Thus, there remains a need to

examine material and political relations 'across' these realms in the context of climate change and the transformations it requires.

What does this relationship between urban and agrarian realms look like from a material perspective? Uneven, contradictory, and co-produced. Capitalist development, as Harvey (2001) has asserted, exhibits a geographical expansionist 'spatial fix' to deal with the contradictions and crisis tendencies in its internal processes. This fix manifests as a constant search for new markets, labor, land, or resources to exploit. For Harvey, the infrastructures of urbanization, particularly, are essential for a 'fixed' capital (in both senses of the word, located in place and resolved) to deal with the problem of overaccumulation. Viewed from one perspective, this results in the 'production of space through urbanization' (Harvey 2001, 28), a particular fix wherein the spatial churn of capital results in the intensification of urban built environments (literally the stuff of cities) and infrastructures of connectivity that enable further accumulation. But, as is evident through the work of Smith (1984) and others, such intensification reaps uneven social, spatial, and ecological transformations on a world scale, within the cities and far beyond. Viewed from a slightly different perspective, urban and agrarian spaces are interlinked through such uneven geographical development of capital. These spaces are not only entangled under capitalist development. They are mutually displacing and destabilizing. As the example of climate policies and farmer protests shows, a kind of fix for a crisis of urban life is proposed to be resolved through the making of crisis in rural life. The demands—of urban sustainability, of agrarian agency—appear incompatible, even as neoliberal economic restructuring, now propelled by the crisis of climate, underlies both.

The resolution of urban and agrarian crises also belie a distinct metabolic and political asymmetry—a dominant urban bias. Scholarly attention to the antagonism of agrarian and urban development has been present in political economic analysis since Marx's study of enclosures, and has regularly reappeared as a key feature of the renegotiation of successive waves of development, for example in the late 20th century debates around the 'urban bias' thesis across both urban and agrarian studies (Byres 1979; Pugh 1996). As Polanyi (2001, 189) writes, for at least two centuries, industrial urbanization has involved the recurrent 'subordination of land to the needs of a swiftly expanding urban population,' and the marshaling of natural resources and exurban space for urban life (see also Angelo Forthcoming). The instrumentalization of energy, food, and water in the service of urbanization turned those resources into accumulated wealth, infrastructure, and waste; development schemes fractured and transformed rural lives and 'emptied out' the countryside in ways that freed land and labor for urban industrial production.

Agrarian scholars have been acutely aware of this 'urban imperialism' (Krause 2013; Wang 2020), although they have rarely framed it in terms of a 'fix.' Agrarian studies has critiqued the equation of progress with urban development, arguing that the hegemony of cities and urban transformation is linked with the rise of capitalism (Edelman and Wolford 2017), and that contemporary urban development, particularly that conducted in the name of climate change, privileges urban futures over rural ones (Paprocki 2020). In response to this hegemony, scholars of agrarian politics have often focused specifically on giving

voice to visions of agrarian futures independent of urban political visions, in defense of demands for what Edelman (2005) calls 'the right to continue being agriculturalists.'

Urban studies has only intermittently grappled with this intellectual and material hegemony, often by illustrating the power of cities over transformations of rural-agrarian imaginaries and space (e.g. Angelo 2017; Brenner 2014). But contemporary urban scholarship has mostly bracketed the significance of these relations—just when exploration of their consequences are sorely needed. We note, especially, the liberatory political project of much critical urban theory, often concerned with ground up, alternative urban movements—exemplified by Lefebvre's (1968/1996) and Harvey's (2008) initial articulations of 'the right to the city' but also far beyond—as being distinctly about the possibilities anti, counter to, or outside of dominant capitalist urbanization. These struggles offer important pathways to possibly non-hegemonic modes of urban life. But these politics do not always leave the city, and, we argue, they ought to be seen in light of and in conjunction with these unequal, asymmetrical urban and rural sociospatial relations.

Field entanglements and climate change

The climate crisis demands that we revisit these questions about the relationship between the urban and the agrarian, and offers another path forward. The geographies of socio-ecological change now push at the boundaries of space and time. On one level, the scope and scale of the impact of human activities on global environmental change now confronts planetary biophysical and ecological boundaries (Rockström et al. 2009; Steffen et al. 2015; see also Goh Forthcoming), further imbricating agrarian and urban social processes and spaces. On another level, such planetary scale change also comes about because of unequal accumulations over time (Martínez-Alier 1997), including over the course of the development of globalized capitalism and the parallel transformations of rural and urban social relationships. In other words, the causes and impacts of climate change intertwine further the social processes in and political demands arising from the rural and the urban, and adaptation involves remaking socioecological (food, water, energy) systems that span urban and rural space. Analyses defined and constrained by particular worldviews—whether rural or urban—struggle to understand beyond their own frontiers. And, precisely because climate change brings parallel, if unequal, impacts across urban and agrarian space (e.g. extreme heat, drought, and sea level rise) and because many questions of transition (such as decarbonization) require coordinated land use change across each, it is particularly important to develop analytical and political solidarities now—ways of translating and commensurating political claims and speaking across these fields and spaces.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that efforts to speak across these fields are emerging from both urban and agrarian studies now, as climate change reshapes these entanglements in ways that heighten our awareness of them. Recently, scholars have probed such limitations of their fields and made overtures beyond by identifying points of alignment, overlap, and recognition. Borras has identified the study of agrarian-urban entanglements as a critical emerging field of scholarship in critical agrarian studies (Borras 2023a, 475n33).

Krause (2013) upturns the processes associated with the so-called urban age and the 'intellectual imperialism' of the urban, and finds moments of interactions, exchanges, and iterations. Balakrishnan and Gururani (2021) invoke the term 'agrarian urbanization' to explore the tensions between urban development and rural propertied classes in India, where agricultural livelihoods meet rapid land transformation, and issue a call to go beyond binaries and inherited siloes (see also Gururani and Dasgupta 2018). Similarly but focused on very different class configurations, Jacobs (2018) writes about a class he refers to as 'urban proletarians with peasant characteristics' who challenge inherited teleologies of capitalist class transitions and their spatial manifestations. Ghosh and Meer (2021) make an overt move to encapsulate questions over agrarian processes into an extended urbanization framework. Gillen, Bunnell, and Rigg (2022) pose a look from the other side, picking up on Krause's notion of ruralization to re-view and rethink urbanization from its peripheries. Van Sant, Shelton, and Kay (2023) trace concepts of real property ownership across urban and rural, pointing to parallel struggles between urban housing and rural land, and calling for a relational way of understanding the interconnections across space. As Balakrishnan and Gururani (2021, 9) argue, in order to break down the binaries between urban and agrarian that limit our understanding of these entanglements, it is also necessary to 'move beyond the disciplinary silos of agrarian and urban studies and forge a conversation between the two analytical frameworks' (see also Gururani 2020).

These scholars point to the limitations of explanations bounded by disciplinary viewpoints. They emphasize the possibilities of more relational ways of seeing. All have been productive for our thinking. We agree with their efforts to inquire into the relationship between these fields and the analytical questions that link them. These scholars' work has motivated us to consider how we might challenge the core intellectual positionalities of our fields. And to continue to build new intellectual and political solidarities between and among them.

The stakes of this project are political. Bifurcated discussions in public, policymaking, and political realms are corollary to bifurcated scholarly discussions. Both hinder conceptual clarity, relational decision-making across urban and rural space, and the formation of urban-agrarian social movement alliances. The stakes are also *higher* because of climate change. Decisions must be made about refashioning water, food, and energy systems; about where and how people will live as the planet becomes hotter and more volatile. These decisions, and the systems and entanglements they reflect, bring up distinct, relational, interconnected processes, and spaces, and thus, invite new explorations and a rethinking of categories.

Social reproductive relations of rural and urban

How to proceed, then, given the instability of these categories? How might we conceptualize the processes that shape urban and agrarian spaces, social relations, and scholarship given the goal of identifying the shared or potentially aligned political claims across what are often articulated as oppositional and irreconcilable positions? We find common ground in shared but distinct struggles over the means of social reproduction. By 'social reproduction,'

we refer to the work conducted outside of the strict sphere of commodity production, meaning the social and physical labor that reproduces individuals, families and communities. Feminist political economists have long argued for greater attention to the exploitation not only of waged labor, but also unpaid and un-free labor, in particular through demands for recognition of social reproductive labor (Bhattacharya 2017; Federici 2012, 2004; Katz 2001; Mies 1986). They have also demonstrated how social reproduction is enrolled in, commodified, and threatened by the production of space among both rural and urban (Chung 2017; Freshour 2017; Miraftab and Huq 2024).

This focus on social reproduction thus links different sites and communities to lay the foundation for productive solidarities (Meehan and Strauss 2015; Trotz 2010). Classic Marxist categories of land and labor similarly span urban and rural space, and the organization of land and labor deeply shapes social reproductive relations. But we proceed with the concept of social reproduction because it centers analogous and linked struggles that are often also in the foreground of political movements, such as the German farmers' protests. Social reproductive labor is necessary for survival; it is (differently) threatened by climate change and climate policy in both rural and urban communities; those threats are outcomes of processes that span urban and rural space and which people in both socio-spatial locations are, collectively, struggling against (Ojeda 2021; Ossome 2021; Paprocki 2016; Shattuck et al. 2023). As the editors of the *Journal of Peasant Studies* recently wrote, a focus on social reproduction demonstrates how threats to lives and livelihoods are both spatially and temporally extensive (Shattuck et al. 2023). For rural and urban working people, these threats illuminate the entanglements of the rural and urban through processes that threaten social reproduction across both. This suggests opportunities for solidarities around resistance to these processes that pose shared threats. Our approach should not be read as a rejection of categories of land and labor. Indeed, as Ossome and others have described, social reproduction is itself essential for better understanding land and labor politics (2021; 2022; Naidu and Ossome 2016). Rather, we have chosen to focus on social reproduction here specifically given its potential to form the basis of a shared politics.

To be clear, we recognize that the social life of land is a critical modality through which urban-agrarian interfaces are productively understood (e.g. Goldman, Peluso, and Wolford 2024). Social reproduction is often fundamentally dependent on specific uses and ontologies of land. Investigations on this issue often focus on the contemporary antagonisms between the rural and urban producers through speculative urban development, through which cities are made attractive to finance capital (Goldman 2011), or the assetization of land itself (Fairbairn 2021; Goldman 2020; Kaika and Ruggiero 2024), both of which are often antithetical to social reproductive needs in both urban and rural communities. But if we are concerned specifically with how climate change and climate policies are destabilizing urban and rural social reproductive patterns in contradictory or parallel ways, then, for example, the transformation of rural land into a wealth-generating financial asset through urban real estate markets in fact tells us less about the concrete relations in which we are interested than it does about a more basic antagonism between social reproduction and capitalist accumulation.[5]

We have, in short, chosen to focus on social reproduction because we find it useful for orienting attention to shared experiences of exploitation and demands for redressing this exploitation across agrarian and urban space, even as this exploitation and these demands manifest in diverse ways (and in ways that are sometimes in tension). Dynamics of urbanization and agrarian dispossession—and climate action—not only reconfigure property relations, metabolic relations, and modes of production, but also, critically, they reconfigure the conditions and possibilities for social reproduction (Paprocki 2021). Interrogating these processes across space is thus necessary for understanding how disparate threats to and demands for social reproduction are uneven, disparate, and also entangled with one another (Goffe 2022).

Changing material entanglements: food, energy, water

It is both intellectually and politically important to understand connections and tensions across urban and agrarian social relations that climate change is transforming. Doing so, we will demonstrate, illuminates important political concerns in new ways—in particular, the ways in which justice may appear self-evident from the perspective of urban or agrarian studies (or social movements), but have unexpected implications from the other. Urban and agrarian life are not just entangled but are mutually disturbing, displacing, and destabilizing, to the extent that crisis tendencies in urban life are resolved in ways that exacerbate crisis in the rural, and vice versa. This resolution of crisis tendencies by pushing the dynamics of crisis onto the other is what makes their political demands seem so incompatible.[6] We identify ways in which these connections manifest as both tensions and as shared articulations; we refer to these collectively as *entanglements.*

We describe three sets of entanglements among resources that are necessary to life and livelihoods (i.e. social reproduction) across urban and agrarian spaces, and which climate change is transforming: energy, food, and water. These are illustrative, not comprehensive; one could offer similar accounts of, for example, transportation or labor. Our point is to show that a progressive multi-spatial politics must engage these entanglements and grapple with the contradictions between them. While these entanglements grow, intensify, and are remade in and for a climate changed world, it becomes increasingly critical that scholars of agrarian and urban studies focus on examining and speaking across these divides.

Food

Political geographies of food production and consumption are a key site of such entanglements. The production and consumption of food bring together agrarian producers and urban consumers in ways that both bind them together in political and economic configurations, as well as draw them into tension with one another around competing values and demands (Friedmann and McMichael 1989; McMichael 2013). Food is a fundamental resource in sustaining social reproduction, and securing food is a principal aspect of the labor of social reproduction. Thus we find concerns related to food are a focal point of political demands for social reproduction from both urban and agrarian communities.

Food consumption and production is a key example illuminating the links and tensions between agrarian and urban communities. Viewed discreetly, urban demands for food security and agrarian demands for food sovereignty are progressive and legitimate on their own terms. Yet viewing them together illuminates the tensions between them (Barnes 2022; Shattuck, Schiavoni, and VanGelder 2015). One vision for food security in the context of climate change involves expanding production in the context of increasing resource constraints. Climate smart agriculture, Taylor (2018) explains, has increasingly become a core paradigm of international development, led chiefly by the World Bank, responding to the specter of Malthusian crisis. Their solution is to increase agricultural yields using the same amount of land and water resources. The implication is a claim that climate change will require farmers to produce more food on the same amount of land for more people living in cities. In this sense, demands for climate smart agriculture are extensions of much longer productivist logics shaping urban and agrarian development and the relationship between them (Cullather 2004). Concerns about the food security of growing urban populations have often manifested as demands for increased yields generated through industrialized agriculture and associated artificially depressed food prices (Patel and Moore 2018). Cheap food is necessary to support the depressed industrial wages that fuel urban expansion. It is also necessary for the social reproduction of rural waged laborers who don't have the means for their own subsistence production (Bernstein 2014). Agrarian studies witnessed similar debates about the depression of food prices to fuel urban-industrial growth in response to declining profitability of Green Revolution agriculture in the mid to late 20th century (Byres 1979; Lipton 1977). Today, its renewal through responses to climate change demonstrates the centrality of such urban-agrarian entanglements to resolving crises of social reproduction.

Here the concerns about meeting the requirements of the social reproduction of urban labor are displaced onto agrarian producers. Driving down the cost of food for urban consumers entails driving down the remuneration for the farmers and agrarian workers who produce it. Agricultural wages are depressed, and the capacity of farming families for social reproduction is squeezed through declining earnings and dispossession of land and other resources necessary to both production and social reproduction (Arboleda 2020a; Levien 2017). The devaluation of food production and agrarian labor becomes what Madden (2025) calls a 'hidden subsidy' supporting this urban growth. Leaving aside whether agro-industrialization and increased yields do support consumption among urban workers as they purport to (Patel 2013), these transformations directly threaten the food sovereignty of agrarian producers.

Agrarian movements for food sovereignty highlight how the expansion of industrial agricultural production, with its attendant monocropping systems, increased inputs such as pesticides and fertilizers, has adverse effects on agrarian communities' food sovereignty, meaning control over what they produce and how. This food sovereignty is a major rallying cry for movements organized around agrarian justice. These demands for food sovereignty are linked with broader demands of peasant movements, specifically the right to subsistence, which is of course fundamental to social reproduction (Scott 1976). In the 21st century these demands for the right to subsistence have

broadened – Edelman's (2005) 'right to continue being agriculturalists.' The centrality of these linked demands for subsistence and the right to engage in agriculture to contemporary agrarian political movements is important to understanding the challenges to social reproduction in the agrarian world today and how these demands are articulated in direct opposition to urbanization. Even as nonagricultural employment is today essential to the survival of farm households almost everywhere, this demand to continue engaging in agriculture is central to agrarian politics precisely because of its importance to social reproduction (Rigg et al. 2018). At the same time, the capitalization of agriculture in many parts of the world has led to a situation where not only labor exploitation but also mechanization and land consolidation have produced economies of scale under which the production of genuinely *cheap* food is only possible on large farms and is antithetical to small scale production.[7]

The contradictions surrounding the implications of cheap food in agrarian and urban communities need to be grappled with in order to be resolved across these sites. Morgan Ody, the current General Coordinator of La Via Campesina International (and herself a peasant farmer in Bretagne, France), has described how this contradiction has been exploited by agro-industrial corporations to benefit elites, saying they 'have used this contradiction. They have said "we will make sure that food is very cheap so that people can have access to food"' (Ody and Shattuck 2023, 554). She argues that the contradiction needs to be resolved through state regulation that eliminates agricultural subsidies that hurt small peasant producers across the Global North and South, ensuring that peasants are fairly compensated for the real cost of production. Resolving the contradiction, she believes, will require other narratives that demand, for example, secure access to food through fair wages for workers and social security measures, rather than exploitation and dispossession of farmers. It also may require state subsidies for meeting the consumption needs of both rural and urban producers (Bernstein 2014, 1053). Thus, this is a powerful vision of solidarity among peasants and workers contingent on meeting the needs of both surrounding the capacity for social reproduction. Grappling with these contradictions and political demands across space thus makes this solidarity crucial.

Energy

Similar tensions can be identified in contestations between demands for urban energy consumption and those related to agrarian land use. Decarbonizing energy systems will require economies of scale: getting large amounts of cheap, clean power to urban populations, many of whom are renters and apartment dwellers, as fast as possible. To do this, the U.S. and much of the world is working with and from a model of large-scale, centralized generation and long-distance transmission with fossil-fuel based sources, in which energy is for the most part produced in rural areas and consumed in urban ones. This has already involved a lot of historical unevenness in urban-rural relations. In the American southwest, coal, oil, and hydropower required the increasing, more intensive 'expropriation of hinterlands' for urban growth (Needham 2014); rural communities were often less served, or served not at all, by proximate infrastructure, while urban residents had ample cheap energy at their fingertips.

These uneven relationships are being heightened and patterns of development entrenched in the transition to renewables, as the imperative to phase out the use of fossil fuels in the context of climate change is accompanied by a surge in demand for renewable energy sources especially to meet the demands of urban consumers. The transition to renewables involves a shift from subterranean to land-based energy regimes (Huber and McCarthy 2017).[8] Renewables are particularly land-use intensive and will require ten to a thousand times more land area than fossil fuels (Smil 2015). While the affordances of wind and solar, as opposed to oil and gas, mean that renewable energy has the potential to be organized in a variety of ways, in many places, renewables are being developed in the same paradigm as fossil-fuel based sources. In both India and the United States, for instance, large solar farms are being built on public 'waste' lands, that are understood to be of little or no current use, and which are far from consumers (Baka 2017; Stock and Birkenholtz 2021; Yenneti and Day 2015). Yet in fact, these projects are being met with protest, as proximate rural residents voice various objections to these enclosures of commons land, which (in various places) has historic cultural significance, or is an important element of small-scale agriculture, recreation-based economies, or habitat conservation and biodiversity (Angelo 2023; Hosbey and Roane 2021; Rignall 2016; Yenneti, Day, and Golubchikov 2016).

Utility-scale renewable energy development on government-managed land is an efficient solution to the problem of providing cheap renewable energy to urban consumers—of preserving and enhancing urban social reproduction by securing a sustainable form of low-carbon energy. Yet it is one that also directly threatens rural social reproduction by displacing rural communities and other land uses including agrarian production and inhabitation (Paprocki and McCarthy 2024; Rignall 2016; Yenneti, Day, and Golubchikov 2016). Large-scale solar and wind development involves huge encroachments on rural lives: the 'industrialization' of natural areas with the creation of new energy corridors; 'land grabs' and enclosures of common lands; threats to ceremonial landscapes and tourism-based livelihoods. It is, thus, a form of urban sustainability in which the costs and benefits are very unevenly distributed. Urban communities benefit from cheap energy; utilities and developers benefit from economies of scale; but rural communities benefit very little.

Seen as a conflict over urban and rural rights to social reproduction, rural resistance to renewable energy development makes perfect sense—and is not reducible to right-populist resistance to climate adaptation. Yet in popular media, in urban climate movements, and in much urban scholarship, this stake and source of rural protest remains nearly invisible or is poorly understood. In the U.S., in particular, rural protestors tend to be seen as NIMBYs unwilling to sacrifice for the public good, and their concerns seen as boutique, bourgeois, or marginal in the face of climate change, rather than as existential as cities' needs for electrification and low carbon energy.

Water

Distinct from food and energy, there's a sort of organic integratedness to a watershed. Energy and food, in many cases, come to be organized to be produced in one place and consumed in the other. But, for water, the watershed

(in some form) and the hydrological cycle remain, with continuous flows of water in flowing or soaking form often traversing urban and rural geographies and territorial boundaries. There is a romance to the watershed, say, in the notion of every drop of rain falling in an area coming together. And also a pragmatism, as a potential 'natural' unit of governance. Following the watershed can show how biophysical flows of water are intertwined with and conditioned by sociopolitics, landscape ecological dynamics, and land use economics. Distribution of settlement and land uses within a watershed can involve contradictory needs (polluting activities in one place that affect everyone) similar to current discussions of loss and damage at the global scale.

But the production of water infrastructure is not necessarily directly reflective of this system, either in its romantic or pragmatic form—if indeed they ever conform with such romance or pragmatism.[9] In many cases, large urban centers control their water through an extended 'urban-infrastructural watershed' that either brings water in, for municipal water services—for example, cities like Los Angeles and New York City (see, e.g. Cantor 2021; Gandy 2002)—or keeps water out, for flood protection—for example, cities like Rotterdam (see, e.g. Meyer, Nillesen, and Zonneveld 2012). This urban-infrastructural watershed is constructed through pipes, canals, catchments, dams, reservoirs, and pumps, and managed through particular laws, technologies, and institutions of governance (see, also, Anand 2017; Boelens et al. 2023; Kaika 2005; Zeiderman 2025). Questions about control, distribution, and protection become sites of conflicting political claims and needs.

In coastal regions such as Jakarta, Indonesia, the problem of rising sea levels and uncertain, extreme precipitation caused by climate change intersect with the problems of geology and urban development. Sites along low-lying rivers in the urban center and along the coastline face chronic flooding from heavy rains and surging seas. This flooding is made worse by rapid land subsidence (sinking far faster than sea levels are rising, due primarily to groundwater overpumping), increased ground impermeability (due to rapid urban development), and failing infrastructure. One way to take on this problem is to see it from the point of view of the city having to protect itself against water. In Jakarta, city officials along with engineers and hydrologists have come up with far-reaching plans to do that. These include, most ambitiously, the Giant Sea Wall masterplan to build, in effect, a new city-sea wall out in the Jakarta Bay that will hold back the tides and create massive retention ponds to drain the city (Goh 2021). This plan, along with other projects to dredge the rivers and concretize their banks, threaten the informal kampung settlements along waterways and coastline.

Another way, recognizing the relationalities, is to see along the watershed, to understand that land use struggles in the further reaches of the watersheds, far outside the city, are intertwined with struggles to protect the informal settlements in the city center. In places like Puncak, near the headwaters of the notorious Ciliwung River, deep inland on Java island, land use conflicts over colonial-era large-scale tea plantations, new tourism resort development (largely for the use of Jakartans escaping the big city), or recent efforts for more restorative agroforestry condition how water rushes into the rivers, making floods worse 70 kilometers away in central Jakarta, or seeps into the earth, recharging the aquifer. Such a watershed view—rural and urban intertwined—opens the

possibility for political solidarities, particularly in the context of climate change (Goh 2019; Forthcoming). It suggests how socioecological struggles around the headwaters, including shifting social and economic bases from plantations or resorts to agroforestry, might be aligned with struggles for informal housing and livelihoods in the city center, both against a dominant vision of urban development.

The watershed and the hydrological cycle knit social relationships and biophysical space, potentially intertwining urban and rural struggles. Indeed, this particular narrative in the Jakarta region is reflective of particular, social reproductive entanglements of rural and urban ways of life. Tourist resort development in the upper reaches of the watershed is in the service of increasingly expansive urban development and consumptive urban ways of life. Informal settlement activists, in contrast, have frequently pointed to the aspects of 'non-city life' in the urban kampungs, such as small-scale food production, key to their social reproduction, as notable contributions to social and economic life of the city more broadly. This emphasizes a kind of value of interrelationality, and of maintaining the possibility of other ways of life, in this region that gave form and concept to *desakota* (McGee 1991), one archetypal hybrid rural-urban sociospatial form.

Toward political solidarities

Across issues of food, energy, and water, what might be understood as rural and urban relations are entangled in ways that expose uneven power relationships, governance hegemonies, and what might be thought of as material boundaries. Two takeaways emerge from these entanglements. First, more than being simply relational, they are often contradictory. That is, despite the fact that there is one underlying cause of this dynamic—the political economy and associated policy orientations in responses to climate change—urban and agrarian demands for social reproduction appear to be in direct competition to the extent that 'fixes' for the problems of one can and frequently do disrupt the other. These relations go both ways; one could imagine purportedly 'general' fixes for climate change focused on shoring up and sustaining agrarian life. And peoples' lives straddle both; scholars have highlighted how many households straddle urban and agrarian worlds precisely in order to meet their needs for social reproduction (Hecht 2014; Naidu and Ossome 2016; Rigg et al. 2018; Shattuck et al. 2023). But, historically and in the present, organizing resources and political economic processes to sustain urban social relationships has posed a real threat to rural life and livelihoods.

Second, the broader regimes of development that enforce this urban view make presumptions about the futures of rural social relationships (see Paprocki 2020). To the extent that the actions for urban sustainability described above seem to be systematically prioritizing and perpetuating urban life, while dismissing or disregarding (or misunderstanding) rural claims, they rely on a kind of 'climate urbanism' (Long and Rice 2019), a dominant mode of urban political economy centered on a frequently exclusionary green urban policy orientation (Angelo 2021). But beyond that, they invoke (or take advantage of,

or reproduce) an 'urban imperialism' (Angelo Forthcoming; Brechin 2006)—an intellectual and practical hegemony that has arisen as part of the material and political relations of capitalist urbanization. Now, in the context of climate change, this urban imperialism takes on the presumption of an urban future as the only valid or possible response to a planet facing climate emergency (see Angelo and Wachsmuth 2020).

This uneven situation—which is not new, but which takes on a new urgency and salience in the context of climate change—is *producing* political conflicts in the specific tenor that we see. Collectively, La Via Campesina and some strands of recent farmer protests reflect opposition to resource extraction and encroachments of capital. They are making material demands—the right to subsistence and the right to continue being agriculturalists, specifically—in response to the unreflexive city-centrism of visions of sustainability described above. The wave of farmer protests against green industrial policy appears as an antagonism to sustainability policy, but may also be articulated as an antagonism toward the very real contradictions of capitalist urbanization and the agrarian extractivism on which it relies. On the other side, urban social movements fight for access to clean water, healthy food, and low carbon energy, often for marginalized urban residents including working-class tenants, while urban policymakers plan for (public or private) larger-scale, coordinated control of land, water and resource use to secure a manner of sustainable urban growth. These urban struggles and strategies are not competing agendas to modernize agrarian practices and end the possibility of rural life. They are, like many farmer struggles, demands for or attempts to secure social reproduction.

But neither urban nor rural movements are typically understood in these terms—as analogous struggles for social reproduction. Instead, in popular media, public discourse, and in scholarship, a separate set of cultural politics gets overlaid in their interpretation, particularly in the Global North (McCarthy 2002), which results in caricaturing on both sides. In the U.S., survey researchers map climate denial across urban and rural space (e.g. Marlon et al. 2025), resulting in reductive discussions of 'two Americas,' or of 'progressive cities' versus rural conservatives, in which resistance is attributed to climate denial (Dunlap and Brulle 2020; see also Koslov 2019). From the perspective of cities, rural movements' claims are overwhelmingly understood as reactionary populism (i.e. they are seen as people resisting climate mitigation or adaptation and unwilling to sacrifice in the public good). Yet, as McCarthy has written, 'considerations of livelihood and social reproduction in fact figure centrally in struggles over access to and control over rural lands and environments' (2002, 1285). From the perspective of rural life, urban movements, meanwhile, and urbanization more generally, is understood to represent the power of encroaching capital, and to be fundamentally antagonistic to rural struggle. Of course there are urban social movements likewise motivated by struggles for social reproduction and not the interests of accumulation. Thus, seeing demands on each side as linked struggles for social reproduction offers alternative possibilities for solidarity.

Finally, we find resources for thinking about the spatialization of geographies of social reproduction in the literature on the commons, spaces or resources that are governed by a given community rather than a state or a market—and which are not hamstrung by disciplinary divisions that organize thinking by either

urban or rural space or social relations, and which in that sense offer possible foundations for a politics of solidarity. Scholarship in both urban studies and agrarian studies has proposed commons as alternative political visions of the distribution of access to space and resources that supports the work of social reproduction as opposed to the expansion of capitalist production and exchange values (Levien 2017; Sevilla-Buitrago 2015; Thompson 1993). They are counter-hegemonic spatial and political projects that operate beyond the space of capitalist production and the nation-state (McCarthy 2005). Feminist political economics (Federici 2012; Naidu and Ossome 2016) and scholars of race and place alike (Purifoy 2022; Roane 2018) have identified how the labor of social reproduction both produces and relies on commons. Yet while such commons create alternative terrains of connections, they can also produce conflicts such as those we have described as 'entanglements.' As McCarthy writes, 'to assert a commons at one scale is almost necessarily to deny claims at another' (McCarthy 2005, 19). Commoning practices, particularly those practiced across 'mobile ecologies' (Hosbey, Lloréns, and Roane 2022; Lloréns 2021), are thus a useful resource for reimagining alternative practices for governing rural and urban space through the defense of the right to social reproduction, yet they are not a panacea for mapping out how to do so. Grappling with questions about power, exclusion, and reconciling these across space and scale manifested within these entanglements is necessary to forging a politics of solidarity.

Questions and ways forward

What is to be done about this situation? How to take these demands seriously, as climate change demands transformations in food, water, and energy systems? If the real theoretical and political challenge is to find a way to overcome the false antagonism between urban and agrarian demands and craft a politics that sets its sights on the real cause, what political work is required? Specifically, beyond documenting struggles, entanglements, and contradictory claims, how might we untangle these issues and highlight their shared foundational concerns? Here we propose three steps that scholars of urban and agrarian studies might take to reconcile these challenges and build solidarity across fields. Following each, we pose a series of questions for scholars to ask ourselves, individually and collectively, in order to do so.

The first step is translation—going beyond illuminating the relationalities between rural and urban to highlight potentially shared claims, and explain disciplinary blind spots in ways that this paper has tried to do: making visible and legible rural struggle for urban scholars and vice versa, and reframing contemporary climate questions of food, water, and energy as being part of broader, relational struggles for social reproduction. We mean translation in the very literal sense of rephrasing or paraphrasing political demands in different languages to make potentially aligned progressive agendas visible across disparate places, identities, and political vocabularies. For instance, in the case of the German farmers described in the introduction, articulating these protests as opposition to mainstream climate policy's tendency to shift the burdens of addressing climate change onto rural producers, rather than opposition to climate adaptation per se, might create space for dialogue and coalition building around aligned demands despite other differences.

Roane's (2018) writing on the 'Black commons,' like McCarthy's earlier work on commons, opens up analytic as well as political possibilities for transcending urban and agrarian binaries and offering possible foundations for a political platform for solidarity. Urban and agrarian studies scholars have also offered resources for prospective political visions that could be the basis for political movements across urban and rural space and provide analytics for urban and agrarian studies scholars to speak to each other across disciplinary divides. Vocabularies that have been advanced as possible frameworks for shared analytics and politics include concepts such as 'occupancy rights' (Guldi 2022), 'the right to space' (Ghosh and Meer 2021), or even Harvey's conception of the right to the city as democratic control over the surplus. In his original, spatially expansive, formulation, 'The right to the city had to mean the right to command the whole urban process that was increasingly dominating the countryside (everything from agribusiness to second homes and rural tourism)' (2008).

Questions these efforts raise: How can we—urban and agrarian scholars—incorporate a shared vocabulary and shared basis for politics into disciplinary conversations? Not to *replace* important disciplinary perspectives and work, but to create opportunities to work and think together—e.g. beyond illuminating entanglements, and interrogating how our disciplines have separated them? How can we translate across our fields in ways that don't completely subsume one another but that facilitate understandings of shared values? And does this work of translation illuminate new ways of thinking about political imaginaries that don't occlude the agrarian in the urban and vice versa?

The second step is commensuration: representing different demands according to a common metric in order to identify ways in which shared claims are already being articulated among social movements. Land and labor offer two possible analytics; we suggest that the lens of social reproduction might be another useful way to highlight the shared interests and desires—i.e. to continue the practices of social reproduction that both urban and agrarian communities are accustomed to and value—underlying different concrete demands. The concept highlights the material and political parallels of contemporary urban and rural climate struggles and suggests the possibility of solidarity across them. Progressive social movements today are already drawing together configurations of agrarian and urban struggles in new ways, reflecting shifting demands on land and resources shaped by intensifying entanglements. In *Golden Gulag,* Gilmore describes how the political economy of agrarian change lays the foundation for the prison economy, but that it is necessary to move beyond such abstractions to forge a politics of solidarity: 'urban and rural households struggle from objectively similar but subjectively different positions across the prison landscape' (2007, 250). She shows how a shared understanding of struggles for social reproduction helped to forge urban-rural solidarities. Similarly, Borras (2016) describes the changing character of land politics as involving both urban and agrarian struggles, some of which are, in both cases, organized around agriculture and some of which are not. An example of increasingly hybrid social movements is Arboleda's (2020a) discussion of the role of logistics unions in the food system and the need to understand their struggles as 'agrarian politics.' While progressive social movements seeking to build alliances across urban and agrarian space are diverse and often fractured, they frequently share

an opposition toward intensifications of resource extraction and increasing encroachment of capital across sites and scales (Scoones et al. 2018). They also frequently share a common interest in redistributive land politics, while often moving beyond traditional demands for agrarian land reform.

Questions: What empirical examples can be identified of solidarities across urban and agrarian social movements? Where movements (such as that of the German farmers discussed above) articulate explicit antagonisms between the urban and agrarian, what values are represented and in what ways are these values shared? Can urban and agrarian social movements move beyond cultural and political differences to focus on the basis of shared struggles, and actual relationship *between* their demands, despite those differences? Can one shared framework or vocabulary (for example, social reproduction, and/or commons), actually be the basis of relational decision making, and/or urban and agrarian social movements that are in solidarity with each other? Is a shared framework necessary, or are there other bases for solidarity and understanding? For instance, could we imagine a scenario where an urban climate justice movement was also making demands around rural land use issues (informed by the demands of their agrarian counterparts) part of their political platform for renewable energy?

The third step is imagination—asking 'what if?' In the spirit of going beyond critique and analysis, attempting to conceive of possible scenarios about relationships that empower claims to social reproduction across socio-spatial ways of life. For both scholars and social movements, the hope is that concepts such as commons or social reproduction would open up possibilities for ideas about and propositions for the future that are in solidarity rather than antagonistic. Such different approaches might result in different spatial and political configurations, including political coalitions across urban and rural space.

Questions: What is a progressive vision of a just climate future that respects urban and rural livelihoods? How might the particular kinds of solutions embedded in contemporary climate policy be challenged? Decisions and recommendations about food security, renewable energy, and water access and control are posed as universal solutions to societal problems when they are often solutions undergirded by an unquestioned appeal to urban ways of life and an urban future. Focusing on material demands through a framework of social reproduction suggests that there could be approaches to sustainability that are *equitable* across rural and urban lives and livelihoods. For instance: If you can't externalize the costs of urbanization onto agrarian communities, if it's acknowledged that there are no simple fixes—what might policy design look like? If you don't accept the teleology of productivism that is embedded in so much contemporary climate policy, if you don't accept that transitioning to low-carbon energy sources can be a substitute for more fundamental transformations in ways of life—what might those totally different forms of living look like?[10] And finally, where are such visions already being articulated?

Conclusion

Gramsci's 'Southern Question' is of renewed urgency given climate change. Climate adaptation demands transitions in socio-ecological systems across

urban and rural space that will have dramatic impacts on place, people, and livelihood. *Just* transitions will require understanding and coalition-building across urban and rural movements and coordination of political demands. It is essential that contemporary scholars of agrarian and urban studies understand these entanglements in order to study social movements and transition trajectories that cross urban and rural space and to pursue and support emancipatory politics that builds alliances around shared demands.

Much of the scholarly work on urban-agrarian entanglements to date has been theoretical, and focused on the particular challenges for disciplines organized around urban and rural space to work and think effectively across them. This important work has yielded a number of insights: that agrarian protest is often unfairly dismissed as regressive populism (McCarthy 2002); the need to understand interconnections of urban and rural space, and between urban and agrarian transformations (Balakrishnan and Gururani 2021; Ghosh and Meer 2021; Van Sant, Shelton, and Kay 2023); and the possibilities for analytic and political frameworks that highlight material entanglements and political and imaginative common ground (Roane 2023).

We build on these insights to argue that climate change is putting a particular set of pressures on these relations now, as it requires adaptation and infrastructure and land use change—and produces conflicts—across urban and rural space. We show how approaches to climate mitigation and adaptation often pursue the sustainability of urban lives at the expense of agrarian ones, strategies which undermine potential sympathies between urban and agrarian social movements and disrupt the possibilities for a just transition. We highlight shared demands for social reproduction at the root of these struggles, arguing that instead of further polarizing apparently disparate urban and rural social movements' demands, we can and should look to their articulations, and see them as shared struggles for social reproduction in the face of climate change. We proceed with the belief that such a view opens up space for moving beyond the antagonisms of the entanglements toward solidarities around shared demands for social reproduction.

If demands around climate change are frequently made in ways that polarize rather than strengthen urban-agrarian alliances in the context of climate transitions, one task for scholars is to think about how those tensions manifest and how to transcend them. As McCarthy has written about calls for commons, they remind us 'that profoundly alternative social relations and values are entirely thinkable' (2005, 16). Similarly, here, we argue that alternative social relations and values in the time of climate change are thinkable through solidarities across urban and agrarian scholarship and politics. We have also invited scholars of agrarian studies and urban studies to think with us about how to do that work together. While pathways toward forging such solidarities are far from self-evident, they are both urgently necessary and potentially transformative alternatives in the face of climate crisis.

Notes

1 Even as we draw attention to the ways these movements work to articulate specifically agrarian modes of life and social reproduction, we also recognize that neither agrarian nor urban 'ways of life' are unitary nor fully equal. As many urban scholars have written in particular, the urban is not a codified way of life,

rather it is a contested socio-spatial process which extends far beyond the boundaries of cities. However, we also recognize here that these categories not only inform specific strategies for addressing climate change in distinct ways, but they are also categories with which people and political movements identify and find meaning. Like any social group characterized by internal heterogeneity, we find commonalities within agrarian and urban communities that reflect both shared conditions of production and social reproduction as well as shared identities.

2 This is unlike some work in fields including political ecology that have not been quite as tightly bounded by particular lineages of thought in urban studies and agrarian studies, and have traced connections across various sociospatial relationships as a matter of course. See, e.g., Hecht (2014) on forest transitions in Latin America, remittances and their impact on rural dynamics, and multisited households across 'rural' and 'urban.' Gort and Loftus have also recently argued that urban political ecology itself is uniquely positioned to challenge spatial abstractions that pit the 'rural' against the 'urban' (2024).

3 There is so much class differentiation within agrarian communities that Bernstein questions the very idea of 'communities' to begin with (2014). We recognize this immense diversity and find that even if such categories are so diverse that they constitute strategic essentialisms (Mollinga 2010), that they are nevertheless useful for thinking with in terms of how claims are made among collectives identifying as urban and rural or agrarian.

4 Debates around the heterogeneity of agrarian labor in the context of contemporary capitalism and development trajectories are exemplified in a debate about the status of the peasantry between Bernstein (2014) and McMichael (2015). Bernstein argues that there are no more peasants in a meaningful, historical sense and McMichael argues that there are, urging recognition of 'peasantness' as a political rather than an analytical category. While Bernstein sees 'peasants' as an anachronistic social category suggesting the persistence of pre-capitalist social forms, McMichael insists on the importance of thinking with political collectives that identify as peasants today, despite the complicated nature of such an identity in the current historical context. McMichael's attention to the continued political relevance of peasant producers is joined by other scholarship highlighting the significance of political demands for recognition of participation in the food system and agrarian production, such as White's (2019) discussion of Black working class farmers in the US South.

5 Though see Majumder and Gururani (2021) for a discussion of the continued salience of land for the reproduction of rural class and caste relations in the context of de-agrarianization and agrarian urbanization. See also Mercer (2024) for an examination of how the acquisition of former agricultural lands for housing construction on the 'suburban frontier' by Tanzanian middle classes confounds dominant understandings of the relationship between industrialization and urbanization.

6 We thank David Madden for this point.

7 We thank Annie Shattuck for this point.

8 While our focus here is on solar and wind power, the expansion of biofuels is also a form of land-based energy production that has displaced significant impacts onto rural spaces (Borras, McMichael, and Scoones 2010; Purifoy 2022).

9 See political ecology critiques of the watershed concept and watershed governance (e.g., Cohen 2012; Cohen and Bakker 2014; Molle 2009; Woodhouse and Muller 2017).

10 We borrow this phrase, 'totally different form of living' from Hosbey and Roane (2021), who use it to describe their analysis of Black ecologies and the legacies of marronage. These visions stand outside of debates between the urban and the agrarian, even as they are also deeply textured by the entanglements of urban and agrarian production and social reproduction.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the participants of the panels on Urban-Agrarian Entanglements at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers for their thoughtful engagement with these themes. We have learned from Laura Barraclough, Madeleine Fairbairn, Swarnabh Ghosh, Kelly Kay, James McCarthy, Ayan Meer, Levi Van Sant, and Michael Woods in conversation and in writing. We also thank David Madden for his valuable input on an earlier version of this paper, and two anonymous reviewers for insightful suggestions.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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