BEYOND GENTRIFICATION: MOBILIZING COMMUNITIES AND CLAIMING SPACE[1]

James C. Fraser[2]
Department of Geography
Center for Urban and Regional Studies
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Abstract: During the 20th century, neighborhood change and the displacement of low-income residents from their homes has occurred in a variety of ways from the demolition of entire areas to more recent revitalization efforts emphasizing the building of community and new governance structures. In this paper, I argue two interrelated points. First, whereas economic displacement of low-income people from their homes and neighborhoods is one effect of neighborhood revitalization initiatives, there is a wider set of factors that constitutes the marginalization, displacement, and exclusion of certain population groups from effectively making claims on neighborhood space. Second, in an era of neoliberalization, whereby civil society is expected to play a larger role in neighborhood governance and the provision of social welfare, the formation and activities of neighborhood-based communities, and their relation to state and market forces, have become increasingly important factors to examine. In this article, I address these areas of inquiry through a case study of a neighborhood revitalization initiative in Chattanooga, Tennessee that has been under way since 1998. [Key words: community, urban revitalization, neoliberalism, neighborhood revitalization.]

In a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of Washington, DC, a battle rages over a pile of teddy bears. The bears, clustered around an elm tree and adorned with dried flowers and liquor bottles, have been assembled as a memorial to a young man slain on that street. Such street memorials are common throughout the Washington, DC and other cities as testaments to lives cut short by violence. Though they sprout in public places, the shrines do not normally attract as much attention as they recently have here, in the neighborhood of Columbia Heights, where tension between established and newer residents is manifest in disputes over the appropriate use of public space. "All of us felt this was an eyesore," said one resident who recently bought a house in the neighborhood. "It's not the way normal people grieve, not to this extent" (Dvorak, 2002, p. B01). The combined power of investment interests, city government, and new neighborhood residents points toward an increasingly common situation where, in the name of neighborhood revitalization and city competitiveness, neighborhood space and identity is being transformed. Under the protection of the police, city garbage collectors have removed the shrines. The memorials may stubbornly reappear, but eventually the mourners may tire and shrines fade away. The

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[2] Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to James C. Fraser, Center for Urban and Regional Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3410; telephone: 919-962-6835; fax: 919-962-2518; e-mail: pavement@unc.edu

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neighborhood is becoming a place where a new set of people are claiming rights to define how space should be used, and longer-term residents sense a change in neighborhood governance. The neighborhood is no longer theirs as it once was. The focus of this article is to further examine the scalar configurations and processes that produce neighborhood change, as well as the exclusionary effects that coexist with neighborhood revitalization.

Conflict over public space is a fact of life in any city. Cities attract people for varying economic, cultural, and social reasons, and they come from many different backgrounds harboring various expectations about urban life. Many early sociologists argued that the modern city promotes an individualistic sensibility that fragments social organization built and sustained upon a common sense of norms and practices. For example, Ferdinand Tönnies wrote at the end of the 19th century that the modern city is not representative of the tight-knit *Gemeinschaft*, or community, but rather a loose amalgamation of individuals—Gesellschaft, or society (Tönnies, 1963). Yet the example provided from one neighborhood in Washington, DC, belies this conceptualization. Individuals do form organized groups of social actors (i.e., communities), and a central constitutive moment in the formation and maintenance of these groups, at least for neighborhood-based and urban movements, is the claiming of rights to space. In addition, neighborhood space and identity are also shaped by the agendas of a broader set of stakeholders who have interests in what neighborhoods mean for a variety of purposes from capital accumulation to the revitalization of entire cities (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Harvey, 1989; Stone, 1989; Smith, 1996; Smith, 2002).

Many of the theoretical orientations explaining such interests claim that the political economy of cities is largely the determining factor in how and for whom places are created. In other words, because neighborhoods are integral components of cities, albeit in unique and uneven ways, they not only represent "use value" for their inhabitants but also "exchange value" for capitalist commodification (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Lefebvre, 1991). For example, geographer Neil Smith (1996) theorized neighborhood change as part of the continual dilemma of capital seeking spaces in which it can accumulate a surplus. This is the central tenet of his gentrification thesis, which hypothesized that when neighborhoods become attractive for capitalist investment this can ignite a chain of events that produces a dramatic economic upswing for investors while pricing out many lower-income residents from the area. Smith demonstrated how gentrification has emerged as a potent tool that city elites use to re-imagine what urban areas mean culturally, politically, and economically (Smith, 2002). Framed as such, gentrification is not only about housing, but also the development of amenities and lifestyle options that are attractive to the types of populations that cities believe will aid with their revitalization.

The transformation of neighborhood space (i.e., revitalization) and the spatial relationships that constitute it are orchestrated by state, market, and societal relationships that require an examination emphasizing multiple points of departure when speaking of destructive and creative moments. The voluminous literature on gentrification is characterized by economic, political, and cultural treatments that variously explain its method of operation. Yet, there are other ways to understand forms of exclusion and displacement operating in the context of neighborhood revitalization projects which have received less attention. In particular, in the context of reregulating neighborhood space, a critical examination of the exclusionary potential of building and mobilization of neighborhood-based community has not received significant consideration in two areas:

first, how neighborhood governance is constituted by a wide range of stakeholders beyond residents and specifying the ways in which neighborhood-based community groups intersect with stakeholder groups who seek to govern neighborhood space; and, second, an examination of how many of these groups draw upon broad sets of scalar relationships that extend beyond neighborhood and city as part of neighborhood political projects.

Responding to the first question about how state, market, and societal relationships intersect, a growing body of literature situates community in direct relation to (and, actually constitutive of) capital and state formations, although in somewhat different manners. For example, the academic literature on community development and poverty has responded to the "gentrification question" by positing that the building of community among neighborhood residents can serve to mitigate what otherwise are the vagaries of the market (Fraser et al., 2003). This community argument suggested that if residents actively participate in the building of neighborhood social infrastructure, expressed as social capital and community capacity, then they will ameliorate neighborhood poverty and be less likely to experience negative effects associated with individual-level poverty (Sampson et al., 1999; Chaskin et al., 2001). Others have been critical of this articulation between community, capital, and governance, claiming that community may actually perform differently. Mayer (2003) offered an eloquent critique of the neighborhood-based community-building movement, suggesting that the focus on the promise of civil society has distracted any meaningful analysis of how the political-economic context shapes community during such efforts. Mayer added that city political and economic elites, albeit not in a lock-step fashion, have prioritized certain forms of civic engagement (i.e., community) over others, which "filters the contemporary reconfigurations in the relationship of civil society, state and market in a peculiar way, which is conductive to supporting the spread of market forces in areas so far beyond the reach of capital" (Mayer, 2003, p. 109).[3]

In a slightly different way, Joseph (2002) contended that in order to be considered a recipient of resources that emanate from the state, social actors must first constitute themselves as a legitimate community. Joseph continued by stating that to accomplish this transformation from simply being an aggregate to becoming a community, social actors must necessarily articulate with the bureaucratic and capitalist apparatus, for example "organized as [a] governmentally regulated and state-sanctioned not-for-profit corporation. If the group does not operate this way then it is a 'gang' or an 'underground network'; it is not given the status of 'community'" (2002, p. 28). The transformation of neighborhood collectives into recognized neighborhood-based communities is central to the current study as are the ways in which these communities take on projects that may be aligned or not with the interests of public and private city stakeholders. These relationships themselves may be axes on which certain groups of residents and others can become

[3] Community building initiatives have dominated the neighborhood redevelopment scene for the past 10 years. Organizations such as the Aspen Institute, Ford Foundation, and Annie E. Casey Foundation have special divisions to focus on community building initiatives, and the philanthropic community has provided hundreds of millions of dollars to aid these efforts (e.g., Annie E. Casey's $550 million Making Connections initiative). The federal government has dedicated significant funds toward these efforts directly and indirectly through programs that include the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, HUD's Hope VI program and Community Outreach Partnership Center program, while the World Bank's focus on building social capital is a central component of the work that is done at the international level.

displaced or excluded from entré into a neighborhood. They are interrelated to the second area of inquiry regarding the ways in which different stakeholder groups create relationships, extending outward from neighborhoods and cities, to assert claims on neighborhood and city space. That is, what effects do these extended relationships produce, and how are they related to promoting certain geographic imaginations of neighborhood spaces that include some groups and exclude others?

In this article, I will address these areas of inquiry through a case study of a revitalization initiative in Chattanooga, Tennessee, taking place in the Highland Park neighborhood. First, I provide a brief overview of types of neighborhood displacement throughout the 20th century, and then discuss the building of neighborhood-based community as an important process that has a wide range of potential effects on residents. Certainly, economics explains a great deal about residential displacement, but a changing sense of who a neighborhood is "for"—who can lay claim to it, who has a right to it—is also indicative of who is at home in the neighborhood.

This suggests the importance of examining community, as a form of civil society, and its relationship to state, market, and other stakeholder groups that are constitutive of neighborhood governance and revitalization; i.e., the changing of the sociospatial identity of place. This is not an entirely new area of inquiry. For example, in a study of affluent Bedford, New York, Duncan and Duncan (2001) found that community and local government mobilized under the banner of place-based preservation efforts can produce a "highly effective mechanism of exclusion" (p. 389). Drawing on their study, I suggest that inner-city neighborhood revitalization provides a slightly different vehicle for understanding forms of exclusion that rely on the enchantment of community.

NEIGHBORHOOD DISPLACEMENT

Since researchers began investigating American cities in the early 20th century, they have examined competition over the use of urban space. Early sociologists were concerned with incorporating the impacts of phenomena such as industrialization and immigration on neighborhood forms and demographic distribution within cities. Between 1800 and 1925, over 40 million immigrants entered the United States, most of them initially settling in cities. Population turnover in large cities was quite high; according to one estimate, half of the country's urban residents moved each decade, to be replaced by new immigrants (Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2000). This constant churning of population took place within the context of a capitalist real estate market and land speculation, foreshadowing later battles between residents and outside investors over rights to the neighborhood and the city.

At the time, however, changes in land use and movements of urban populations were considered a part of the natural "ecology" of the city. Robert Park and, later, Roderick McKenzie, argued that population change within cities followed an invasion-succession model, with different groups of people competing for space (Park et al., 1915). Ernest Burgess used the idea of competition to develop his concentric zone model of the city, in which land use is demarcated by race, class, and economic activity (Burgess, 1925). According to the ecological model promoted by these social scientists and others, the eventual displacement of economically constrained people is inevitable, and part of the natural order of urban change.

By the 1940s and 1950s, the federal government was taking a more explicit role in shaping urban population change. Inner-city abandonment was tacitly encouraged by the federal government, as home mortgages for war veterans were only available on newly-built homes, which were located almost universally outside central-city limits, and as the new interstate highway system enabled workers to live in outlying areas and commute downtown. At the same time, the great migration of rural Southern Blacks to northern cities was peaking, as Blacks searched for industrial jobs and freedom from Jim Crow segregation. The inner city fell into decline, left only to the poor and the non-White, who were unable to buy homes in most suburban jurisdictions (Wilson, 1987).

The urban renewal initiatives of the 1950s and 1960s were attempts to erase the build-up of overcrowded, low-income neighborhoods in central cities. One of the purposes of urban renewal was to uproot slum conditions and "deconcentrate" poverty: displacement, therefore, was built into the process by design. The experience of urban renewal left behind many bitter residents whose communities had been destroyed. A 1966 report on people displaced by urban renewal in Washington, DC reported that, although they had been able to find new housing elsewhere, "those displaced expressed high levels of alienation and regret over the loss of their old neighborhood setting." In one city, an urban renewal report concluded "'New Southwest'[the urban renewal area] may yet develop into the 'Good City,' but its birth has been at a cost … It has risen over the ashes of what was a community of well-established, though poor, inhabitants'" (Gillette, 1995, p.165). This report was an anomaly of the time. Few cities were conducting research on displaced people in order to find out what had happened to them since they left.

In the 1970s, gentrification began to take place in some American cities. Described as a "back-to-the-city" movement (Laska and Spain, 1980), it was generally hailed as the ideal solution to the failure of 1960s War on Poverty programs and the ills of central-city America: the market would take care of the "problem of the ghetto." By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the trend that some social scientists had dismissed as insignificant had spread to cities and towns across the country (Berry, 1985). One of the effects of a booming economy during the Clinton era was an increase in real estate value and the shortage of affordable housing (Quercia et al., 2002). At the same time, cultural changes were making the inner city a more attractive place to be as the post-industrial city began developing, in part, based upon geographies of consumption (Zukin, 1982). The combination of these two factors resulted in the displacement of people who could not afford the increased rents of certain newly desirable inner-city neighborhoods. Moreover, there have been cultural components to the population shifts that occur during gentrification whereby newcomers are inscribed with the sense that they are rightfully reclaiming urban space (Smith, 1996).[4]

[4] Using a slightly different lens, other researchers examine cultural components of displacement but focus primarily on the cultural factors influencing those moving into a gentrifying neighborhood, not of those being displaced. Sharon Zukin, for instance, examined the cultural changes that result in the desire on the part of middle-class suburban residents to return to New York City, and the creation of a "loft living" (Zukin, 1982). David Ley (1996) looked at middle-class migrants who are reshaping central cities in Canada, and Christopher Mele (2000) described the gentrification process of New York's Lower East Side as counterculture in the service of urban capital. In all of these cases, it is the changing cultural desires of the middle-class immigrants—including subcultures of gays, students, activists, and artists—that seem to inform gentrification and the resulting displacement of long-term, low-income residents.

THE RE-EMERGENCE OF COMMUNITY AND DISPLACEMENT

Under urban renewal programs, it was clear enough why people were leaving their neighborhoods: in many cases their neighborhoods were physically not there anymore. Today, displacement occurs in a context different from when the welfare state was more "stabilized" in the United States. In many cities, new urban spaces are being created based on the neoliberalist political rationale that attracting capital investment to the central city will ameliorate the negative effects of decline in the industrial sectors of the economy and assist those living in poverty.[5] Public-private partnerships provide a vehicle to finance neoclassical, mixed-use projects (i.e., upscale shopping and lofts) that reside where industry once did in the city (Smith, 2002). For example, local municipalities can channel federal funds, such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, provided by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to leverage private investment dollars that are used to promote elite interests, and philanthropic organizations are leading revitalization in many cities (Fraser et al., 2003).

The public-private partnership, as a neoliberalist strategy, is increasingly evident among current approaches to urban land-use decisions. Gentrification, for example, is a phenomenon that appears to be driven by private investors, but is actually heavily aided by local governments in order to ensure the maximization of profit, for both investors and the city (Smith, 1996). Frequently, these public-private partnerships can develop plans to restructure entire residential neighborhoods without any formal vote or referendum by citizens. While this is the case, there are practical reasons to involve neighborhood residents in land-use planning. On the one hand, neighborhood-based organizing can assist in creating favorable conditions for capital investment by increasing surveillance within a geographic area, by engaging in beautification projects, and by providing social services that supplement the state and market. On the other hand, local interests at the neighborhood level can contest and thwart development plans that are perceived not to represent the interests of residents (Davis, 1991). More generally, with the dismantling of many social welfare programs and tight city budgets, it is not surprising that neighborhood-based community has been hailed by practitioners and academics as a necessary route toward managing impoverished neighborhoods.[6] Notwithstanding the progressive politics of many grass-roots-based community movements that strive to effect positive change for low-income families, neoliberalist placemaking in urban neighborhoods

[5] A neoliberalist economy is often thought of as one in which the government excuses itself from the workings of the market in order to advance the freedom of economic actors to maximize their own benefit. Those who favor this form of economy argue that government "interference" with the market not only impinges on the rights of individuals to do with their money what they please, but also hampers the overall efficiency of the economic system. In reality, however, it is both difficult and undesirable to rid the market entirely of the state, and neoliberalist initiatives tend to play out in scenarios in which government is, in fact, a key actor. As it turns out, it is not the absent state but the public-private partnership, in which the state and private corporations work together toward the common goal of increased profit for each, that has come to exemplify the neoliberalist strategy.

[6] Alternatively, neighborhood-based community groups rely on the state and private foundations and corporations for much-needed resources.

attempts to cast community in the service of the state and capital, although this does not imply that community cannot also be a site of resistance.[7]

Neoliberalism is not just about the kind of restructuring of economic space that gentrification impels. Importantly, it is also about the restructuring of social and political space (Jessop, 2002). Community-building, within this context, is more than a purported poverty amelioration strategy, but is implicated in a broader set of urban revitalization practices that are indicative of "[the] striking coexistence of technocratic economic management and invasive social policies" (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 389). While the need for community-building initiatives is premised, in part, on the withering of government support for low-income neighborhoods, in reality it appears that the state is simply pursuing neighborhood development more efficiently—through partnerships with foundations, local businesses, and neighborhood-based community groups (i.e., neighborhood and homeowner associations). A part of the revitalization of neighborhood and urban space is the ongoing struggle to define the meaning of a city and for whom it exists. Notwithstanding economic displacement, a central area of inquiry that has been underrepresented in studies of neighborhood revitalization is an examination of how community, state, and capital intersections produce other forms of exclusion that mediate the ability of people to claim rights to produce and inhabit space in these transforming neighborhoods; and further, how inhabitants in a city, like the builders of street-corner shrines in Washington, DC, might negotiate such potentially marginalizing practices.

A CASE STUDY OF HIGHLAND PARK, CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

Chattanooga, Tennessee, like many cities across the United States, has experienced inner-city deterioration since the 1950s. While this occurred unevenly in Chattanooga, the general trend during the rest of the 20th century was for small pockets of wealth continued to continue to exist on the fringes of the CBD next to larger neighborhoods that have been characterized by many as blighted. Between the 1960s and the late 1980s, Chattanooga's downtown business district and inner-city neighborhoods were not sites where many people chose to live, but rather were areas characterized, in part, as having the highest level of air pollution of any city in the United States.[8]

This was also a period of time during which many middle-class families migrated to burgeoning suburbs. Middle-class flight from Chattanooga's inner-city neighborhoods was exacerbated by steel manufacturing and other heavy industry that created unsafe and undesirable living conditions in downtown-area neighborhoods. In addition, social relations between people in Chattanooga were racialized, and an increasing expression of this was residential segregation. Many businesses that had thrived earlier in the century

[7] When residents come together and form community it can create an obstacle for capital accumulation, in part, through claims on space. Joseph (2002, p. 29) suggested that "the elaboration of the community group as a distinct, different, particular community makes it available for insertion into a particular slot in the hierarchy of capitalist exploitation. In combination with the discourses of equality and rights that articulate capitalism and democracy, such formations may be or become sites of resistance to the flows of capital." Similarly, Gough (2002) acknowledged that while community may respond and align with the demands of capital, there is always the possibility that community will be organized in an oppositional mode to capital and prove to be an obstacle to capital accumulation.

[8] In 1969, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated Chattanooga as the "dirtiest city in America."

closed, while others followed the decentralizing middle-class residents. These intersecting trends changed the composition of Chattanooga's inner-city neighborhoods in four interrelated ways. First, the sociodemographics of these neighborhoods shifted dramatically from middle-income and white to lower-income and non-White. Second, the tax base was further diminished by the relocation of many businesses. Third, the physical infrastructure of the neighborhoods deteriorated and municipal services declined. Fourth, the character of these neighborhoods shifted from lively and productive to derelict and disenfranchised places that were disconnected from political, economic, and cultural networks. By the 1970s, these inner-city neighborhoods had became places that provided low-income, albeit in many cases substandard, housing to people who did not have the resources to live in other neighborhoods. During the 1990s large numbers of Latino immigrants settled in downtown-area neighborhoods, including Highland Park and adjacent areas.

The story of Chattanooga's downtown revitalization as told by a wide range of civic, political, and economic elites in the area has focused on the role of public-private ventures, beginning with the leading role played by the Lyndhurst Foundation during the 1980s. The city and Lyndhurst sponsored Vision 2000, a planning exercise that included input from over 2,500 residents in the area and which spawned a $45 million aquarium, the centerpiece of a citywide revitalization that includes a new waterfront park, a "Riverwalk" pedestrian system, new hotels, and hundreds of new and refurbished housing units. The goal, as stated by local officials, was the transformation of Chattannooga from a workday downtown to a "24-hour city."

Chattanooga has been reimagined as "a city with a future," according to area leaders and the local press, and many have suggested that this city has been rebounding from its post-industrial decline significantly (Kick et al., 2002). The CBD has shown remarkable material signs of improvement, whether measured by dramatic increases in revenues garnered from hotel taxes, $400 million in new construction along with a record-setting number of building permits being issued, or the new minor league baseball stadium (Riverpark) and other renovation projects, all totaling more than $1 billion. Similarly, Chattanooga is now recognized widely as a "green" city that is environmentally and socially progressive. Publications across the country, as well as the city newspaper, have represented Chattanooga's revitalization efforts as nothing less than a citizen-driven "urban renaissance" (Fraser et al., 2002).

Central to the efforts of Chattanooga leaders to reimagine the city as a space of hope and prosperity has been their ability to shift the scale at which they operate by reclaiming devalorized areas, reincorporating them into the city map and building a landscape that is appealing to the sensibilities associated with tourism, entertainment, retailing, and the related endeavors of capital investment (e.g., convention center facilities, shopping districts, university expansion). After the successes of the initial revitalization of downtown Chattanooga, political and economic leaders in the city decided to expand their efforts by redeveloping Chattanooga's low-income neighborhoods. My research project began in 1998 in four areas contiguous to the CBD: Bushtown; M.L.K.; Highland Park; and the Southside Historic District, where the newly formed Community Impact Fund (CIF) launched its Neighborhoods of Opportunity community-building initiative.

This consortium of key stakeholder groups funding the effort included the city, United Way of Greater Chattanooga, and three local foundations. The CIF board, consisting of

Fig. 1. Historic housing stock in Highland Park. *Source*: Patrick Williams.

members from each of these groups, in consultation with other organizations (e.g., the Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, and the Urban League), has governed the project since its inception. The present case-study focuses on events that occurred in one of the target neighborhoods, Highland Park. The analysis is based on ethnographic data that have been collected over the duration of the initiative for the last five years, 1998 to 2002. Materials collected include fieldnotes; narratives from interviews; secondary sources, such as newspaper accounts and survey data.

THE REVITALIZATION OF HIGHLAND PARK

Highland Park was developed during the latter half of the 1880s, in part, because of its altitude and proximity to the CBD. Spurred by the "Great Flood of 1886," which affected downtown-area neighborhoods, many upper-class Chattanoogans relocated to Highland Park, which lie along the route of a newly developed rail line that circled the city (Nicely, 2002). Highland Park was named for its elevation, which protected inhabitants from flooding, and rapidly became a site of intensive economic and cultural investment. Much of the housing stock consisted of large Victorian-style homes that sat on tree-lined streets, a residential landscape that has largely survived even in the context of the trends of the latter half of the 20th century (Fig. 1).

From 1970 to 1990, Highland Park exhibited signs of significant neighborhood disinvestment. The population dropped 40% while the percentage of families living below the poverty line rose from 45% to 51%. The housing stock suffered a 22% loss in units and vacancy rates more than tripled from 6% to 22% (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991; CensusCD Neighborhood Change Database, 2001). By 1990, neighborhood conditions

had reached intolerable levels and residents formed the Highland Park Neighborhood Association in an effort to reclaim their community (Cook, 2000).

The new neighborhood association took active steps to address the problems of prostitution and drug dealing that had claimed their neighborhood's streets in the preceding decade (Cook, 2000). This grass-roots-driven effort, coupled with citywide community policing programs, helped make residents feel safer in their own homes and made the entire neighborhood more attractive to new residents and realtors. Changes enacted by the City of Chattanooga also helped clean up the neighborhood: zoning regulations, for instance, were amended to discourage the establishment of boarding houses (Cook, 2000).

By 2001, the transformation of Highland Park had progressed to the point where two real estate firms were working together to actively market the neighborhood's historic charm and proximity to downtown (Park, 2001). In their promotional materials realtors have also touted Highland Park's access to medical facilities, the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga campus, and plans for additional schools in the area (Park, 2001). The neighborhood has also been featured in several national media outlets during the past few years as an example of successful neighborhood revitalization and historic preservation (Park, 2001; Glendenning, 2002).

Preliminary signs of the neighborhood's revitalization could be seen in the late 1990s. Between 1990 and 2000 occupancy rates in the two main census tracts that comprise Highland Park rose from 78% to 81%. Median household income increased from $14,135 to $21,118, and median house value rose from $33,600 to $49,950 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). Although the 48% rise in median house values is clearly significant, it does not fully capture the surge of rehabilitation and restoration activity that has taken place in Highland Park since 1999. One indicator of this activity is the success of two real estate firms specializing in restoring and selling historic properties in the neighborhood. One of the two firms estimates that it has sold between 40 and 50 homes in the last five years (Heather Bell, owner, Old Homes, Inc., pers. comm., January 23, 2004).

The two real estate firms that specialize in "historic home" transactions in Highland Park currently (early 2004) list a total of 12 homes for sale on their Web sites. Five of these properties are priced at $200,000 and higher; four are priced between $150,000 to $200,000, and three fall into the $100,000 to $149,000 price range (Old Homes Inc., 2003b; Southern Historical Homes Inc., 2003b). Given the median neighborhood income of $21,118, it is likely that most if not all buyers for these types of properties come from outside the neighborhood.

The Highland Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA) and its members were formally recognized by the city for their efforts in 1998, when Highland Park was chosen to be one of the "Neighborhoods of Opportunity" earmarked for intensive investment by the Community Impact Fund (Fraser et al., 2003). It was at this point that the largely internal efforts of a growing number of neighborhood association members became connected to a public-private neighborhood revitalization initiative that sought not only to reduce poverty and associated problems within Highland Park, but also to reclaim Highland Park in a larger effort to respatialize the city. In particular, city leaders felt that Highland Park presented an opportunity to encourage people of higher socioeconomic status to relocate back into the City. CIF staff members were charged with bringing the community in Highland Park in to agreement with this vision of creating a "neighborhood of choice" for

middle-class professionals, assuring people that if they worked together low-income families would benefit as well from this upgrading in neighborhood status.[9] A plan was drafted for developing neighborhood infrastructure and marketing the area, which suggested that preparing a supply of housing for upscale buyers who wanted large, historic homes, prior to focusing on better quality affordable housing for low-income resident families, would lead to a healthy neighborhood.

This alignment between neighborhood residents and other stakeholder groups was important, but the CIF staff recognized that they did not need to include everyone in the neighborhood to constitute a legitimate community. Rather, they needed a group that could speak for others that were not active participants in the placemaking effort. For example, one member of the CIF team stated,

> And, you can never have enough buy-in, and everybody, I mean, this isn't an ordinance. People are not going to vote on it. Umm. But what's important is that enough people who sort of get the idea and are able to carry out the functions that are laid out in here that it begins to provide its own momentum. And, it becomes you know, the disinvestment tipping point changes and becomes an investment tipping point. (CIF Staff/Consultant #5)

This message was effectively transmitted into the neighborhood, where there were groups of neighborhood association members who had been actively engaged in sorting out which groups of people they wanted to discourage from using neighborhood space. These groups initially identified by the HPNA included prostitutes, drug dealers, absentee landlords, and other people who were generically defined as being engaged in criminal behavior. The neighborhood association had actually taken a lead in trying to make the neighborhood safer for a broad constituency of residents from low-income families to middle-class empty nesters restoring historic homes in the area.

A significant benchmark in the process occurred when the CIF staff promised financial, political, and technical resources for the neighborhood-based community group, and the agenda to transform the neighborhood went through at least two identifiable periods in which tensions arose around the spatiotemporal aspects of neighborhood change. The first period encompassed 1998–2000, when already active neighborhood leaders and community members were told they needed to attend a year's worth of planning exercises through which the CIF staff would assist them in identifying appropriate neighborhood priorities and strategies. For the neighborhood association in Highland Park this was simply too long a process with too little immediate payoff. Interestingly, the CIF board agreed and after two years the entire staff of the CIF was replaced. This provides a good example of what can be done when city leaders in the public and private domains intersect with neighborhood groups. In this case both felt that the change was not happening fast enough and that it was not worth pursuing a model of neighborhood initiative that stressed detailed planning for the accomplishment of human capital development and

[9] Although most documents produced by the CIF were development oriented without regard to race, one of the conceptual founders of the initiative acknowledged that there were very specific demographics that neighborhoods could realistically go after. This was indicated in one initiative document that stated, "In Highland Park there are opportunities to attract young White professionals as well as to solidify the base of working-class people in the neighborhood" (Housing Strategy Proposal, 2001, p. 2).

neighborhood improvement. Instead, both groups wanted to move forward in a more dramatic fashion by reshaping the neighborhood environment for the explicit purpose of encouraging capital investment by attracting developers, families of higher socioeconomic status, and amenities that would appeal to the middle-class. For the city this was attached to a broader agenda of attracting business investment to Chattanooga and demonstrating that it could provide a high quality of life in downtown-area neighborhoods near existing and projected business locations.[10] For the largely middle-class constituency of active Highland Parkers, this was an initiative to improve their quality of life, increase housing values, and attract more people who actually could "choose where to live."

If this first period could be described as an example of how power is constituted from the everyday practices of citizens and the intersection of these practices with the existing political-institutional milieu, then the second period of time was characterized as an explicit partnership between the neighborhood association in Highland Park and political and economic elites in Chattanooga. In this period, both parties forged new scalar relations to make claims on this neighborhood space that effectively altered the political-institutional environment in Chattanooga. The CIF board and new staff proposed to focus on the development of the neighborhood's physical infrastructure and marketing in order to bring faster change to Highland Park. This took many forms including continued surveillance of Highland Park by the neighborhood association, increased police presence, city involvement in condemning housing that was left vacant or dilapidated, and the CIF's endorsement of a mixed-income housing strategy to bring in investors. These housing and surveillance approaches to creating Highland Park as a "neighborhood of choice" were not only endorsed by the neighborhood association but directed by them as well.

This was exemplified in the neighborhood operating translocally to attract developers from Atlanta without direct assistance from the city or CIF staff. Since 1999, these developers have "succumbed to the many charms of Highland Park" (Old Homes Inc., 2003a), and restored more than 50 homes, recruited a stream of newcomers from the Atlanta metropolitan area as well as other Chattanooga neighborhoods, dramatically increased housing prices in the neighborhood, and, were responsible for promoting cultural representations of Highland Park that have reimagined it from a disorganized place of inner-city poverty to a national model of revitalization, showcased on Home and Garden Network's television show "Restore America," where it was depicted as a place to be in the Southeast. At the same time, political and economic leaders in Chattanooga aligned with the HPNA in promoting the development and preservation of the neighborhood's housing stock and a broader geographical imagination of Highland Park that harkened back to a different time in the early 1900s when it was a much-desired address.

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[10]Richard Florida's *Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) discussed the movement in urban revitalization to draw groups of people to their locality who are "creative" in some respect, arguing that these are the people who make cities vibrant culturally as well as economically. Indeed, even prior to his publications on this topic, Chattanooga along with countless other cities, have pursued the symbolic analyst class who largely manipulate knowledge in their profession. This is tied more generally to post-industrialism and realities that many U.S. cities have faced as their manufacturing bases declined.

The CIF brought in national consultants from the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation (NRC) network to assist in developing neighborhood transformation plans.[11] The consultants recommended that Chattanooga in general, and Highland Park in particular, frame revitalization efforts around the demographics of households, arguing that mixed-income housing development would provide the foundation for broader neighborhood wellness.[12] In Highland Park, the implementation of mixed-income housing policies to achieve neighborhood revitalization involved setting goals for achieving certain rates of homeownership versus renting, promoting public-private entities to advance capital to build or restore higher-income housing, and to entice private developers to invest in the neighborhood after demonstrating that they would realize a return on their investment. The consultants suggested a minimum of 70% homeownership as a goal for Highland Park, whereas the Highland Park Neighborhood Association suggested that 80% would be nice (Riddell, 2002).

The efforts of the HPNA and the CIF intersected, and have largely been in alignment since the beginning of the initiative to expend the resources of both collectives on a certain type of revitalization in Highland Park. In part, this alignment has been a product of similar place-based collective action frames[13] that were created to define the situation in Highland Park. Specifically, both the HPNA and the CIF made the claim that the identity of Highland Park had shifted throughout the 20th century from being synonymous with the "good life" to becoming a place of transgression—but now becoming a place of grandeur once again.

> Highland Park became Chattanooga's finest address. Its close proximity to downtown, and its readily available rail access, made it an ideal place to live. Many city neighborhoods experienced decline in times past. Highland Park also suffered with this problem. During the 70's and 80's, the neighborhood declined, crime increased, and many homes were neglected as out-of-state "slumlords" rented these once grand homes without maintaining them. A number of people and organizations have been involved and continue to work hard in the revitalization of the neighborhood. Once crime-challenged streets are now frequented by mothers walking their children, children playing, and dogs taking their owners for walks. Homes that fell into disrepair are now being preserved and restored to full architectural grandeur. Today's residents are renewing the tradition of Highland Park being Chattanooga's finest address. Architectural styles found in Highland Park include Queen Anne, Italianate, Greek Revival, and Craftsman. (Southern Historical Homes, 2003a)

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[11] A national nonprofit organization created by Congress to provide financial support, technical assistance, and training for community-based revitalization efforts.

[12] Mixed-income housing has received considerable attention as a means to assist impoverished neighborhoods as well as low-income families through the building of diverse social networks. The first large-scale effort by the federal government to place this on the urban revitalization agenda occurred in 1993, when the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development initiated the Hope VI program to deconcentrate poverty through the razing of existing public housing developments and the rebuilding of mixed-income housing developments. Critics have argued that mixed-income housing projects are synonymous with the displacement of low-income families since, by definition, the neighborhoods already have enough low-income families and need middle-income families to move-in.

[13] For discussion, see Martin (2003).

Fig. 2. Johnathan Bell of Old Homes Inc. talks with Betty Harrison, realtor, outside a recently renovated house on South Greenwood Avenue, Highland Park. *Source*: *Chattanooga Times Free Press.*

The restoration of Highland Park, therefore, takes on a particular spatio-temporal character, harkening back to another time at the turn of the 20th century when Highland Park was a different place. A central theme that binds the two Highland Parks has been put forth by the CIF:

> Highland Park will become a neighborhood of choice, that is, people with choices among a number of neighborhoods will choose this neighborhood. The image of the neighborhood will reinforce the level of confidence neighbors and others have in the future of the neighborhood … Highland Park will have a real estate market that continues to appreciate so that it makes economic sense for people to invest time, energy, and money in the neighborhood. The neighborhood will be competitive with other neighborhoods and will attract resources. Highland Park will offer housing opportunities for a variety of income groups. (Schubert and Nedland, 2002, p. 2) (Fig. 2)

While the HPNA and the CIF framed the identity of Highland Park in broadly similar terms, leading to mutual support for improvement of the housing stock, increasing surveillance over the activities that took place within the boundaries of the neighborhood, and providing a focus on marketing the neighborhood to restore it as one of Chattanooga's finest addresses, the reimagining and reengineering of Highland Park was also about making claims on space that had exclusionary effects which transcended the neighborhood scale.

MOBILIZING COMMUNITY AND MAKING CLAIMS: THE CASE OF ESPERANZA DEL BARRIO

The increased capital investment in Highland Park has been paralleled by an increased emphasis and reliance on community as an integral component in the governance of social, environmental, cultural, and economic decisions in the neighborhood. The HPNA was recognized by most outside stakeholders in Chattanooga as the legitimate voice of the neighborhood community, yet it was actually the decisions made by this group that began the contesting of the use of space in the neighborhood. Drawing on the housing goals put forth by the CIF, the HPNA argued that certain groups of people and organizations representing them, namely recent Latino immigrants, should not have rights to the neighborhood. This was because many active neighborhood association members noted that Highland Park already suffered from pockets of concentrated poverty and that the upward trajectory of the area depended on attracting middle-income residents to the neighborhood who would buy homes at market rates. The first indication of negative sentiment toward Latinos was the HPNA's campaign against a nonprofit organization, Esparanza Del Barrio (Hope of the Neighborhood), which attempted to locate within the neighborhood in order to serve the growing population that had settled there.

Located on the border of Highland Park, Esperanza Del Barrio was founded in 1996 and has since been taken in by the Salvation Army. Since then it has developed a reputation:

> in the Hispanic community as the go-to resource for Spanish speakers. Hispanics know that when they walk in the door at Esperanza, they'll find committed, caring, bilingual staff. They'll also find a welcoming atmosphere—computers to get online, warm coffee to sip, a comfy couch, and a *foosball* table to unwind. (Ammann, 2002)

In 2002, using the 2000 census as well as local indicators, Esperanza leaders noted that there was an increasing population of Latinos migrating to Chattanooga and Highland Park in particular.[14] Moreover, ConAgra, a poultry processing facility employing approximately 800 Latinos, had located adjacent to the neighborhood. In response to this shift in

[14]In 2000, 3,281 (2.1%) of the total population of Chattanooga's total population of 155,554 were Hispanic. Census estimates determined that 5000 Hispanics lived in Hamilton County (Pop. 307,896), which contains Chattanooga. The Highland Park Neighborhood Association claims that only 1% of its population is Hispanic, although the Director of Esperanza Del Barrio contends that there are more than likely 10,000–15,000 Hispanics residing in Hamilton County and that it is a well-known fact that more than 1% resides in Highland Park. The Census 2000 data suggest that between 3 and 6% of the population in Highland Park may be Hispanic.

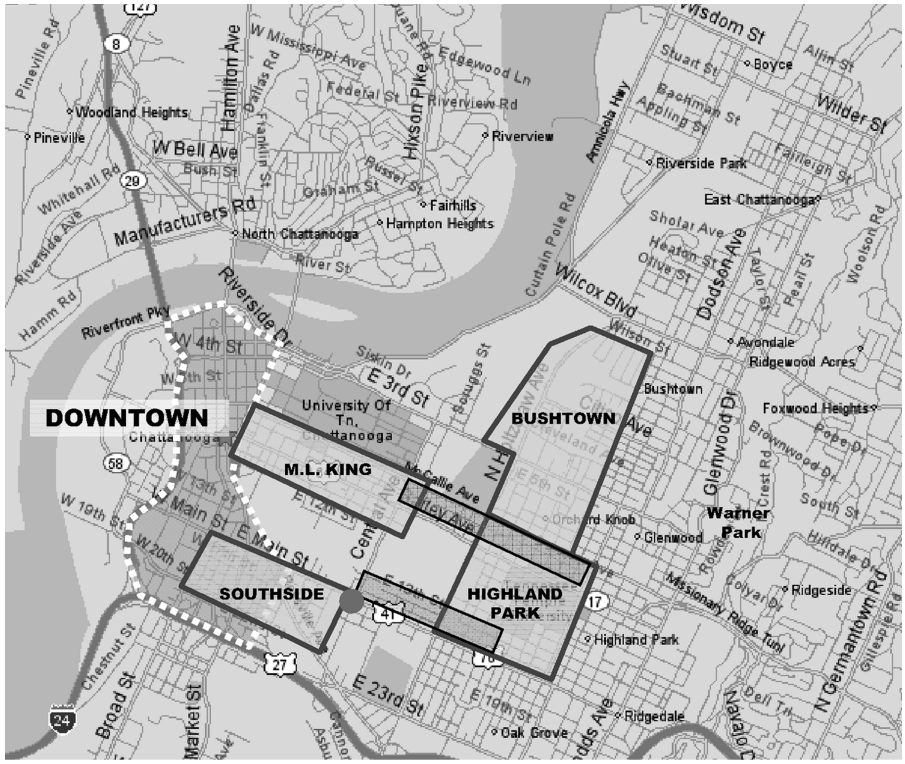

Fig. 3. Map of Highland Park neighborhood indicating areas of Hispanic settlement (thick outline) and the Con Agra Poultry Processing Plant (gray dot). *Source*: Base map provided by Community Impact Fund.

citywide and neighborhood demographics and employment patterns, the nonprofit sought to expand its operations and locate in the Highland Park area. Esperanza contacted Tennessee Temple College, located in the middle of Highland Park, to obtain a lease for space to provide services and act as a gateway for Latino newcomers to Chattanooga. Once an agreement was finalized the organization approached the Highland Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA) to discuss how Esperanza could become a part of the community building and neighborhood revitalization that had been under way since 1998 (Fig. 3).

It was at this point that the HPNA told Esperanza that the neighborhood did not welcome the organization as part of the community being built. Citing the Highland Park Infrastructure Revitalization Strategy and Market Plan (Schubert and Nedland, 2002) that was created by consultants affiliated with the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, a national housing and revitalization intermediary funded by the United States Congress since 1978,[15] the president of the HPNA along with the governing board claimed that the neighborhood needed to achieve at least 75% homeownership as part of a strategy to

[15]The Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation was created under Title VI of the Housing and Community Development Amendments of 1978, P.L. 95-557.

become a "neighborhood of choice." Indeed, the HPNA suggested that an 80% homeownership rate would be more beneficial and that "[the] main goal of the Highland Park Neighborhood Association is to restore the neighborhood to its former grandeur, which means more homeowners and more expensive homes, said [the former HPNA president and current board member]" (Riddell, 2002, p. 1). According to the HPNA, the presence of Esperanza would not mix well with the "intense revitalization" that was occurring because it would attract low-income Latinos who would only contribute to the rental population. One board member articulated the issue of neighborhood revitalization and exclusion by stating that her "vision for the neighborhood does not include an influx of Hispanic renters" (Riddell, 2002, p. 4). Similarly, other board members claimed that Esperanza was not needed in Highland Park because there were so few Latinos, and by locating in the neighborhood the organization would only solicit unwanted street traffic. The HPNA formally requested that Tennessee Temple, the potential landlord, not rent to Esperanza, which led Esperanza to decide that its success would be compromised if the voice of the neighborhood community was against it.

What makes this series of events remarkable is not only the accounting of a neighborhood association engaging in a political maneuver to exclude an entire socioeconomic and racialized group of people from having mobility through or inhabiting the neighborhood, but that this was made possible in the context of building community and mixed-income housing, both significant neighborhood redevelopment strategies that have garnered widespread political support throughout the United States as effective forms of poverty amelioration and urban revitalization (Fraser et al., 2003; Lepofsky and Fraser, 2003). What has happened in Highland Park is simultaneously constitutive of the national agenda for neighborhood revitalization, and has been made possible through the creation and maintenance of scalar relationships at different levels, intersecting in the sense that each stakeholder has made the discursive move to articulate neighborhood-based community with inclusiveness and democracy (i.e., as a strategy for the inclusion of groups that have been disenfranchised from "mainstream" American institutions and networks).[16] While concomitant economic revalorization of Highland Park had been occurring during the comprehensive community-building initiative, the exclusionary practices of the HPNA were much more complex than driving up property values past the threshold of affordability for low-income renters and potential low-income homeowners. Although those were explicit goals of the HPNA and other middle-class residents, the discursive and material practices occurring in Highland Park were set into motion through a multiscalar network of actors, albeit intersecting in partial and incomplete ways, to reconfigure social, political, and economic space through the technology of community-building.

CONCLUSION

During the 20th century, neighborhood change and the displacement of low-income residents from their homes occurred in a variety of ways from the demolition of entire areas to more recent revitalization efforts emphasizing the building of community and

[16] See Fraser et al., 2003, for discussion on the conceptual development of the comprehensive community building paradigm.

new governance structures. In this article I have argued two interrelated points. First, while economic displacement, a central component of gentrification, is still operating as a pernicious force that displaces low-income people from their homes and neighborhoods, there are a wider set of factors that constitute the marginalization, displacement, and exclusion of certain populations of people from effectively making claims on neighborhood space. Following the work of Purcell (2001), a wide range of variables constitutes the reasons the HPNA mobilized as it has, and framing these as a "politics of space" is useful in order to understand the neighborhood project that has been ongoing since the late 1990s. It is too deterministic to posit that the HPNA acted only in accordance with what they thought would, for example, raise housing values. A broader vision has been put forth by a range of stakeholders, including the HPNA, which speaks to a geographical imagination of a neighborhood constituted by certain forms of land use, activities, populations, and connections to other places and organizations that are part of a network of flows of people, capital, knowledge, and culture.

Second, in an era of neoliberalization, wherein civil society is expected to play a larger role in neighborhood governance and the provision of social welfare, the formation and activities of neighborhood-based communities have become increasingly important factors to examine. In recent work Martin (2003, p. 733) examined the importance of place-based collective action frames, defined as neighborhood–generated discourses that "constitute a place identity as part of their articulating of reasons and goals for activism." Examining how neighborhood-based organizations constitute place-identity and its relationship to activism is a significant theoretical advancement that allows an analysis of mutual constitution of social and spatial identities, yet I suggest that these sociospatial frames are created in a multiscalar manner that extend beyond groups of neighborhood residents. For example, the HPNA, via a relationship brokered by the CIF, drew upon housing policy recommendations that have been nationally promulgated by the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation in order to constitute their place-frame of the current neighborhood situation as well as their vision for the neighborhood in the future. Even the creation of Highland Park's physical boundaries, which were instrumental for designating a space to be claimed, was a scalar accomplishment that was orchestrated by the CIF, reified by the mapping activities of the Chattanooga and Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency, and recognized by the City of Chattanooga as a legitimate scale of municipal intervention. Thus, the neighborhood's collective identity was a relational construct influenced by the connections among different groups of actors within a neighborhood and stakeholders at the municipal, state, federal, and even global levels.

While the HPNA, a subset of Highland Park residents, was central to the constitution and maintenance of the neighborhood change that occurred, other groups of (potential and existing) residents and organizations were excluded from becoming part of the community. This is not simply to say that certain groups did not participate in the development of Highland Park, but rather that these groups were actively fought against and discursively constructed as being obstacles to the dominant image of what the area should be. The work that was done to achieve this definition of the situation included many nonresident groups acting in alignment, albeit temporarily, with the HPNA in order to make Highland Park an integral part of Chattanooga, emphasizing particular relations between the Chattanooga and other locales. For example, city leaders were able to begin to channel flows of capital and people into the area from other cities and regions, including

Atlanta as well as national-level foundations and governmental agencies. Understood in this way, the project of respatializing Highland Park was not only a neighborhood-scale effort but also constituted a citywide political project.

Nonetheless, the idea of neighborhood-based community has remained a powerful imaginary during this transformation of place. Many scholars have asked the rhetorical question, what does *community* imply? This is a difficult inquiry to address because there is no one thing that community is or does, but efforts to contextualize its various manifestations and intersections with political-economic and cultural change that occur simultaneously at different scales, is a starting point. Community in itself opens up possibilities for groups to come together and achieve what individuals might not, but community for itself tends toward more exclusionary practices that are characteristic of defining spaces for some but not others. Thinking through the distinction, especially in examinations of collective action, is not always clear-cut. At the beginning of the neighborhood revitalization process that occurred in 1998 in Highland Park, who would have been able to determine that people who wanted to create a better place to live would do so at the expense of transnational migrants and the organizations attempting to assist them? Likewise, this exclusionary effect could hardly have been initially associated with a complexity of factors that went well beyond gentrification.

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