ROSE IS NOT AN APPROVED COLOR: DISCOURSES OF PLACE MEANING AND

THE POLITICS OF GENTRIFICATION

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last ten years Nashville's image as an "It City" has been steadily imprinting on the international psyche. In 2013, a New York Times column read "Portland knows the feeling. Austin had it once, too. So did Dallas. Even Las Vegas enjoyed a brief moment as the nation's 'it' city. Now, it's Nashville's turn" (Severson, 2013). The "It City" moniker has stuck and has ushered in a plethora of representations of Nashville as a booming market, bustling with activity, and open for business. A recent boost came in October 2015, when Nashville was the only U.S. city recognized on Lonely Planet's Top 10 international cities to visit for 2016. Newly elected mayor, Megan Barry, praised the publication for recognizing "the unique culture and welcoming atmosphere of Nashville [which] makes our city a premier tourist destination for travelers the world over" and praised this international crew of tourists for helping "to keep our city thriving while also contributing to our economic vitality" (Nash, 2015).

This narrative of prosperity and growth is juxtaposed against a second narrative of the city as unevenly developed and contending with increasing housing costs, rising risks of displacement, and disruptions to the aesthetic nature of neighborhoods' built environments. As the metropolitan region continues to grow, the realities of who can stay and who is no longer welcome articulate. To promote a more socially just and not just economically vital city, urban researchers, developers, and policymakers must consider the nature and consequences of gentrification that is occurring amid a wider process of urban change (Lees, 2000; Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2008). Several definitions of gentrification have been used over the fifty years since it was first defined by Ruth Glass. The definition employed in the present study is that

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"gentrification is a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment of fixed capital" (Clark, 2005 qtd in Lees et al., 2008, p. 160). Despite a vast body of literature extending over several decades, gentrification continues to be of significant importance in urban research and praxis because its face has evolved (Hackworth and Smith, 2001) and its expansion into a global neoliberal strategy requires continued critical analyses at multiple scales (Smith, 2002; Slater, 2006). This expansion or generalization of gentrification, as Smith explains, is driven by the increasing dominance of urban real-estate markets in producing global capital (2002) – indeed, the city is a critical engine of the "reproduction, reconstitution and mutation of neoliberalism itself" (Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2009, p. 50). Neoliberal ideology valorizes free and unfettered markets, private property rights, individual freedoms, and minimization of government intervention and has resulted in intense social inequality and polarization (Harvey, 2005). While still the dominant social, political, and economic force of the contemporary era, neoliberalism is also understood as an incomplete and contradictory process, comprised of rounds of self-destruction and creation, contention and entrenchment (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2009).

This study situates neighborhood change processes occurring in Nashville in an ecology of discourses of neighborhood life that promote and contest the political-economic drivers of gentrification. It adopts a continuum orientation to gentrification, wherein neighborhood change processes are always at risk of inducing unwanted displacement and socio-economic turnover, but the experiences and decisions made in everyday life play a role in facilitating these outcomes. While the label 'gentrification' has become commonplace in the city, a close analysis of the ways residents make meaning of their neighborhood sheds light on these everyday and

perhaps even mundane ways that marginalization and resistance to gentrification are taking place. Accounts of gentrification resistance are few, and those that do exist are focused primarily on institutionalized efforts. Additionally, while there is a longstanding empirical literature on the impacts of individuals' positive place meanings and relationships, there is little investigation on the multivalent nature of place meanings and how dynamics of power, inclusion, and exclusion are present in their expression. Thus this study employs a critical analysis of place meaning to the investigate the particular neighborhood circumstances, priorities, and contestations that can inform both institutionalized and dispersed efforts to combat gentrification.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gentrification as a process

The body of gentrification literature is largely dominated by two contrasting perspectives: one a "humanist and sociocultural" analytic (consumption-side perspectives) and another the political-economic analytic (production side perspectives). The prior represents gentrification as a process driven by the preferences of individuals and homogenous groups, moving 'back to the city' to establish lifestyles liberated from the stagnation and restriction of suburbia. Such theories promulgate analyses and discourses of the 'benefits of gentrification' – e.g., how an influx of wealth and cultural difference can add social mix to poor and often times Black neighborhoods. The consumption-side view has been critiqued for painting gentrification as "chaotic and differentiated" (Lees et al., 2008, p. xxiii), for focusing too much on middle class gentrifiers and, in some cases, as being sympathetic to them. Further, urban scholars argue that these interpretations elide critical analysis of the negative consequences of gentrification for non-gentrifiers at risk for displacement (Slater, 2006) and operate on unsubstantiated claims that social mixing yields positive outcomes for non-gentrifying residents (Bridge, Butler, & Lees, 2010).

Production-side theories, alternatively, focus on "economic relations, legal principles and practices, institutional arrangements, and pure political struggles" (Lees et al., 2008, p. 42) concerned with the accumulation of profit as drivers of uneven development and gentrification (Smith, 2001, 1996). From this viewpoint, individual decision making is entangled with systems of capital, and local phenomena are entwined with broader global processes. Local gentrification dynamics are increasingly a part of transnational processes influenced by the mobility of local

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labor markets, are extending beyond core cities to their inner-ring suburbs, and are imbricated with the struggles over property rights and the right to exclude (Smith, 2002; Lees et al., 2008). Such production-side theories reflect the economism of Marxist analyses that have dominated structuralist accounts of urban geographies (Martin, McCann, & Purcell, 2003). Analyses of urban space and gentrification that attend to the articulation of market forces with colonial and racial logics (Blomley, 2004; Bonds & Inwood, 2015; Fraser et al., 2013; Mele, 2013; Safransky, 2014), however, have widened the political economy analytic – positing colonialism as much a political and economic force as a cultural one (Gregory, 2004).

Indeed, the framing of the gentrification literature as a binary of production-consumption theories has been shifting as urban scholars deny the incommensurability of these explanations and posit a 'continuum' model of gentrification (Shaw, 2008). Understanding gentrification as a process on a continuum means that the possibilities of a full-fledged rent gap (Smith, 2002) and forced displacement due to high housing costs are always present, even when changing neighborhoods are in the moment predominantly experiencing cultural and social shifts - termed 'marginal gentrification' in the continuum (Shaw, 2008). This notion of marginal gentrification should not equate the cultural and social experiences in changing neighborhoods as gentrification itself, but should interpret them as circumstances of vulnerability that could lubricate full-fledged gentrification. Alternatively, if these circumstances (e.g., lost sense of community, racial tension, loss of political voice, alienation from place) are taken seriously, they might increase the amount of force required to displace residents. Retaining the label "gentrification" on these neighborhood experiences, even if they are not characterized by spatial mobility (Davidson, 2009), keeps a critical gaze on seemingly benign processes of neighborhood change and

encourages the development of preventive interventions by multiple urban actors, including policymakers (Shaw, 2008, p. 27).

Opening up conceptual space for prevention of and resistance to gentrification-induced displacement does not imply that neighborhoods further along the continuum are beyond remedy, but the literature on resistances suggests that such efforts are exceedingly difficult to stage (Lees et al., 2008). Anti-gentrification efforts have been challenged or diminished by two important factors, "(1) continued working-class displacement robbing a city of activists, and (2) the authoritarian (neoliberal) governance of urban places" (Lees et al., 2008, p. 249). Smith, for instance, describes revanchist responses of heightened political suppression and police repression of homeless, squatting, housing, and other anti-gentrification efforts to claim urban land for middle- and upper-class priorities (2002, p. 442). In the face of such challenges, resistances try to disrupt the "false choice" (DeFilippis, 2004; Slater, 2006) presented to gentrifying communities – that they accept either decay or gentrification as the only possible neighborhood outcomes; question whose interests are prioritized with private development; prioritize the importance of the use value over the exchange value of place; and demand the decommodification of housing (Lees et al., 2008). Though falling short of complete decommodification, efforts to protect affordable housing and models of collective ownership of housing have emerged as imperfect but promising avenues to intervene in physical displacement (DeFillipis, 2009; Lees et al., 2008; Newman and Wyly, 2006). These interventions also succeed only through coordinated and institutionalized effort.

Indeed, academic accounts of gentrification resistance have focused largely on already institutionalized efforts against advanced gentrification. Lees' (2014) account of gentrification in Southwark, London, for instance, describes the efforts of public housing defenders, tenant

organizations, and anti-gentrification activist groups that coalesced to make demands on the state, developers, and media; destabilized these entities' legitimacy; questioned the Aylesbury Estate project's financial viability; and altered the public image of the area. Maeckelbergh's (2012) account of the mobilizing tactics of the Movement for Justice in El Barrio (MJB) – a group of organized residents and advocates in East Harlem, New York – describes their highly coordinated networks that extend both conceptually and tactically beyond international borders. The MJB connects with national and international land struggles conceptually through the common mobilizing frame of anti-neoliberalism; and they connect physically to gather information, financial resources, and support through in-person gatherings, conferences, video message and recordings, speaking engagements, and direct actions. Unlike the resistance toward the Aylesbury Estate development (Lees , 2014), MJB's strategy, influenced by Zapatismo, is anti-statist, working toward "self-determination, autonomy, and participatory democracy within and outside their organization" (Maeckelbergh, 2012, p. 668) to build power and exercise a 'right to stay put'.

However, if contestations are seen and acted upon only once gentrification is further along the continuum, then the opportunity to identify levers that weaken forces of gentrification-induced displacement may be lost. One account of resistance to 'marginal gentrification' includes Martin's (2007) comparison of neighborhood organizations' efforts to challenge the loss of political influence in three Atlanta neighborhoods. In these neighborhoods, the most successful tactics – that is, ones that maintained legitimacy of a neighborhood association, representation of the African American population, and sustained activity -- included intentional education of newcomers on the neighborhood history, restriction of newcomers' activities to committee rather than leadership positions, and leadership development of long-time residents.

Less successful were the establishment of separate organizations, which resulted in lack of transparency, secrecy, and mistrust between new resident and long-time resident groups. As Lees and colleagues (2008) contend, a decline in social movements focused around urban development should not be interpreted as lack of objection or as consent to gentrification. Rather the dearth compels inquiry into the varying ways marginalization and resistance manifest and characterize lived experience of neighborhoods undergoing rapid change.

Politics of the Everyday

The present study explores the everyday experiences and struggles of life in a neighborhood undergoing rapid redevelopment in order to elucidate conditions that assist or might challenge its gentrification. The notion that such forces at work in neighborhood change can be evidenced in everyday practices draws upon a theory of space as socially produced (Lefevbre, 1991). For Lefevbre, space is produced through the dialectics of spatial practice (everyday living), representations of space (physical plans and constructions of spatial systems), and representational space (imagined spaces). The space produced by these social dialectics is abstract space dominated by the forces of capitalism (Lefebvre, 1991). If we think of space as constituted by experiences of place, meaning, and value (Davidson, 2009), then it is possible to see various ways that it can be destabilized -- symbolically, residents can be alienated from a place in ways that are distinct from the material hardships of life there. This reveals marginalizing processes that may contribute to the political and economic forces causing gentrification-induced displacement. Further, a theory of space as socially produced helps to see ways that residents' everyday experiences expressed through place meanings, discourses, and behaviors contest their alienation to symbolically reconstruct a place that is familiar, where they belong, and where they have political influence.

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Empirical literature from community and environmental psychology demonstrates that such place relationships and cognitions of place matter at different scales. People's relationship to place, while serving functions on an individual level like a sense of security, belonging, or stability (Hay 1998; Scannell and Gifford 2010a), are also noted to be important for interpersonal relations – addressing social divisions and building social cohesion (Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Brown & Perkins, 1992) and bringing residents together to act on common social problems (Brown and Perkins, 1992; Brown et al., 2004; Cheng et al. 2003; Perkins et al. 2009). Methods for ascertaining these person-place relationships have been wide-ranging, including surveys, civic social assessment tools (Kruger & Shannon, 2000), stakeholder interviews, and participant observations (Brandenburg and Caroll, 1995; Cumming & Norwood, 2012). Such studies have shown that peoples' relationship to place – such as their place meaning, place identity, and place attachments – can impact their participatory behaviors, for instance how they predict individuals' participatory behaviors like public housing tenant organizing (Saegert, 1989) or neighborhood-level organizing (Perkins, Brown & Taylor, 1996), or how at a group-level of analysis, place relationships have been employed in the reconstruction of places after an environmental disaster (Francaviglia, 1978; Scannell & Gifford, 2010a)

These person-place relationships or meanings are important to understand, however, not just because they might have these psycho-social and behavioral *effects*, but also because what they represent may reveal logics and tensions that have a bearing on the social and political experience of place. In the community and environmental psychology literature, there is a normative assumption about the positive valence of person-place relationships – that is, having more attachment and more meaning is desired for better psychological, social and civic outcomes. However, these relationships or meanings also pose exclusions – if having positive

place meaning fosters a sense of belonging, we must ask 'whose belonging'? If place attachment among a community serves to preserve culture, we must ask – 'whose culture'? If strong person-place relationships foster engagement in a neighborhood there is no guarantee that that participation and community-building will lead to socially just outcomes (Heller, 1989). Indeed, the relationships to and meaning-making of place itself must be considered a site of struggle and negotiation.

In the present research I consider how place meanings – as they appear in spatial practices of neighborhood life, representations, and discourses – contribute to the conditions of marginalization or resistance in an urban neighborhood. Understanding representations of space and the "values, stories, and ideals" (Martin, 2003, p. 117) that undergird these representations is a theme of study in contemporary geographic thought on urban politics. This research answers calls for studies that explore the power dynamics underlying representations and interpretations in ways that influence public perceptions and policy debates.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND ANALYSIS APPROACH

The present study explores how the meanings of place expressed in residents' discourses can lead to greater understanding of the marginalization experienced and resistances waged in gentrifying neighborhoods. Following in the naturalistic inquiry paradigm, this study approaches "realities [as] multiple, constructed, and holistic" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37), and the academic researcher as naturally value-bound (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The qualitative methods used in this study include interviews with nine community residents who represent a range of experiences and observation of nine public meetings– seven neighborhood association meetings and two community education events. During individual interviews, I have shared with participants my personal and academic commitments to considering social justice in the development of neighborhoods and advancing understanding of practices that intervene in displacement, marginalization and exclusion.

The site for this research, Cleveland Park in Nashville, Tennessee, emerged from ongoing partnership development between community members and researchers. In the spring of 2014, concerns were mounting from residents and socially active neighbors about escalating living costs, risks of displacement, and a social environment marked by rising racial tensions. These community members wanted university researchers to be informed about what was happening in their neighborhood, offer lessons to inform community action and organizing, and serve as a resource for research needs as they emerged. Toward these ends, during the period of research, I shared my observations of settings and provided feedback on events when requested by organizers.

Data collection

The participants in this study were selected purposively to reflect a range of experiences and demographics in the neighborhood. The characteristics of participants are depicted in Table 1. These individuals were identified through multiple means: attending neighborhood meetings and observing which community members were acting as leaders, announcing the study during a neighborhood meeting and collecting information from interested residents, and asking participants to recommend a neighbor who does not typically attend neighborhood meetings. Interviews lasted between 50 minutes and 90 minutes and followed a semi-structured format, prioritizing depth of an idea, concept or experience rather than breadth of topics. This format is appropriate for studies where the participants are diverse, bearing different areas of particular knowledge and experience – here I was concerned with knowledge based on racial experience and neighborhood tenure. The interviews address participants' descriptions of the neighborhood; their histories, experiences, and attractions to the neighborhood; perceptions of changes in neighborhood since they have been living there; main concerns and ways that they participate in addressing those concerns; as well as hopes and visions for the community's future.

Table 1. Interview Participants		
Name	*Neighborhood tenure**	*Demographic*
Danielle	5-10 years	African American, female
Derrick	20-30 years	African American, male
Evelyn	20-30 years	African American, female
Jimmy	50-60 years	African American, male
Maryanne	0-5 years	Caucasian, female
Nelson	5-10 years	Multi-racial, male
Rosalyn	50-60 years	African American, female
Ryan	0-5 years	Caucasian, male
William	5-10 years	African American, male
* Neighborhood tenure has been indicated as a range to protect identity of participants		

Participant observation occurred at seven neighborhood association meetings and two community educational events called *Moving with Change*. During participant observation I was attentive to spatial arrangements, interactions among attendees, body language, and language used to describe the characteristics, history, quality of life in their neighborhoods; the gentrification experience and process; and attendees' larger concerns, community relationships and neighborhood visions.

Cleveland Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA). The CPNA formed in the early 2000s when residents coalesced to address the acute needs of the neighborhood – specifically to drive out drugs and violence and demand that the city provide more police and safety services. Meetings take place once a month in the evening at the neighborhood community center (during the period of the study, management of the community center was transferred from the city parks department to the Boys and Girls Club of America). Attendance at the meetings fluctuated between 60 and 15 community members, with the most well-attended meetings hosting a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, ages, genders, and length of residence in the neighborhood (at most meetings, attendees are asked to introduce themselves by stating their name and how long they have lived in the neighborhood). Over the course of study, attendance by African Americans dropped: at the first meeting observed in January 2015, an estimated 45 of the 60 attendees were African American, whereas at the last meeting (observed a year later) only five of the 30 residents in attendance were African American. These meetings follow an agenda planned by the Steering Committee; the district Councilman and Police Community Affairs officer are both allotted time for monthly updates, and the remainder of the time during the 90 minute meetings includes announcements about upcoming community events, discussion of community goals and visions for the future of the neighborhood, and outstanding concerns or ideas. The meetings are

high energy, but tensions are palpable along racial lines as well as between residents of varying neighborhood tenures.

Moving with Change. The *Moving with Change* (MWC) educational events are two-hour meetings held at different community venues (e.g., churches, community centers). These events are organized by a group of four informal community leaders who shared a desire to provide longtime neighborhood residents education on the trends of change in their neighborhood, the risks of displacement, ways to protect themselves from predatory development practice (e.g., developers harassing residents with requests to buy their homes for less than market value), and policies that could be implemented to protect current homeowners. For the meetings I attended, the organizers worked through the pastors of two churches to reach out to their congregants to attend these events, producing mixed results – the first meeting had roughly 20 attendees while the second had only 8 beyond the organizers and hosting pastor (two of whom were researchers and three of whom were white, new residents, who are active community members in the neighborhood). These events were primarily in a formal presentation format and designated limited time for audience participation.

Analysis

Data analyses were performed using both a domain analysis process (Spradley, 1979) and a constant comparative, open and axial coding processes (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). Field notes and interview transcripts were imported to MAXQDA 12.03 for coding and analysis. Data were first coded using domain analysis (Spradley, 1979) to identify instances of place meaning. Place meanings were those segments of data where the speaker identified, referenced, or expressed a belief, value, or attitude toward the identity of the neighborhood. These meanings are associated with language about the place itself as well as the social interactions – practices of

place – that happen within it. Such practices of place are operationalized as any activity or action by residents that affects or intends to affect the way the neighborhood looks and feels, decisions that are made about the neighborhood, and the types of things that can happen there. Both place meanings and practices were then coded at the paragraph unit of analysis with descriptive codes (e.g., place meaning as "diversity") and explanatory codes using Spradley's (1979) function domain (e.g., the place meaning "home" is a way "to claim"). These open codes were reviewed, merged, sub-categorized and reorganized.

The credibility of the present research is supported by prolonged engagement – engagement in the field began in the spring of 2014 and continued through the spring of 2016.[1] Further, I have made efforts to triangulate methods and sources – observation of different types of public meetings, interviewing, and informal conversations with community stakeholders – which enhanced my understanding and interpretations as data collection progressed. In my descriptions of the research site and data collection methods I offer thick description as a means to trace the natural history of the study and exercise transparency (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, by including several extended quotes, I demonstrate that the language and perspectives of participants are driving the findings; I urge the reader to evaluate how and whether my own interpretations leave space for additional interpretations.

The small sample was designed to encourage a frequency and depth of contact so as to allow for an historicized, politicized perspective worthy of deep interpretation, rather than a snapshot of attitudes that could be generalized to the broader neighborhood. This study does not cast the data from interviews and observation as somehow "unadulterated" (Fine, 1994, p. 21) by the researcher; rather, my own participation in the analysis cannot be masked. Going deep into

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[1] Following data collection for the present study, I was engaged in another project in the neighborhood as part of another research team.

the rich interview and participant observation data collected has meant looking at multiple contours of the interview interaction, and treating the data as not simply a compilation of the responses to interview questions, but as expressions of knowledge and perspectives beyond the questions. Understanding the interviewees and the data in this way is informed lessons from oral historians (Portelli, 1991) as well as from feminist scholars like Haraway (1988) and Collins (2000) that call upon the researcher to shed the 'researcher-as-knower/knowledge-producer' position and instead read closely to understand the knowledge and analyses produced in the particularity and positionality of the speaker.

CHAPTER IV

STUDY CONTEXT

The following study is focused on Cleveland Park in East Nashville – a neighborhood where rapid urban change has heightened tensions and altered both the social and built environment landscapes. Geographically, residents praise the location for its close proximity and easy access to all parts of the city and surrounding areas. It is one of several neighborhoods in Nashville Council District 5, is split by two zip codes, three U.S. census tracts, four block groups, and eighty-six blocks. According to U.S. Census data retrieved from the Nashville Metropolitan Planning Department (Table 2), demographic shifts in the neighborhood have been considerable.

Table 2. Selected Neighborhood Characteristics				
	2000	2010	2008-2012	%Change (2000 - 2012)
Total Population	3,596	3,433	3,180	-11.6%
White	458 (13%)	658 (27%)	869	89.7%
Black or African American	3,000 (83%)	2,636 (69%)	2,206	-26.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native	9	3	0	-100.0%
Asian	19	13	53	178.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	5	0	
Some other race	54	48	25	-53.7%
Two or more races	56	70	27	-51.8%
	3,596	3,433	3,180	-11.6%
Hispanic or Latino	79	67	93	17.7%
Total housing units	1,346	1,498	1,821	35.3%
Occupied housing units	1,206	1,261	1,551	28.6%
Owner-occupied	587	565	488	-16.9%
Renter-occupied	619	696	1,063	71.7%
Vacant housing units	140	237	270	92.9%
Per Capita Income	$10,710	$10,763	$15,601	45.7%

Putting the neighborhood in context, Cleveland Park is located in Council District 5 where residents are experiencing heightened financial strains. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, 37.6% of the population in District 5 is living in poverty, and median workers income is among the lowest in the county (Metropolitan Social Services-Planning & Coordination, 2016). Furthermore, roughly 60-67.1% of renters and 40-49.4% of homeowners with mortgages in District 5 are cost-burdened (Metropolitan Social Services-Planning & Coordination, 2016). This degree of strain is in part explained by the slow growth of incomes despite Fair Market Rents (FMR) increasing steadily across the Nashville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). According to data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, between 2000 and 2013, Median Family Income (MFI) increased six percent (for all family sizes), while FMR increases were between 21 and 39 percent (units with fewer bedrooms saw higher increases). For homeowners with a mortgage, across the Nashville area, increases in energy, insurance, and maintenance costs have contributed to increases in housing cost-burden, particularly for elderly residents with fixed-incomes (Owens, 2013). What is more, property values citywide are seeing substantial increases, with an expected increase between 33 and 37 percent between 2013 and 2017 (Garrison, 2015). Data from the Davidson County, TN Assessor's Office reports that, among Metro's Council Districts, District 5 has seen the highest increase in property values between 2013 and 2016 – a 45.3% increase – which translates into increases in property taxes for homeowners in the neighborhood (Davidson County, TN Assessor's Office, 2016).

Organizations and community members across the city are expressing concern and taking action to raise awareness of these significant changes and how they will impact residents. In 2013, a faith-based organizing coalition of member institutions, Nashville Organized for Action

and Hope (NOAH), launched its efforts in earnest and identified affordable housing as one of the main areas of concern for the city. Through base-building and public actions, NOAH elevated the amount and level of discourse on affordable housing during the 2015 mayoral election. As of the writing of this paper, none of the NOAH member organizations are based in Cleveland Park. Other organizations, however, have focused specifically on Cleveland Park. In 2013, the Tennessee Alliance for Progress (TAP), a non-profit citizen mobilization and social justice organization noticed District 5 as one of the most rapidly gentrifying areas of the city and began efforts to raise consciousness and spur action on affordable housing in the area. They convened several community meetings at a neighborhood church to engage concerned neighbors on the issue and held a larger public meeting with a panel of experts – representatives from Metro Planning, Vanderbilt University, and neighborhood associations from Council District 5 – in an effort to stimulate citizen action and encourage the articulation of an inclusive community vision for the area. These attempts to mobilize community members in coordinated action or engage them in participatory planning efforts organized by the city had little traction. In fact, in an exchange on social media, one Cleveland Park resident spoke directly to a TAP organizer, "please just go away and back to your own neighborhood. we are capable of writing our own letters and planning our own neighborhood. we don't need you to save us. thanks tho."

Over the last five years, news media sources have paid attention to rising concerns and responses to gentrification in Cleveland Park. In 2012, the Tennessean reported that community leaders were trying to avoid gentrification – though it did not include any information on *how* this was being done (DeVille, 2012). In 2014, a television news channel ran a story about displacement due to gentrification in Cleveland Park and the desire for neighborhood "stability and affordability" (Mason, 2014) by community leaders. And in 2015, when gentrification and

housing affordability became key issues not only in the mayoral campaign, but in the Council

District 5 race as well, one Tennessean article noted "serious neighborhood concerns about

gentrification and pricing people out of the homes" (Boucher, 2015). The article reported that the

incumbent candidate, Councilman Scott Davis who eventually won re-election, was campaigning

on a commitment to "blendification" (Boucher, 2015) – that is, working toward an ideal balance

of positive economic development for the neighborhood while maintaining its affordability and

livability for long-time residents.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The place that emerges from the discourses of neighborhood residents is one that is churning with dynamics of both marginalization *and* resistances, alienation *and* mutual support, exploitation *and* reappropriation. The tensions around place meaning demonstrate ongoing negotiations of the neighborhood identity, social character, and civic values that form the texture of neighborhood life. These tensions highlight the mechanisms that support gentrification – that is, the ways that neoliberal capitalism is "carried into places" (Massey, 2004, p. 8) – and simultaneously the processes, imagination, and cognizance needed to disrupt these mechanisms. The dynamics and tensions are here described as negotiations to represent their political nature – there are power relationships in play that are not settled or resolved, but do take shape in the life of the neighborhood in ways that have real consequences for residents.

Negotiations of market meaning

The dominant narrative of Cleveland Park is that it is gentrifying, and, in following with the dominant approaches to studying gentrification, these narratives are split in propagating views of gentrification as positive or negative, as defined by dispossession and displacement or by social and cultural choices and desires. More interestingly, the Cleveland Park of the past and the Cleveland Park of the present are both understood as in-motion; however, residents who have entered in the last ten years tend to put forth a more dichotomous definition – a before and an after the injection of investment, where the after is associated with improvement and undergoing process of becoming better. The meaning of Cleveland Park as a hotbed of capital flows is demonstrated in several comments from both longtime residents like Derrick and newcomers like Nelson and Ryan:

In my mind that's what I saw. you know, I knew that this was going to grow, ok, unless something drastic happened. It was going to grow. I'm not good at the percentages and all of that, but it was going to grow and expand   (Derrick)

 [My realtor] said, 'Get it.' He's like ' Get it- it's coming that direction'. He's like 'Everything that you see on the other side.[2] He said get it. That's a lot of house for, you know, I mean, I got the house for 162 [thousand]. I could easily put it on the market tomorrow for 280. Easy. That was actually 8 months, 6 or 8 months ago I had another realtor friend run numbers for me because of all the development that's going on recently and I was like, I was like 'one, I'm not selling, but I'm curious can you run some comps for me?' And she's like if you ever sell that house come to me. She's like, 'you'll make a mint.'   (Nelson)

 [The police officer] said 'now' he said 'if you can get this house, get it, because everyone – everyone's moving across Gallatin, and then across Ellington, and' he said, 'this is going to be the new hot spot because people are priced out of Lockeland Springs.   (Ryan)

These meanings of the neighborhood put forth a notion of development that naturalizes capitalist investment as the path to improvement. While residents do not deny that such 'progress' conjures up divisions and tensions between longtime and new residents, the latter believe that the neighborhood getting 'over the hump' should be perceived as beneficial for everyone. One resident suggests that longtime residents should be grateful and see it as a sign of success that people are moving in to the neighborhood. This same person is not sure whether the transition from one side of the hump to the other occurred "on its own" or because of newcomers moving in, leaving out the possibility that the development and gentrification frontier were created by capital markets or that the universally desirable qualities of 'safety', for instance, were the result of community action and organizing.

The dominant development narrative operates somewhat paradoxically through both the razing of space to create an ahistorical context as well as the painting of what Gregory (2001)

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[2] The "Other side" refers to the West side of Gallatin Road – the area where Cleveland Park is located. Gallatin Road is one of the main thoroughfares that cuts through East Nashville. The East side of Gallatin gentrified rapidly in the early 2000s and is considered one of the 'hippest' areas of Nashville, if not the South.

calls a "space of terror" (p. 106). New residents describe how ten years earlier (before they

arrived), there "was nothing over here" and "no one" wanted to move in in juxtaposition to the

current moment when "everyone is moving in." Such comments by new residents minimize who

and what existed prior to the "discovery" of the neighborhood by gentrifiers, and they create the

"gentrification frontier" (Smith, 1992) where there is nothing worth preserving. Indicative of the

frontier ideology is the refrain "it's like the Wild West over here", which has been uttered in

informal conversations with developers and realtors about the area – it's wild and ready for the

taking. Denial of value or even existence prior to being 'settled' by the gentrifying pioneers is

exemplified in an interaction described by Jimmy, a longtime African American resident. Jimmy

described his African American neighbor's confrontation with newer White neighbor about

acquisition of her land:

> She was over there one day and one of the new neighbors said 'I'm so glad you're
> here. I've been wanting to talk to you' and she said 'oh, ok' he said, 'how much
> do you want for that lot, uh, I want – my uncle wants to buy because I'm here and
> he wants to be next door to me.' And she says 'Oh honey,' she said ' it's not for
> sale. We're…my mother left this to me. And uh I'm getting ready to build on it'
> and he said 'oh, ok, but how much would you take for it?' And she said, 'it's not
> for sale though.' 'My uncle wants it, and he's really entitled to buy that because
> I'm already here.' And she just looked at him and walked away.

In the story retold above, the White neighbor persistently attempts to define the land by its

exchange value and aligns these attempts with denying Black ownership. The African American

neighbor's claims are based on a different meaning of and relationship to the land through her

mother and for her own uses. The White neighbor's razing of prior claims and prior meanings

contributes to an environment in which previous claims to space are being replaced by claims

backed by the market. Paradoxically, it is precisely the historic nature of the neighborhood that is

used in branding and marketing the area to gentrifiers. Danielle, a newer African American

resident, points to the historic street markers as a signal of this marketing. Maryanne, a White

new resident, notes that it is the "neighborhood feel" given by the 1920s and 1930s bungalow-style homes that is attractive to many new home buyers in the area. In these regards, to the extent that history can be commodified it will aid rather than inhibit development.

Another means to devalue prior claims to place is to denigrate, rather than simply erase, the place's prior form. Participants who frame gentrification in positive terms like Nelson and Ryan cast the historical nature of the neighborhood as something that stands in the way of development, calling up a history from the 1980s and 1990s when Cleveland Park experienced a wave of drug use, drug sales, prostitution, and violence. For newcomers, this is often the only history they know, and developers, real estate agents, and new residents use this knowledge to describe what used to exist as undesirable and even terrifying. One resident commented that "the only way we knew about it was that we didn't want to live there" and a police officer commented to a new resident that "you could have given [a house] to me for free and I would have told you no." And, as with any "landscape of wilderness and savagery" (Gregory, 2001, p. 107), this one should be navigated with adequate equipment; Ryan was told, "Get [the house], get a fence…get dogs, and to be honest, if you're comfortable, get a gun."

These discourses of development that define an un- or under-developed neighborhood as new or nonexistent on the one hand and a 'space of terror' on the other perpetuate what DeFilippis (2004) and Slater (2006) describe as the 'false choice' painted by proponents of gentrification: that neighborhoods must choose gentrification or undesirable conditions of divestment an decay. For new residents in Cleveland Park, the history of the neighborhood represents an obstruction to improvement – something that is "holding it back a little bit" (Ryan, personal interview). By getting "over the hump" (Ibid.) of the past, change, newcomers believe, can improve conditions for everyone.

In contrast to place being defined by a terrifying past, longtime residents define the place as 'home'. Home is used to connote an authentic claim to place that can transcend the monetary claim. 'Home' expresses a claim based on the length and depth of relationship rather than property value, and as such is able to incorporate considerations of those who fall outside of the experience and discourse of ownership. Danielle expresses this sentiment eloquently, describing the challenges for renters in gentrifying neighborhoods:

> You know, so I don't get a say - this has been my home and I've been renting for
> 20 years. but somehow your opinion is more valuable than mine because you
> bought a home - bought your house. Which means - which supposedly means
> you're more invested, but I've been living here for 20 years

There is some suggestion that defining a place with the value of 'home' – a use-value – precedes its definition as having exchange value – this may be explained by the connotation of longevity with 'home' (i.e., that you need to live somewhere a long time before it can be home), and value of longevity contrasts with the value of future speculation. This view is reflected in a comment from Jimmy: "It's [the neighborhood] not hip and trendy to us, it's home. It's all I know." Jimmy's comment evokes a romance with 'home' as pristine, untouched, nostalgic, and historic. However 'home' is deployed by gentrifiers, too, as a claiming politic. For example Nelson who notes: "A lot of people are really making [the neighborhood] their home...I was kinda...the pioneer to come here." Here, the nostalgic vision of 'home' comes up against the settler vision of home; however the dual uses does not eliminate the importance of this discourse. Rather, it demonstrates how such terms are politically charged, depending on the positionality of the speaker. Nelson's use of 'home' as a newcomer represents an appropriation of neighborhood space, reinforced with colonizing rhetoric of 'pioneering.'

The discourses of gentrification as positive development because of increased exchange value are contested through interpretations of the neighborhood as more multiplicitous than the

bad-to-good linear progression suggests. Over the last five years, Evelyn, who has lived in the

area for over 30 years, has observed families moving in and out of the neighborhood, particularly

new homes, after having lived there for only a short time. She interprets this churning as a

negative sign:

> You know you're constantly seeing people move in and out. Even though they're
> buying these [expensive] houses they constantly moving in and out, and I don't
> know what they're deal is. For me, eventually the housing market is going to
> crash cause you know I think these people get into these houses then they realize
> they can't afford them then the next thing you know they're trying to sell it off to
> somebody else or whatever then they moved in and think they could keep it up,
> you know, then they can't - you know. Then eventually it's just gonna be sitting
> there because nobody can afford it.

Evelyn interprets the changes she witnessed as the neighborhood headed in a negative not an

improved direction. The reasons for this quick buying and selling could be many (e.g., lack of

affordability as she suggests, upward mobility, dissatisfaction with the neighborhood, changes in

employment, etc.), but regardless of whether Evelyn's assessment is accurate, her observations

echo warnings that excessive residential mobility presents important challenges for

neighborhoods already undergoing change (Coulton, Theodus, & Turner, 2012). Relatedly,

Danielle interprets the gentrification taking place as produced and manufactured at the cost of

African American people. Danielle's analysis disrupts the normalization of market logics as

improving quality of life for everyone. For example, she emphasizes that the positive meanings

of the neighborhood – e.g., as "walkable", as "safe", as having a "community feel" – are part of a

branding strategy to market place to a particular population – a middle-class White population.

Her comments refuse to interpret these meanings as natural or inherent to the place; rather, she

promotes a perspective that this place identity has been created to serve capital. She agrees that

in her own ideal neighborhood there will be restaurants to patronize that are easy to access;

however, she is dubious that the 'walkability' of the neighborhood can be maintained without the

surveillance and exclusion of African American residents. A new African American resident at a CPNA meeting shared Danielle's concerns regarding surveillance. As a U.S. Veteran he is accustomed to running and likes the walkability of the neighborhood, but reported that he has been called in by residents to the police for being a "Black man running."

Place meanings that do not erase history in order to define Cleveland Park as a viable and vital neighborhood also challenge the 'bad-then-good-now' narrative. Long-time residents do not romanticize the fact that their neighborhood has a dark past – "nothing but shooting every night…[j]ust every night it was shots", explains Derrick -- but they counter negative portrayals in two ways: first, by extending the timeline farther back to a past when "it was nice and quiet" and, secondly, by lifting up the skills and knowledge of residents who navigated struggles in the neighborhood in order to survive. Indeed, the meaning of Cleveland Park as a place of struggle is critical to understanding the different dimensions of the current moment of gentrification in the neighborhood. Rosalyn's comment describes this sentiment:

> People need to be able to understand where people have come from – it was very good, then the housing turned bad, and it all flowed over, it became very very bad and now we're just getting back to it being very good again. And there are people who have lived in the area who have seen and experienced not only seen but experienced all of that. They need to be able to understand that that's difficult to come through. Some people were in very bad situations, and now have gotten to the point of where instead of living over in Settle Court I'm now living in a house, I'm able to rent this house. Now I've got a family and I'm still, you know- I'm still struggling, but I'm making it. Now you're going to come take all of that away from up under me? They don't get that. They don't understand that.

Authoring a more dynamic history becomes a launch point for contestation of the discourses of positive development and resistance to erasure and commodification. As stated by Jimmy, "History cannot lie – it's there". In his stories, Jimmy describes silent markers of this history immortalized in buttercups that his late mother planted, bullet holes that he does not have filled on his house, and benches made by his father that now live in various houses of worship around

the neighborhood. Indeed, these markers tell of a living place that cannot – or will not – be erased. The assertion of people, life, activity, not the romantic vision of history, refuses a narrative of Cleveland Park as blank frontier land.

Tactically, disruption to the false choice between gentrification and decay is expressed through refusals to participate in the market or participation on resident-defined terms. By refusing to sell their homes, long-time and African American residents state their claims to their place in the neighborhood— their 'right to stay put' (Newman & Wyly, 2006) – and they depict market forces not as neutral or natural forces of change, improvement and development, but in some cases as predatory and violating. Describing interactions with developers who approach her and her neighbors at their homes, Danielle expresses

> it's like - do you see a sign in my yard that says, 'for sale?' No. OK well then, take that as an indicator, you know…or they'll yell at my neighbor, and he's like 'and sell myself outdoors? No.' (*laughing*) or people walking up and looking in your windows, you know.

Indeed, all participants in the research reported receiving multiple buying requests either through postcards or in-person. Some described agents lurking around their properties, peering into windows, and presenting traffic hazards as they slow down in their cars to assess homes. Both Nelson and Maryanne suggest that their neighbors should just ignore these requests if they are not interested or have their names removed from lists. They interpret these tactics as the normal mode of operation of the market – necessary for business, but easy enough to just ignore. Longtime and African American residents, however, interpreted these tactics as a deeper affront; indeed the MWC meetings were in part prompted by a goal to educate residents on how to protect themselves from this type of predatory development practice.

Market dominance in Cleveland Park is contested not only through refusals to participate, but also by trying to influence its forces rather than be dictated by them. Continuing her analysis of the marketing of the neighborhood, Danielle describes how she understands the forces at play:

> I knew that they were encouraging developing in that area around the city center. And my house falls within that radius. In the event that they want to resell it - if they want to buy it - they're going to have to pay me some money for it because I know they're getting funding and tax breaks and all those other kinds of things to develop that area.

According to Danielle's analysis of the real estate market, the process of development is calculating, intentional, and subsidized. She goes on to describe an interaction with a potential developer over the phone. She gave the developer a selling price that far surpassed what she believes is the value of the home, but she describes doing that because, as stated above, she believes they are getting incentives to develop. She remembers telling the developer that if they did not call back within a certain timeframe the price would go up. The developer never called back. During the MWC meetings, organizers' key message to African American, long-time, and elderly residents is to stay in their homes, and, if they are going to consider selling, to learn the full market-value of their home before accepting deals made by developers who are advertising quick sales and immediate cash for homes. Both Danielle's selling price and the MWC guidance on price represent market logics, but they also assert terms by which the market should play: rules that are determined *by* the targeted residents.

The interpretations of and resistances to predatory developers continue a neighborhood history of struggle that extends as far back as the forced removal of indigenous peoples in the same area. Discourses that extend the history and reveal the dominance of market interests in the neighborhood counter views advanced by newcomers that Cleveland Park was frontier space awaiting gentrification with open arms. Trying to shift who 'controls' the market can appear as a

contradictory tactic – if long-term and African American residents (those who feel they are most targeted) do get a reasonable price and decide to sell, would this still pave the way for gentrification? Indeed, this strategy does not stem the rising costs of housing in a neighborhood and would still lead to a population that is of higher socio-economic status than previous users. This tension highlights an important insufficiency in the logic of trying to set the terms of the market unless the strategy is coupled with a strategy to create housing for low-income populations.

Negotiations of social relations and exclusions

Cleveland Park's identity is frequently represented as 'diverse' and as having a 'community-feel' – meanings that can inoculate or obscure the ways marginalization and alienation play out in neighborhood life. Several residents discuss 'keeping an eye out' for what is happening on their street or with their neighbors – either they participate in this watchfulness or they feel that their neighbors are guarding the street, yards, and community spaces. This stewardship is in some moments welcome – reflecting the romantic "eyes on the street" of Jane Jacobs (1961). Both Danielle and Maryanne, single females, share that their neighbors look out for them – one was told they were 'under their neighbor's protection' after she called in an attempted robbery on their house. Such experiences contribute to a representation of the neighborhood as tight-knit, supportive, and caring of people and place beyond the property line. Yet other times, such surveillance is not welcome, and neighbors also reinforce their privacy, property, and social difference. This tension around the meaning of Cleveland Park as a cordial and harmonious social space reveals ways that residents are encouraging or contesting the neighborhood's changes.

The negotiation of caring and communal space versus surveilled and private space can be contentious. Indeed, the property line underscores social tensions that emerge around claiming space; this is evidenced in an incident recounted by Nelson. The daughter of Nelson's neighbor – an elderly, longtime, African American resident – approached Nelson's tenants (Caucasian male and female) about their car that appeared to be crossing the property line between their houses. Nelson defended his tenants, pointing out that the street is open parking and, even if it were not, the tenant's car was only partially crossing into the neighbor's property. The neighbor's daughter, however, was insistent that the car be moved; Nelson voiced his frustration: "you've got issues…you've got a problem…it's not my problem…you don't own the street." He describes the daughter's response as sarcastic: "Yeah you got everything so peaceful over there. You got your dog you got your garden." The neighbor's daughter discursively emboldens the line that separates her family from Nelson and where his claims to space start and end. In retelling this incident, Nelson, who moved to Cleveland Park 6 years ago anticipating an influx of development and "new blood" (as he described), makes clear that the community-feel of the neighborhood is interrupted by these contentious interactions that reinforce social difference. Similarly, Ryan, a White male newcomer to the neighborhood, while believing that he lives in one of the best places in East Nashville because of its friendliness, also describes "still getting the looks" from his African American neighbors when he walks his dogs in the park (e.g., as though to ask who he is and what is he doing there). The separation between new residents and long-time residents is also evidenced in Maryanne's experience of asking an older African American neighbor if she was coming to a neighborhood picnic, and that neighbor quietly turning around on her porch to go back inside. Highlighting difference and reminding newcomer

neighbors of it may be an expression of "feeling threatened" (as Nelson described); it may also

be a refusal to assimilate to a changing culture and values.

The proliferation of efforts to regulate the aesthetics and uses of neighbors' spaces also

exemplifies caustic neighboring experiences that negate a harmonious characterization of

Cleveland Park. Several African American residents – in both interviews and community

meetings – decried the practice of 'calling codes' as un-neighborly. For instance, as Jimmy

expressed,

> I think we're going to have to be mindful of how we treat our neighbor. If they've
> got an old car sitting in the driveway, ask them can you help them before you turn
> them into codes. You know, 'I know a guy who'd like fix that for you.' Try to
> find out where they are.

Similarly, Danielle senses that there has been a push for more oversight over the ways people

can build their homes, the colors they can paint them, and the uses to which they put their

property. This push is made evident by neighbors who have come to her door to talk about other

neighbors putting barbeque pits in the front yard, having their belongings on their front porch,

and painting their house certain colors. These concerns, she explains, are couched in a belief that

aesthetic anomalies will threaten the value of other homes in the neighborhood and that the

neighborhood association could take a larger role in preventing these uses or preferences.

Danielle interprets the motivations of these disgruntled neighbors in the following way:

> We want prettier neighborhoods at the cost of whoever's got to get hurt. We want
> our neighborhood to look a certain way, you know. And we're going to do what
> we have to do get it, you know, even if it is constantly calling the police on this
> man and force him to paint his house a certain color because rose is not on our
> required - rose is not …on the approved list of colors by realtors who sell homes
> and say these colors will sell better, you know?

Danielle's analysis demonstrates how the market-value meaning of place and social harmony

meaning of place abut. The contentious neighboring relationships represented in codes violation

reporting relate to the prioritizing of an exchange-value meaning of place. Some urban studies researchers recommend a critical reading of the codes enforcement phenomenon (Betancur 2002, Kennedy & Leonard, 2001, Bates 2013). They suggest that codes enforcement serves two related purposes: first, acts as a tool for surveillance of populations who may be regarded as "undesirable" in a gentrifying neighborhood (Betancur, 2002) and as neoliberal governmentality – the devolution of state responsibilities, management or actions to private and individual actors (Rose, 1999; COTOI, 2011). Here, neighbors are carrying out the power of the state by doing the leg work of reporting and citizen management. Codes enforcement is also heavily driven by market-value enhancing interventions from both developers and local institutions who stand to benefit from opportunities to obtain land when a property is condemned, closed, or fined (Betancur, 2002). Conflicts arise as the costs of such enforcement are disproportionately borne by low-income populations in the neighborhoods who, frequently, are elderly and African American (Betancur 2002, Kennedy & Leonard, 2001). Indeed, some researchers recommend that, along with other markers and warning signs, changes in code complaints be monitored as an indication of gentrification and housing displacement risk (Bates, 2013).

Related to codes reporting practices and regulations of neighborhood aesthetics, residents' discourses around waste corresponded with patterns of expression about how place should be used and who should be welcome in the neighborhood. Though not intending to glamorize litter or normalize the throwing of trash as an act of resistance, stories from study participants who pick up trash symbolize contentious relations between residents. Ryan explains that on some occasions he independently picks up multiple bags of trash in his area – food, garbage, dirty diapers, etc. When he brings up the problem of trash at community meetings he says that he hits a brick wall:

When a group of people that are white in the community say something it's almost like they take it like a personal attack on the whole community. And once you do that, then they're really not focusing on what we're, what I'm trying to say…I want to actually do a picnic area, because if you have a picnic area then they actually have to get a permit to use the space and that's perceived as 'oh you don't want people enjoying the park' and that's not what I'm saying, I just don't want to pick up after people. And it's that – it's almost like you're hitting a brick wall when you're saying it because they take it as attack against the whole community.

Similarly, a White resident at a CPNA meeting who has been in the neighborhood for one year noted that one of her dislikes about Cleveland Park is how "certain people" throw trash. She recounts an incident when a woman threw trash out of her car window: she picked it up and brought it directly to the woman in the car who responded to the White participant with an expletive. The woman at the meeting expressed that it is hard to want "those people" in "our neighborhood" when "they" disrespect it like that. It is unclear how "those people" is raced or classed; however, both Ryan's and the CPNA participant's comments enact an exclusionary politics – though Ryan is more conscious of how his comments might be interpreted. The "us" versus "them" language is explicit, and "they", in some instances, should have their use of public space regulated or they should not be welcome in the neighborhood altogether.

The ordering of the neighborhood to make it more organized and more aesthetically pleasing to a particular demographic of residents also renders the place more docile and less threatening. Nelson, Ryan, and Maryanne, for instance, all newcomers, refer to the space as fragmented – they describe the area as "block by block" or "house by house". Nelson's description of the neighborhood as, "nice house, nice house, nice house, shitty house, shitty house…[t]here's still those pockets...especially in this area in the past year or two those pockets are becoming – [but] they're breaking up so, I think it's fantastic" valorizes those actors who

instill aesthetic and social order. The orderliness, once established, readies the object – here the place – for "calculation and commodification" (Gregory, 2001, p. 93).

The supposed 'community feel' and desirability of social order are accompanied, somewhat paradoxically, by praise for the diversity of the neighborhood. In community meetings and in interviews, non-Black residents celebrate that this is the most "diverse neighborhood they have ever lived in", explain that they chose to live in the neighborhood because of its diversity, and proclaim that they hope to keep the neighborhood diverse. In Cleveland Park, "diversity", as in other contexts, is used as synonym for having a sizeable African American population. Further, "diversity" connotes an equilibrium among various racial groups without attention to power differentials. Thus, when the term is attached to the meaning of the neighborhood, it superficializes – or at least fails to acknowledge – African Americans' historic and current lived experiences and struggles for place. That is, it does little more than represent difference in what Leong calls "nonwhiteness…in its thinnest form – as a bare marker of difference and a signal of presence" (2013, p. 2155). Long-time and African American residents detect this appropriation of the neighborhood racial character, as evidenced in their explanations of what Cleveland Park's racial identity should represent.

Several African American participants interpret the praised "diversity" as making a commodity of the racial character of the neighborhood and as falling short of actually appreciating what diversity means. Rosalyn, an African American woman who has lived in Cleveland Park for over 50 years, links the history of place to its racial composition, calling up a need to understand how the neighborhood came to be racialized. Rosalyn's comments reflect that "diversity" deemphasizes the meaning of difference in favor of assimilating and equalizing

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difference. She calls for emphasizing the importance and meaning of African American experience in the neighborhood rather than taking it for granted or erasing it:

> So, you know, you're moving in, when you first move in, you know you're coming into an area that's full of African Americans. You don't care to try to understand the culture… where were all these black people and you know, how did, did they live?...But you try to overlay and just totally wipe out one culture so that your culture can come in as opposed to trying to find those areas where it can work together?...[T]hat appreciation for differences is a key and until people really understand that that has to come from a different place than knowledge, it has to come from the heart, and a desire, and to really want to live with other people and merge my cultures with them" (Rosalyn)

The counter-narrative to "diversity" highlights not only current predominance and significance of African American life, but also the historic racialization of space (Lipsitiz, 2007). During the *Moving with Change* events, presenters trace the neighborhood history of redlining and urban renewal, for instance, the racial underpinnings of which have been well documented. Danielle observes the current inundation by the real estate and development market as 'blockbusting in reverse' – pushing people of color to sell and steering White folks to buy – which in turn induces feelings of disbelonging and unwantedness. Indeed, recalling this history from the 1950s and 1960s connects the current moment of gentrification to a longer history of racial dispossession. Derrick pointed to the black skin on his arm and explained – "things just aren't right when you know that they want *this* out of the neighborhood". These varied expressions expose interpretations of the neighborhood's development as racially motivated. Understanding racialization highlights the historical context of racial capitalism and the employment of "diversity" as a continuation of this history. That is, it reflects a continuing exploitation of racial difference for the benefit of capital accumulation by white individuals (Leong, 2013). Further, these descriptions of the racial subtext expose the weaknesses of "linguistic anesthetic[s]" (Slater, 2006, p. 751) like 'urban regeneration' and 'social mixing'

discourses that cast gentrification as commonsense for positive change (Smith, 2002; Blomley, 2004; Slater, 2006; Bridge et al., 2010) but mask underlying problems and marginalizations.

Subverting the racial capitalism expressed through discourses of diversity entails not only 'calling it out', so to speak, but also shifting 'who benefits'. As discussed previously, refusals to sell property take the neighborhood off the market; they also, however, attend to the racial nature of dispossessions. Such refusal, as evidenced in Rosalyn's comment below, claim place as Black owned and not available for the market.

> So we moved in. The Underwoods moved in, the Kerrys moved in, the Balls moved in, the Hayes. And then there were several other [Black] families. And then Jimmy's family moved in. There were other families [who] have moved in but they've moved out since. The bottom line was these are the families that are left there now, they own their homes- all of us own our homes, so there's no one that can sell it away from up from under us. And then some of us went out and when people left, we purchased other homes. So we own land too that they're trying to get, but not selling to them.

Emphasizing ownership of land by African American families gives the neighborhood a meaning based on Black racial identity and challenges a norm of colorblindness (Harris, 1993). This rejects a deeply entrenched social construction of 'whiteness as property' wherein the act and protection of possession is reserved for whites through an assumed right to exclude (Harris, 1993). As critical race scholar C. Harris explicates, Black subordination is reinforced through the recognition of "the settled expectations of whites built on the privileges and benefits produced by white supremacy" (Harris, 1993, p. 1731). African American's ownership of land and refusal to sell enacts claiming based on a "right to inclusion" (Harris, 1993, p. 1791) in the distribution of resources, wealth, and property that have over the course of history been invested in the maintenance of white privilege.

Negotiation of inclusive civic space

The place meanings that emerge from the discourses of participation in neighborhood civic spaces shed light on how neighborhood exclusions manifest and intersect with logics of gentrification. The main space of civic participation in Cleveland Park is the Cleveland Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA), but over the course of this study, two additional spaces emerged – CPNA, Inc., and the *Moving with Change* events – in response to the changing demographics and dynamics of the both the CPNA and the neighborhood overall. Both long-time and newer residents share a belief that the CPNA should be a welcoming space, but the terms and experiences of this inclusion differ based on divergent notions of the neighborhood's meaning – a neighborhood of positive change for everyone or one where marginalized peoples' experiences and interests should be prioritized.

Nelson characterizes CPNA as increasingly attended by young, new residents who are adding to what he perceives as positive change and growth of the neighborhood. The presence of new residents, he suggests, give 'balance' to the CPNA, and this balancing force wants to be a part of "making a difference." As Nelson goes on, he appropriates the CPNA for these new residents using the rhetoric of inclusivity, but that balance that they were providing seems to swing in their favor:

> You know we're very welcoming and [say] 'hey, come to the meeting' to those people that feel threatened, we're not changing things we're growing…some people feel threatened when they hear the word change, you know, and it's like it's yes technically yeah things are changing, but in a good way…we're just being more neighborly, and if you don't want to come, ok then fine. But don't ruin the vibe you know- the buzz…don't be a buzz kill. … Ok stay home, that's fine. If you don't want to be here, like I said earlier, don't come. That's fine, but don't feel threatened and- I know that's easier said than done … but, it's just one of those things that's happening and you can't stop it. You know, get on the train. If you want your own, you know, area – fine.

The language of "we're very welcoming" raises questions about who is welcoming whom. In Nelson's comments the change and development interests are not only part of an inevitable 'train' moving forward, but these interests constitute a vibe and a buzz that should not be disrupted. While recognizing that it is a hard choice to make, Nelson perpetuates a false choice that a neighborhood must either change, develop, and gentrify or be left behind to degeneration.

Indeed the discourse that casts the CPNA as 'inclusive' and for anybody actually serves new and White residents best. The openness that they suggest permits *them* to enter into the civic space and engage in priority-setting and decision-making. By making the neighborhood and CPNA 'inclusive' they adopt a rhetoric of 'equality'. This 'equivalence' is dictated by the market – that is, by buying into the neighborhood, they assume equal political voice to other homeowners, and perhaps more powerful political voice than others (e.g., renter tenants). Two stories highlight the exclusivity that results from White homeowners engagement in the CPNA. Ryan (White, male, new resident) describes that his first motivation for becoming engaged at the neighborhood level was to have a say in the placement of affordable housing near his home. He describes that very soon after moving into the neighborhood he learned that affordable housing was being proposed for several lots; he and his neighbors were unhappy that the Councilman had not reached out to them to provide any information on the proposals, what "affordable housing" actually meant, what the homes would look like, if there was any kind of overlay that would prevent affordable housing. In response they organized a meeting with the Councilman and got additional information from a council person at-large who informed them that there were no actual plans to build affordable housing, and that if anything it was going to happen not in this neighborhood but farther away where the metropolitan housing authority already owned property. Not only was his foray into neighborhood concerns activated by an exclusionary "not-

in-my-backyard" (NIMBY) mentality, but also it invalidated the need for affordable housing that would keep the neighborhood inclusive to a lower income population. The second example comes from a CPNA meeting discussion of the proposed House Bill 843, the Neighborhood Protection Act, that would allow neighborhood associations to petition for an order of protection against individuals with repeat felony offenses within a neighborhood. While one attendee wanted to discuss this topic to a growing need to provide programs and services to people re-entering community from prison, a new White male homeowner in the neighborhood expressed frustration at the notion of welcoming in individuals who would hurt property values. These examples speak to individual values around property that depart from serving the "needs of the greater community" and instead serve individual needs for accumulation and, per C. Harris's analysis (1993), the preservation of White privilege.

The battles to assert newcomer 'inclusion' also played out in hotly debated Council District elections in 2015. The officers of the CPNA supported different candidates, and tensions arose over the appropriate practices of candidate support so as not to blur the lines between individual-endorsement and organizational endorsement. The elections were split along racial lines – Scott Davis as the incumbent candidate was understood as the "Black-candidate" and Sarah Martin, a newcomer to Cleveland Park, was regarded as the "White-candidate." The CPNA became a space of contesting the ethical practices of a neighborhood association. As the CPNA became a more contentious space, officers began stepping down from their roles. When Davis won reelection, White residents began showing up in larger numbers as if to reinforce that the CPNA needed to be an 'inclusive' space for them too.

Without addressing the underlying exclusionary dynamics of the CPNA, efforts to improve it are compromised. One citywide community- and neighborhood leadership

organization, the Neighborhoods Resource Center (NRC), has on two occasions over the study

period tried to facilitate visioning sessions during CPNA meetings that foster conversations

about appreciations of existing aspects as well as desires for change and future goals. These

efforts have fallen short in two regards: first, adequate time and attention have not been allocated

to these conversations – they are inserted into already full agendas and provide limited

opportunity for participants to understand and engage on the process – and secondly, the

contributions that are voiced have not been adequately recorded (e.g., on flip chart paper),

processed by fellow participants, or carried through into action. What these visioning

conversations promise is the articulation of shared goals to inform organizational actions, but

what they do not confront are the power dynamics operating in who shows up and who does not

to participate in the meetings; who speaks and who does not once there; and the possibility that

achieving consensus will not be feasible with the strategy and time allotted. In the absence of this

confrontation, the desires of the most active participants – here new and White residents –

dominate organizational activity.

The paradox of 'inclusivity' as a means of excluding has generated a high degree of

discomfort and tension in the CPNA that drives some residents away (like Evelyn) and for others

motivates a refusal of political displacement. The following quote from Jimmy expresses the

motivation behind these resistances:

> I think we can get and keep some of our neighbors active and people respect them
> for what they know and been through because the one thing I've been told too
> many times 'the new people don't respect us or treat us like second class citizens
> in our own damn neighborhood.' I've heard that on several occasions, and I say
> 'well, you don't have to be treated like that' always remember.

The experiences of being disrespected and counted out as 'second class citizens' collide with the

deep neighborhood knowledge longtime residents possess and the history of struggle they

endured that eventually paved the way for investment. Pushing back against the loss of political voice is enacted discursively, epistemically, and materially.

Discursively, push back is waged by calling attention to the paradox of neighborhood 'inclusivity', calling into question the universality of benefits, and reclaiming definitional rights of the neighborhood. As Rosalyn expresses, though she likes that the White people are excited about inclusive social gatherings, she is concerned that these priorities for the CPNA are incongruent with the needs of the low-income population of the neighborhood – the people who face barriers to attending meetings or organized social events. She explains,

> So you have [people] in a community who are just trying to work everyday, take care of their family, they try to keep their religion up if possible. They just try to maintain. And that's all, they don't see anything else. They're struggling so much that all of their energies are going into maintaining.

To Rosalyn, the very conditions of their lives prevent low-income residents from participating in neighborhood events. If the priorities of the association focus on social events rather than material needs (i.e., shifting the priorities of the historic CPNA), then those low-income residents who are not able to attend events are benefiting little from its efforts. Thus it is not clear if the efforts of the current CPNA are actually universal or if they are intended for a select cross-section.

Rosalyn also pushes back against a loss of political voice by justifiying definitional rights of the neighborhood. According to her view, CPNA is a disappointment because it has not maintained the meanings she and some of her fellow long-time neighbors have ascribed to the neighborhood. As she describes:

> [Newcomers] have absolutely no history in the neighborhood; they don't understand what's going on in the neighborhood. And that's where the neighborhood association has failed – I strongly believe that's what's failed. Because when the people came in, the neighborhood association should have a structure set up that invites you in. It's like my neighbors around me, as soon as

they came in we had conversations, invited them over to the deck, or a lot of the other things we've done, or just talk across the fence, sit on the front porch - whatever the case may be to help them understand the history of that neighborhood and so that they could have, if they care to have, an appreciation for it.

For Rosalyn, the CPNA allows newcomers to enter into civic spaces as though the neighborhood were a blank slate and with false understandings. Indeed, this view departs from the notion of the CPNA as a universal space or that residents can enter into it on equal footing (or with equivalent political voice based on property ownership). Instead, Rosalyn's comments suggest that newcomers come in with a deficit – they need to be educated.

Pushing against the co-optation of civic spaces is also done through epistemic levers. The epistemic harms[3] enacted by political displacements are challenged through an appreciation of different manners of expression. During one of the NRC visioning sessions an African American woman sitting behind me, Linda, expressed quietly that her words had not been written on the page and she noticed that others expressing dissatisfaction were not getting their comments captured either. Throughout the meeting, Linda had several vocal reactions to comments other people made. Though she was in dialogue with the comments filling the room they were not directly responding to her; instead, CPNA officers made general comments to the room to "please, be respectful of the facilitator" or "only one person speak at a time, please." In another meeting several months later, the CPNA was preparing to take a vote on new officers, and all candidates were White. After expressing her discomfort with the lack of representation of the African American constituency and becoming increasingly agitated by the imminent vote, Linda

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[3] By 'epistemic harms' I am referring to what M. Fricker (2007) and J. Medina (2013) define as 'epistemic injustices'. Fricker defines two types of this injustice, testimonial and hermeneutical. Here my attention is focused on the former, wherein "prejudice on the hearer's part causes him to give the speaker less credibility than he would otherwise have given" (Fricker, 2007, p. 4)

was told to sit down and hush. The marginalization was not just political in the sense of losing representation (no people of color among the candidates for officer positions) but also in the sense of losing a right to expression and a right to emotion – a right to be human. Though the neighborhood and civic spaces are understood as inclusive or welcoming to certain expressions and interests, they are here shown to be closed for others. Later, Rosalyn remembered Linda:

> You look at Linda. Linda spends a lot of her time – People don't listen. I listen to what she says. People I think look at that in- at what she's saying in different ways because sometimes she's just so straightforward in what she's saying. Which I actually like because I'm kinda straight forward too [laughter], so- But when she's saying something, she has a good reason 'cause deep down in her gut she just heard something that didn't make any sense and she's going to address it. And that's what I like about her… But I think these are the people that are out there, and people look them in a negative kind of fashion. But their passion, when they're speaking to you, is there because they sense that something is wrong, because of the knowledge that they have.

Rosalyn's ability to hear Linda in a different way than other community members do validates Linda's expressions as critical to improving interactions among distinct groups and to improving democratic processes (Cumming & Norwood, 2012; Cornwall & Coehlo, 2007). Indeed, she understands Linda's dissent as a productive difference that is generated from a place of knowing and experience.

Long-time residents also use this epistemic approach to recast meanings of an open neighborhood and neutral CPNA as meanings that have always entailed power struggles. In particular, Jimmy, Derrick, and Rosalyn retell the history of the CPNA that connects it to a history of neighborhood divestment and a struggle to demand public services. These residents describe a process wherein, at first, people were afraid to come out to meetings because of the dangerous nature of the area surrounding the community center. Instead, actions against illicit activities were taken independently and gradually progressed into organization. Derrick and Evelyn, for instance, describe setting up spiked treads in the alleyway behind their house to

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puncture the tires of drug dealers who would speed through the alleyways and conduct transactions there. Simultaneously, a group of concerned women in the neighborhood began organizing their neighbors to write down and report the license plate tags of drivers who appeared to be picking up prostitutes or making drug transactions. The information on these drivers would be communicated to the police department. The networked-activity of reporting constituted a precursor to what was eventually formalized as the CPNA. Residents gained momentum and established the CPNA as an organization in the early 2000s. The group started to have good turnout because "everyone was on the same page" (Jimmy, personal communication) about the urgent need to change conditions of "crime, drugs, crack houses, prostitution, abandoned houses, abandoned cars everywhere" (Ibid.). Once they started to build a group, the meetings continued; their efforts resulted in the acquisition of block grants; and eventually they decided to formalize regular meetings about neighborhood issues not specific to the block grant.

Residents who know this history emphasize that the building of the organization was a long process, and the stakes in this organizing were high. Rosalyn describes the times:

> Now you need to understand, these people [community leaders] were threatened. These people were threatened. Daniel's [one of the community leaders] house was broken into. We tried to watch it as much as possible when he was out of town…I finally just had some cameras put in – I had some on my house and had some turned toward his house.

Derrick describes the experience of going to these early neighborhood meetings and learning from the leadership that was emerging:

> Derrick: he [Jimmy] just told us explained and told us…these are things [the association] can do. And that was powerful! That was really powerful!...and it was work
> Interviewer: and it was work, right, but you all did it
> Derrick: it was *work*.
> Interviewer: you did it
> Derrick: it was *work*

By stressing the hard work of change – change that, at least in some part, contributed to making the neighborhood more attractive for new investment – these residents show that spaces to exercise political agency were created purposefully. The CPNA was not a neutral or independent institution charged with weighing each resident's concerns equally; rather, actions and priorities were determined through collective organization. To equate the current moment of newcomer residents collectivizing to create an institution that serves *their* needs would be misguided, for it would ignore the prevailing power structures that privilege their interests based on Whiteness, affluence, and mobility.

Drawing on this history of building an organization, long-time and African American residents have begun waging their contestation of the new status quo through the creation of new civic spaces: CPNA, Inc. and *Moving with Change*. These actions put forward a meaning of Cleveland Park as a place of struggle and as part of an ongoing negotiation between competing interests of profit and low-middle income people (Brenner, Marcuse, & Mayer, 2011). The perceived 'failing' nature of the CPNA combined with denigrations of the knowledge and expressions of long-time residents prompted African American community leaders to create CPNA, Inc. in December 2015. They waited to announce this new organization until the CPNA held their new elections (where only White residents were running for officer position). In creating a new organization, the group of African American residents brought to the fore the tensions of the neighborhood, including racial tensions and divisions. Based on comments from its organizers, it formed knowingly – not naively – of the frustration it would prompt. The leaders believed this would be the best hope of building an organization to address the needs of "the majority of the community, like affordability and educational opportunity" (William,

personal correspondence). However, such a strategy to contest political displacement has not shown to be successful in other city neighborhoods undergoing gentrification (cf Martin, 2007).

Like CPNA, Inc., *Moving with Change* (MWC) was formed to address concerns of a particular demographic of the neighborhood that the organizers believed were not being prioritized by the original neighborhood association. As already described, the MWC meetings are coordinated by a team of four community members (three of whom eventually led the formation of CPNA, Inc.) and aim to provide education that will build the capacity of participants to advocate on their own behalf in the gentrifying environment – for example, learning what to consider when confronted with developers offering fast cash for their homes or how to avoid rising property taxes. The goals of MWC emerge from the social and professional positions of the organizers – two long-time African American residents who have been active in the civic life of the neighborhood and are well-connected to other African American property owners in Cleveland Park, and two newer African American residents, one in real estate and the other a developer. By focusing on the need for such education and intervention, MWC operates from a meaning of place (both the neighborhood and civic spaces) as increasingly exclusive of the low and moderate-income demographic.

Though MWC aims to lower displacement risk for homeowner residents, they frame the task in terms of adaptation – as though the market increases and private demand for the neighborhood are unstoppable and inevitable. They encourage individuals' to build capacity to stay-in-place by leveraging information about personal property value, seeking homeowners insurance, and engaging with political efforts geared at expanding property tax relief options. The focus on property tax abatement as the primary policy lever to prevent displacement is a departure from other strategies in the city that are focused on building and funding affordable

housing. In written feedback provided to MWC organizers, I posed the following concern:

> There was a woman in the audience at the March 28th meeting who said that she's a renter right now and would like to buy, but that she can't afford anything in the neighborhood. The response was that [one of the MWC organizers] is planning on building affordable housing, so she should hang on. Earlier in the meeting, however, the messaging was that there already is enough affordable housing in the neighborhood. Also, if people do sell their homes for fair market value, do you think they'll still be able to buy another house in the neighborhood (e.g., avoid displacement)? If not, then I think the messaging of "there's enough affordable housing" is a little misleading.

My question to the organizers reflected confusion about how they understand the current challenges and priorities for the neighborhood. Indeed, without consideration of these questions, MWC may further a discourse of 'neighborhood as inclusive' (e.g., by suggesting that affordable housing is not the concern) while excluding those who are most vulnerable for being displaced. They want their intervention to be immediately useful and relevant to current residents but their suggested strategies focus primarily on homeowners rather than renters, require resources on the part of residents (e.g., to buy insurance), and necessitate organized action on property tax abatement – an effort that is not likely to materialize in the short term.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The dominant meaning of Cleveland Park is a 'place of becoming', a terrain of possibility upon which the market will inevitably seize, and where private property ownership and individuals' action to 'improve' the neighborhood are antidotes to social and physical decay or disorder. Such a place meaning relies on particular narratives of the past and its stewards as dispensable. As Harvey describes, the hegemony of neoliberalism "has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world (2005, p. 3). Indeed, these market-based discourses naturalize development and make a goal for gentrification "common-sense" to achieve a universally desirable habitat. In so doing, they challenge longtime residents' claims to place based on their knowledge of and struggle for it as well as their ability to make decisions about and set priorities for its future.

Counter-discourses, though not necessarily expressed as visible activisms, dissent from hegemonic identity in multiple ways. They contest the market-based meanings of the neighborhood and the options as presented (e.g., to develop or decay); they denaturalize market forces and demonstrate the produced nature of socio-spatial patterns; they call attention to the racial ideologies that undergird development historically and currently; and they reveal an orientation to civic space that engages struggle rather than ignore power differentials. These counter-positions emphasize racial difference and the importance of pulling levers that remind of difference rather than submitting to color-blind discourses.

I have argued for the value in discerning symbolic and discursive resistances in order to understand the dynamics in neighborhoods that are in earlier stages of gentrification and where

institutionalized anti-gentrification efforts have not coalesced. This research does not suggest that such contestations can stand on their own to resist gentrification or that these efforts are pristine; gentrification is a complex political, economic, and social process that will not be subverted solely through discursive and symbolic contestations. However, in querying the place meanings and dynamics related to these meanings in neighborhoods, one can bring into view factors that could impact citizen-led efforts. These meanings and dynamics reveal the beliefs, knowledge, feelings, and experiences that individuals bring to their participation in neighborhood life or that are operating within participatory settings. Indeed, a growing body of literature argues for greater attention to the intersections of affect and emotion with deliberative rationality to understand active citizenship (Haggerty, 2003; Isin, 2004; Grundy & Boudreau, 2008). These meanings also elucidate ideologies; hegemony shapes ideology so pervasively, that a failure to scrutinize the ideologies being espoused might unknowingly reproduce the conditions of oppression we seek to contest and alter.

The MWC program is an opportune example of how well intentioned efforts might simply reinforce the status quo, do little to shift it, or strain the energies of community leaders. While they have stated a hope for MWC to stimulate greater democratic participation among African American and long-time residents in the neighborhood, the organizers themselves (who are also leaders of CPNA, Inc.) have had their energies strained by carrying the psychic burden of their struggling neighbors and being pulled in multiple directions between family, jobs, and community work. Seeing this, Rosalyn expressed her concern about the lack of coordinated leadership that she believes is needed to coalesce efforts that challenge unbridled development and gentrification:

> Where do you see [leadership and partnerships]? I mean, just to be honest, where
> do you see that? Except for people who are on the sidelines trying to accomplish

things or- and really trying to accomplish, but mostly trying to keep things from rolling off the track, the train from getting off the track, and just rolling on wherever it wants to go.

As described above, MWC does not appear to be challenging the direction of market-based development (on the track of gentrification); rather, the program forwards a notion that there are ways for long-time residents to benefit from it. The pressures of gentrification take a toll not only on residents at risk of displacement, but also on the organizers whose face burnout and on the imagination of more transformative alternatives.

From MWC also emerges a caution about efforts to attach African American identity to place meaning as a strategy of resistance. While spaces like MWC or CPNA, Inc. lift up the importance of African American history and struggle, they also may cover up intersecting class differences that are critical to experiences of neighborhoods. The MWC focus on homeowners, for instance, represents a set of priorities and risks that may be distinct from renters. Without addressing class-based divisions, efforts that appear to be "for the community" will continue to marginalize the most poor or working-class residents. Based on the anecdotes from research participants, however, there is some indication that attitudes towards social-class based exclusion (e.g., drug dealers) have shifted. Whereas in the past, concerned community members took action to drive out illicit activities, long-time and African American residents now opt to not-report illicit behaviors or form relationships with those engaged in drug activity to help them toward a different path (William, personal correspondence). Danielle, for instance, says she knows where the dope houses are and where the 'weed man' lives, but that they are not bothering anyone so she is not compelled to turn them in. Similarly, Jimmy talks about knowing where the dope houses are, and he simply avoids going around there or bothering anyone there. Indeed, without romanticizing drug activity in the neighborhood, these decisions to refrain from

reporting raise questions about how anti-gentrification discourses and efforts work to counter *both* class-based and race-based exclusions.

The ways residents make meaning of their neighborhood is symbolic of wider politics beyond the individual. D. Massey (2004) suggests there might "be a crucial political stake to challenge and change the hegemonic identity of place and the way in which the denizens of a particular locality imagine it and thereby avail themselves of the imaginative resource to reconstruct it" (p. 7). In Cleveland Park, this political stake of counter-hegemonic place meanings is to disrupt the normalization of gentrification. What becomes possible when gentrification is no longer imagined or acted upon as inevitable, beneficial for everyone, or political and socially neutral? Civic spaces in Cleveland Park could seize on the imaginative resources that become available. Given the divisions based on class and race, this will necessitate an ability to hear, appreciate, and respond to difference differently (Haraway, 1988; Young, 1999; Medina, 2013; Mouffe, 2013): neither to suppress it nor allow it to divide, to engage in understanding it while still keeping respectful distance, to consider the possibility of cooperation and work across it while holding space, too, for tensions and clashes.

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