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Urban Understandings: Exploring Potential Coercion
in Lincoln Park's Gentrification Process

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Departmental Honors Thesis
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
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Examination Date: 12 April 2023

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Abstract

While much research has been carried out on the topic of gentrification over the past several decades, little to no economic research has been conducted on the potential presence of coercion within the process. In this paper, we define coercion as any attempts by third parties, whether government or private entities, to artificially accelerate the natural housing cycle. In studying this, we examine Lincoln Park as a case study, a Chattanooga neighborhood that was once a bastion of culture and security for the Southern African American community, by employing a two-pronged approach. On the qualitative front, we interview community and city leaders, as well as employ investigative journalism in researching the existing literature, including books and newspapers, on the history of Lincoln Park. Quantitatively, we build and conduct a survey among the residents of the neighborhood, allowing us to run empirical analyses upon the data. Combing the two approaches, we construct a holistic study of the potential presence of coercion within Lincoln Park's housing and development process. In the end, while we find examples of coercive efforts on the part of the city of Chattanooga as it relates to Lincoln Park as recently as the past decade, these efforts do not seem aimed at accelerating the natural housing cycle, meaning they do not meet our criteria of coercion. Thus, as we have defined it, we do not find coercion within the context of Lincoln Park's gentrification process.

Keywords: gentrification, coercion, housing and development, Lincoln Park, Chattanooga

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Introduction

Gentrification is often associated with racism and marginalization, redlining and money-hungry politicians, much of this deserved. According to Merriam Webster, gentrification is defined as “a process in which a poor area (as of a city) experiences an influx of middle-class or wealthy people who renovate and rebuild homes and businesses, and which often results in an increase in property values and the displacement of earlier, usually poorer residents.”¹ Wealthy, typically White, people move in and kick out the unwealthy, typically Black, residents who have been living in the community for years and years. Due to the dynamics and the history of slavery and racism in the United States, it is easy to see why people would look at the word gentrification in a less-than-favorable light. However, as the subtext of this paragraph may hint, the true story and nature of gentrification is less straightforward.

In his “Old homes, externalities, and poor neighborhoods. A model of urban decline and renewal,” Stuart S. Rosenthal (2008) observes that “most low-income urban families in the US occupy old homes built originally for higher income households”² Houses go through a natural lifecycle that is often overlooked in both academic and non-academic discourse alike. According to Rosenthal, the average housing cycle lasts for one hundred years, meaning that a home that was built as a high-income residence will have gone from high- to mid- to low- and back to high-income again within a century’s time. For instance, Rosenthal finds that for, “the typical neighborhood in Philadelphia, a neighborhood’s relative economic status in 2000 is 95% back to where it began 100 years earlier in 1900.”³

¹ (Merriam Webster, n.d.)

² (Rosenthal, 2008, p. 833).

³ (Rosenthal, 2008, p. 821)

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In considering why this occurs, consider a home occupied by a high-income family. When the home is first built, it has a relatively high selling price. Keeping all things equal as far as the regional or countrywide housing market and inflation are concerned, the value will generally decline as the house ages. In this process, the high-income residents will move out and purchase another high-income home. In their place, middle-class residents will move in until the home degrades to the level that residing in the house is no longer worth the upkeep. Low-income residents move into a home that now has a low price. Given that houses in a neighborhood are typically built around the same time, houses in a neighborhood go through this process together.

The natural housing cycle is one that logically follows an understanding that capital depreciates over time. It just so happens that the very process that is often misconstrued as gentrification is a primary source of housing for low-income residents.⁴ The process of high-income homes transitioning to low-income residents is called filtering, which provides an explanation and a source of existing low-income housing. It is important to consider the full lifecycle. In the same way that a high-income area is going to be strongly indicative of natural degradation to come, so too is “the presence of ‘old’ housing... often a predictor of future demolitions, development of new housing, and gentrification.”⁵ Rosenthal continues, “In this regard, old housing should be associated with an increase in the future status of the neighborhood.” The reality of neighborhood cycles leads to almost a natural self-gentrification of neighborhoods. Homes eventually decay. When they do, their value is cheap and the services they offer are low, making them, quite literally, prime real estate for a developer. Additionally, since these homes were originally intended for upper-class residents, they are more likely to be

⁴ (Rosenthal, 2008, p. 824)

⁵ (Rosenthal, 2008, p. 825)

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located in desirable locations (such as riverfront property), driving their potential selling price high. Logically following the cycle, the low-income residents would then move into other low-income housing, recently left by middle-income occupants. The notion, derived chiefly from Rosenthal's work, that gentrification as the process has been described above is not an inherently malevolent force, is a critical building block of this research. However, the presence of a natural housing cycle may lead the curious to consider whether the cycle is ever intentionally sped up to benefit the interests of developers and city officials.

Think of the now-low-income housing sitting on a pretty piece of land. The houses have been significantly degraded from their initial high-income status, but they are not near the point of being condemned. The potential value this land holds may be enough to drive some who stand to gain from development to seek ways to move people out of their homes prematurely. The inspiration for this paper is in part born out of anecdotal reports of just that: coercive techniques aimed at moving low-income residents from their homes. Coercion, for the sake of this paper, is defined as attempts by third parties—government and developers—to artificially accelerate the natural housing cycle, to move residents out of their homes prematurely and deceptively for the gain of profit or agenda.

Our focus is on the Lincoln Park neighborhood in Chattanooga. We chose this neighborhood due to the outsized role it has played in Chattanooga's history and in the African American community's experience in the South. The neighborhood has turned from a thriving haven to one defined by potential neglect and marginalization. Its recent history (e.g., the past 50 years) is comprised of constant battles between neighborhood residents, city officials, and developers. This history, which will be discussed in further detail later in this work, makes it a prime candidate for coercion.

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This research consists of a two-pronged effort. The first is comprised of qualitative interviews conducted with community leaders and city officials, undertaken with the desire to garner a narrative history and future outlook of Lincoln Park and the forces at work within it. The second prong is a quantitative one. In it, we surveyed residents in Lincoln Park to quantitatively test hypotheses.

Literature Review

Before delving into the details of how third parties' interests may induce coercive pressure that disrupts the natural housing cycle described earlier, it is important to define gentrification. While much of the common discourse surrounding gentrification, at least in the United States, revolves around race (i.e., the process of White people "pushing out" people of other ethnicities), McKinnish, Walsh, and White (2010) (henceforth MWW) find that ethnic minorities are often on the receiving end of gentrification, as well as the negative end. The issue, they argue, is that past researchers have erroneously limited their definition of gentrification, thereby limiting the scope of their research and perpetuating misunderstanding of the nuances of the gentrification process.⁶ While race is an important element of gentrification, gentrification's definition should not by it be limited. Rather than using ethnicity as a qualifying criterion to determine if an area is being gentrified (e.g., the percentage of White households in a neighborhood must increase by 10% for it to be considered gentrifying), MWW define

⁶ (McKinnish, Walsh, & White, 2010, p. 183)

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gentrifying neighborhoods as low-income neighborhoods that undergo an increase in average family income of at least \$10,000 within the span of a decade.⁷

The methods used by the researchers are difficult to emulate. In its publicly available form, Census Data provides good macro-snapshots of tract (i.e., neighborhood) health, but it does not allow researchers to track who enters and leaves the neighborhood, neither from nor to where residents are relocating. By contrast, MWW use confidential personally identifiable Census Bureau data, allowing them to track movements.

Interestingly, MWW find “little evidence to suggest that Black or Hispanic householders are disproportionately exiting the gentrifying neighborhoods.”⁸ Rather, the division between stayers and leavers seems to fall along the lines of educational achievement. MWW repeatedly return throughout the paper to the finding that White householders are neither the only benefactors of gentrification nor the only source of increasing income. When looking at the overall income gain in the gentrifying tracts, Black householders with a high school degree outpace their White college-educated counterparts by accounting for 33% of the total income gain, compared with the 20% contributed by the latter, more educated group.⁹ These data provide a sharp contrast to the story of gentrification that is often told.

But why do the contributions of Black residents with a high school degree outweigh White residents with a college degree? MWW propose that gentrifying neighborhoods are likely to draw middle-class Black residents (and current residents) for two reasons. For one, “gentrification might bring new proximity to job opportunities, a larger tax base and better public

⁷ (McKinnish, Walsh, & White, 2010, p. 183)

⁸ (McKinnish, Walsh, & White, 2010, p. 189)

⁹ (McKinnish, Walsh, & White, 2010, p. 190)

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services, improved retail environment, and other changes in neighborhood quality such as reductions to crime.”¹⁰ By providing amenities, gentrification may negate certain costs (implicit and explicit) for an existing resident, enabling and encouraging them to stay. However, an even more potent driver is the desire by ethnic minorities to “raise children among peers with similar or ethnic backgrounds.”¹¹ This is a point echoed in other works as well, specifically that it is the “ethnic flavor” of neighborhoods that attracts some gentrifiers.¹²

Finally, in the predominately non-Black gentrifying tracts, college educated Whites accounted for 38% of the income gains, compared with high school-educated Blacks’ 9.1%. This is contrasted with the situation found in the predominately Black gentrifying tracts, in which college-educated Whites contributed only 12.6% share of the income gains, far behind high-school educated Blacks who contributed 45.4% of the income gains.¹³ In the same tracts, college-educated Whites experienced a population growth from 1.8% to 3.8% while the population share of Black high school-educated residents grew from 38.5% to 45.7%.¹⁴

Another factor that warrants particular attention includes the presence—or lack—of access to public transportation. Indeed, access to and cost of transportation, both public and private, are key drivers of agglomeration. With the advent of the car, middle- and upper-class citizens left the expensive city in the great exodus to the suburbs where the cheaper land was flowing with milk and honey. In their stead, the poor flocked to the center and filled the gap left by the higher income classes, an idea summarized by the Alonzo-Muth-Mills (AMM) model.¹⁵ In

¹⁰ (McKinnish, Walsh, & White, 2010, p. 182)

¹¹ (McKinnish, Walsh, & White, 2010, p. 182)

¹² (Helms, 2003, p. 486)

¹³ (McKinnish, Walsh, & White, 2010, p. 191)

¹⁴ (McKinnish, Walsh, & White, 2010, p. 191)

¹⁵ (Glaeser, Kahn, & Rappaport, 2008, p. 7)

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more technical wording, the AMM operates under the assumption of a high level of income elasticity of demand for land. However, in accounting for the urban centralization of the poor, Glaeser et al. (2008) estimate that the income elasticity of demand for land is outpaced by the presence of public transportation by a multiple of two to three times.¹⁶ In other words, the income elasticity of demand for land is “too low” for urban poverty to be attributable to wealthy individuals’ desire to live where the land is cheap.¹⁷ The researchers test this claim by analyzing whether or not metropolitan areas that experience very little comparative use of public transportation are marked by a concentration of the rich living in close proximity to the city center. In looking at the use of cars and subways in newer cities, which are designed with automobile transportation in mind, the researchers found statistically significant correlations that demonstrate higher-income residents are more likely to live in the CBDs (Central Business Districts) of cities with a low use of public transit than those with a high use.¹⁸ It follows that the poor do not live near the CBD in high concentrations because, without the public transit, there is not a strong reason for them to congregate in the city center. This would explain anecdotal examples of “White flight” in cities like Jackson, Mississippi in the 1990s, where wealthy White residents moved out of the city to the suburbs, claiming it was due to poor Black residents were moving in.

By contrast, Helms (2003) finds that close proximity to the CBD and a high use of mass public transit lead to an increased likelihood of renovations (i.e., gentrification).¹⁹ The same, he finds, is true of general neighborhood amenities like parks. How, then, can the same factors that

¹⁶ (Glaeser, Kahn, & Rappaport, 2008, p. 2)

¹⁷ (Glaeser, Kahn, & Rappaport, 2008, p. 8)

¹⁸ (Glaeser, Kahn, & Rappaport, 2008, p. 18)

¹⁹ (Helms, 2003, p. 496)

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lead to an increased presence of the poor also lead to an increase in renovations—an indicator of an incoming wave of the rich? Conceivably, other factors, such as public amenities may attract the rich to the downtown area. When these forces are strong enough and the land cheap enough, this combination may lead to an increased interest in the rich desiring to move downtown again. Regardless of how one connects the pieces, this much is clear: access to mass public transit is important enough to the poor that it speaks causally to their presence in the CBD *and* such amenities also serve as an indicator, though perhaps not the strongest and certainly not the only, that a neighborhood is likely to undergo renovation and gentrification, especially if other factors are present.²⁰

The implications for a study conducted in Lincoln Park are clear. Public transportation really matters and must be focused on, which is why we structure questions surrounding it specifically into our survey. Public transportation is critical to low-income communities and disrupting residents' access to such an amenity may go a long way in “encouraging” residents to leave the area. On the flip side, researchers should keep in mind the potential pull that transportation may have on high-income residents.

Methods

The roots of this paper extend back three years to a literature review first completed with the intent of surveying the existing academic work completed on gentrification for the purpose of identifying gaps in the literature. Upon finding a conspicuous lack of economic research on the presence of potential coercion within gentrification, we began to work through ways to study the

²⁰ For a more in-depth analysis of all such factors as laid out in Helms' paper, including those of less relevance to this study, I refer readers to Table 5 in his article.

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phenomena. One of the biggest difficulties with this endeavor lies in the fact that there is no indicator for coercion. While anecdotal stories fall short of capturing an objective, actionable, and repeatable conclusion, quantitative analyses often find themselves groping for a target. How one empirically measures the presence of coercion and the extent thereof is a difficult undertaking. As such, we decided to take a two-pronged approach, attempting to combine the benefits of both while mitigating their downsides.

We set off with the intent of conducting interviews with a slate of community and government leaders. This we aimed to pair with a survey to be conducted among residents in Lincoln Park upon which we would conduct empirical analyses. Despite multiple attempts to reach out, the limited response among community and government leaders forced us to pivot, focusing our qualitative efforts upon an evaluation of the history of Lincoln Park and claims made among residents and leaders as recorded in news stories and reports with in-person excerpts from interviews included along the way. The news reports were gathered from the Chattanooga Public Library where they were archived.

On the quantitative front, we set to work creating the survey document we would use to interview residents. Lincoln Park is a neighborhood that has been promised a lot in the past with little changing in residents' eyes. As such residents are often naturally skeptical of forays by outsiders into the neighborhood, making it necessary to walk the delicate line between ascertaining the data and information we need and being sure not to spook residents by asking questions too directly. Because of this, we refrained from asking questions such as "What is your income," and instead asked questions like "How many times do you go to the grocery store?" "Where do you shop?" and "What is your profession?" In asking such questions, we lose the

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directness of response, but we maintain contact with the resident throughout the entirety of the survey, also raising the likelihood of accurate responses.

We began with two sets of hypotheses. Before looking at any intent to speed up the gentrification process, it is necessary to establish the baseline of whether or not there is any presence of gentrification in the neighborhood. Thus, our first set of hypotheses revolves around the question of gentrification, itself. Our null hypothesis 1 is “Lincoln Park is not under a state of gentrification” and our alternate hypothesis 1 is “Lincoln Park is under a state of gentrification.” Our second set of hypotheses then builds upon these, moving to ask about the presence of coercion. Our null hypothesis 2 is “There is no coercion present in Lincoln Park’s gentrification process,” which is accompanied by its pairing alternate hypothesis 2 “There is coercion present in Lincoln Park’s gentrification process.” As indicated by the structure of both sets of hypotheses, the burden of proof lies upon the conclusions that 1) gentrification is occurring in Lincoln Park and 2) there is coercion present in the process.

Each of the questions in the survey centers around these guiding hypotheses.

Question 1: Did you grow up in Chattanooga?

The goal of this question is to establish a timeline of this resident’s perceptions of the neighborhood and its position within the larger city context. This allows us to better understand the long-term knowledge this particular resident may have.

Question 1a: If Yes... Where in Chattanooga?

This question will give context to the resident’s background. One of the ways this is accomplished is by pairing this with the first part of question 1 and the demographics questions. Understanding where and when a person grew up in Chattanooga provides insight on their

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potential socioeconomic background. This is also very important in understanding the resident's potential connection to the community in question.

Question 1b: If No, When did you move here?

Similar to question 1a, this allows us to draw larger conclusions about the resident's background when coupled with other information. These conclusions can not only help understand the resident's connection with the community, but they can also help illuminate potential biases on the part of the respondent.

Question 2: How long have you lived at this residence?

This serves similar overarching purposes as Questions 1, 1a, and 1b, with more specificity. Not only will it help us calculate a working turnover rate—which is important when evaluating the development process, it sets up the following questions in this section.

Question 3: If applicable, where did you live before?

Question 3 is important in seeing the large picture of the development process. Are residents moving in from other low-income neighborhoods or are they moving in from higher neighborhoods at a significant rate?

Question 4: If applicable, how has the neighborhood changed since you first moved here?

This question gets at both the first and second set of hypotheses in a qualitative way. If there is a change, what has that been like? Has it been noticeable? Do residents resent these changes? These are important questions when discerning that nature of change.

Question 5: How would you describe the neighborhood as it is today?

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This question speaks to the second set of hypotheses in an indirect way: is there a sense of ownership and responsibility on the part of residents? Are the first things they say positive or negative?

Question 6: Have you ever considered leaving this house?

This question both evaluates the contentedness of residents with their current situation but also sets up its important follow-ups.

Question 6a: If Yes.. Why?

It is crucial to know where there have been forces exerting a pushing force on residents or if they are considering a move for “typical” reasons facing the everyday home owner and renter.

Question 6b: If Yes... Where would you move?

We are seeking to again understand what the motivations are for residents considering moving. It raises significant questions of the health of the neighborhood if long-term residents are looking to move to neighborhoods of a similar socioeconomic status.

Question 7: If you left this neighborhood, what would you miss the most?

This question aims to identify those aspects of the neighborhood most important to residents. What do they look back on with nostalgia, what do they really desire? Hopefully, this will provide insight into the strength of the outward-pushing forces.

Question 9: How tight-knit would you describe the community as it currently is on a scale of 1-5?

Does the resident have social roots to the community? Is it a unique bastion of similar backgrounds or is it becoming more foreign to long-term residents? These questions are

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answered by the data provided by this question when viewed in conjunction with the insights derived from more historically focused questions found earlier in the survey.

Question 10: [Responding from the options of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree evaluate the following statement]: “Since moving to the neighborhood, the community has grown closer.”

This provides more insight to question number 9, demonstrating a perceived trend to the current state.

Question 11: [Responding from the options of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree evaluate the following statement]: “Since moving to the neighborhood, many of the core families in the community are still here.”

This question serves to further evaluate the long-term change of the neighborhood, specifically in its social composition. It provides another angle at evaluating the unity of the community.

Question 12: [Responding from the options of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree evaluate the following statement]: “Since moving to the neighborhood, the demographics have shifted from African American to Caucasian.”

Gentrification is a more complex issue than it is usually viewed. This research project will view gentrification as a change in average income of a community within a certain amount of time regardless of the change in ethnic composition. The purpose of this is to garner a more comprehensive view of the development process, but it does not mean that ethnicity is to be ignored. This question helps take the our understanding of a potential gentrification process to the next level: who is moving in and who is moving out?

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Question 13: [Responding from the options of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree evaluate the following statement]: “Since moving to the neighborhood, wealthy residents make up a higher percentage of the neighborhood than lower income residents.”

This question helps understand residents’ view of the housing development process in their neighborhood. Recall that the definition of gentrification used in this study is based on income rather than ethnicity, so this question is very important.

Question 14: Do you rent or own this property?

Understanding whether someone owns or rents a property not only allows gives us more insight into the person we’re talking to—which is in and of itself very important to developing an equitable picture of the situation—but it also highlights potential vulnerabilities that may be coercively exploited. Without this information, we will not be able to ask the specific questions seen in the next nine questions.

Question 15: If renting, on a scale of 1-5, which number most closely matches your view of landlord, with 1 being the most negative and 5 being the most positive?

This question gets at the second set of hypotheses. Does the resident have a good relationship with their landlord where they feel heard or is there resentment?

Question 16: If renting, on a scale of 1-5, how responsive is your landlord when repairs are needed, with 1 being the least responsive and 5 being the most responsive?

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One potential source of coercion is landlords attempting to get renters to break their lease by failing to maintain their facilities. This question also speaks to the quality of life residents have.

Question 17: If renting, has your landlord ever tried to evict you?

This, along with the question 18, speaks directly to any potential instances of coercion that may have occurred.

Question 18: If yes, may I ask on what grounds they attempted to evict you?

See above.

Question 19: If renting, may I ask what the ethnicity of your landlord is?

This question allows us to evaluate whether there is an ethnical imbalance between landlords and renters within the macro context of a neighborhood. It is important to note that this is not a standalone question. Rather, it is a piece to a puzzle that can only be put together with the other information gathered in this survey.

Question 20: If owning, have you been asked to sell?

This question helps give us an idea of how much outside interest has demonstrated for residences in this community. Is there high demand? If there is, this can signal a situation attractive to people willing to use coercive measures to capitalize on the market opportunities.

Question 20a: How often have you been asked to sell?

This takes question 20 a step further in helping us estimate how much demand the market has for these residences.

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Question 21: Have you considered selling?

This helps us estimate the amount of commitment to the community. Coupled with the previous two questions also allows demonstrates any contrast that might exist between outsiders' demand for the homes and residents' desires to sell their homes.

Question 22: Would you like to sell?

Questions 22 and 23 give us a better understanding of residents' circumstances when it pertains to the difference between outsiders' and residents' interests. It goes even deeper in the logic created by questions 20, 20a, and 21.

Question 23: What is the primary factor keeping you from selling?

See above.

Question 24: Which of the following utilities does your household pay for?

Question 24 is similar to question 16 insofar as it gets at the quality of life residents have in this community and . This is also a question that helps us to roughly estimate the resident's income when coupled with other questions—a touchy subject when asked for outright.

Question 25: Excluding times stemming from overdue bills, how often do you experience outages in your utilities?

This question's reasoning is the same as that of question 24. Question 26 also falls into this category.

Question 26: How quickly are your power outages typically resolved?

See above.

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Question 27: How often do you shop for groceries?

This is similar to the second motivation listed under question 24. The purpose is to extrapolate estimated income. This, combined with a desire to understand the potential presence of a food desert—a sign coercion may be in existence—is the full motivation in asking this question, along with Questions 28, 29, 29a, and 30.

Question 28: Where do you typically shop for your groceries?

See the explanation listed for Question 27.

Question 29: How do you typically get to the grocery store?

See the explanation listed for Question 27.

Question 29a: If by bus, how often do the buses run?

See the explanation listed for Question 27.

Question 29b: If by bus, do the buses run on time?

See the explanation listed for Question 27.

Question 30: How long is your commute to the store?

See the explanation listed for Question 27.

Question 31: I plan to talk to city officials. Is there anything you would like for me to pass on?

The goal of this project is not to check off a graduation requirement. The goal is to help people. Facilitation of sentiments is a way to that, which is what this question seeks to do.

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Question 32: Have city officials running for office come to the neighborhood or your door to campaign?

This question serves to highlight the interest in the community those in power—or those seeking power—have. This again serves as an indicator for potential coercion.

Question 32a: If yes, do you remember their names?

In our experience interacting with residents in the communities we are seeking to study, there is often resentment toward city officials due to promises not kept. If there is not resentment, which is to be measured in questions 32a and 32b, this can serve as a sign that there is not any coercion present—at least not any that is discernible by residents.

Question 32b: If yes, On a scale of 1-5, how would you describe your views of these city officials with 1 being the least favorable and 5 being the most favorable? If you do not have an opinion, please say “No opinion”

See above.

Question 33: What is your age?

When studying a potential gentrification process, demographics are crucial. While one can have a good idea of whether or not there is gentrification present based solely on income and its change, having more demographic information paints a more holistic picture, which will help ensure we have as much of the story as possible. We want to remove the presence of assumptions, replacing them with data.

Question 34: How many people live in your household?

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See the explanation for Question 33.

Question 35: If applicable, how many school-age children do you have?

See the explanation for Question 33.

Question 35a: If any, where do they attend school?

See the explanation for Question 33.

Question 36: Are you currently employed?

See the explanation for Question 33.

Question 36a: If yes, what is your profession?

See the explanation for Question 33.

Question 36b: If yes, how many jobs do you work?

See the explanation for Question 33.

Question 37: What is your highest level of completed education or professional training?

See the explanation for Question 33.

Question 38: How would you best describe yourself?

See the explanation for Question 33.

After designing the survey and receiving IRB approval, we created a list of residences in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. We used the neighborhood boundaries listed on Zillow.com. Because there is not a list of addresses on the website, we went house-to-house on Google Earth, manually typing out each address on an Excel spreadsheet. Each address was then assigned a

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number and the list was put through a random number generator to ensure statistical randomness in the canvassing process. At this point, it was not yet known how many houses would need to be surveyed to attain the desired sample size. The now-randomized list was pulled by groups of 40 into another spreadsheet and reordered by street number for the canvassing process. We then went door-to-door surveying residents. Residents were provided the options of filling out the survey on their own by hand or by answering questions audibly read by the surveyor. 4 of the 40 respondents selected the latter option. The choice was given in an effort to expedite the survey process and further encourage residential response.

Upon concluding canvassing, the quantitative survey responses were recorded digitally while the qualitative responses were transcribed before being categorized and coded in preparation of empirical analyses.²¹ Categories were created based on the residents' responses to open-ended questions, which were then used to code each of the responses.

For Question 1, which asked "Did you grow up in Chattanooga?", we used the census tract numbers that coincided with the location residents provided. This not only allowed us to run empirical analyses based on the responses, but it also provides deeper insight into the demographics and economics of the regions from which Lincoln Park residents are moving. The next qualitative question, Question 4, asked "If applicable, how has the neighborhood changed since you first moved here?" The responses were categorized in seven sections: 1) Gentrification 2) New Construction 3) Lost its character 4) No change 5) Other 6) People moving out and 7) Has become safer and more peaceful. Categories 1, 2, and 6 may seem quite similar, but there are important nuances present. "Gentrification" includes responses that specifically mentioned either

²¹ (Srnka & Koezsegi, 2007)

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gentrification explicitly or some sort of outside-influenced pushing out of residents. “New Construction” indicates that the respondent answered by stating that new construction was the biggest change that had occurred—there was no mention made of any forces at work in the new construction. Similarly, “People moving out” includes responses that talked about people leaving as their main theme, but, unlike category 1, no mention was made to any duplicitous causes for the moves. This delineation is important as the distinction between an observation and an insinuation of darker forces at work reveals much about the perspective of the resident.

Question 5 open-endedly asked “How would you describe the neighborhood as it is today?” For this question, we classified the responses along five categories, those being: 1) Quiet, safe 2) Gentrified 3) Other, generally positive 4) Other, generally negative and 5) Neutral. Numbers 1 and 2 were separated from three and four due to their frequency of occurrence (especially number 1) and significance to the survey question (name number 2). Question number 6 asked the resident why they would leave if they had previously stated they had considered leaving. The question’s respective categories were 1) Need more space 2) Want to purchase rather than rent 3) Neutral/ Miscellaneous 4) Negative gentrifying changes and 5) Negative non-gentrifying neighborhood factors. The distinction between numbers 4 and 5 is similar to the notes made on previous questions. Number 4 includes responses that specifically mention some sort of ill-intent in the housing process or that include the word “gentrification,” while those questions that fall under number 5’s category make no such claim or insinuation. The follow-up to Question 6a—Question 6b—asks residents who stated they had considered moving where it is they would relocate. The responses fall into the categories of 1) Within Chattanooga 2) Unsure 3) To another city 4) To the country 5) To another house within Lincoln Park 6) Anywhere with more space 7) Out of state and 8) The suburbs.

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The response categories to Question 7, which asked respondents “If you left this neighborhood, what would you miss the most?” were 1) The neighbors 2) Convenience of location 3) Nothing 4) The house 5) The quiet and safety and 6) The nostalgia. Question 19 asked “If renting, may I ask what the ethnicity of your landlord is?” There were four response categories: 1) White 2) Black 3) Don’t know and 4) Conglomerate. “Conglomerate” in this case means the respondent stated they rent from a corporation rather than an individual landlord, meaning that the question of ethnicity is not able to be answered in a binary manner. These responses, albeit limited in number, provided additional, unexpected insight, further highlighting some of the benefits of qualitative questions. Question 23, which asks residents “What is the primary factor keeping you from selling?” received responses that fell into 8 categories: 1) Market conditions 2) Family history of house 3) Convenience 4) Remodeling 5) Oppression 6) Nothing 7) Unreasonable offers and 8) Family. Response categories 4 and 5 warrant some light explanation, both of which received only one response. Question 4 included a response in which a resident stated they were currently remodeling, which is why they would not move. Question 5 involved a response in which the respondent stated that banks motivated by racism were the reason the resident was unable to move.

Question 31, “I plan to talk to city officials. Is there anything you would like for me to pass on?” received a wide range of interesting responses. There ended up being 11 categories: 1) Grocery Store 2) Ineffective improvements 3) Help for homeless 4) Roads/ Speeding/ Speedbumps on Scruggs/ Sidewalk/ Parking 5) Stopping gentrification 6) Clean up 7) Residents won’t sell 8) Improve the community 9) Low wages 10) Issues with old houses 11) Market prices. Category 1 was a frequent response among respondents. “Grocery Store” includes responses where residents stated they desired a closer grocery store to the neighborhood. Category 2, “Ineffective

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improvements,” are responses where residents said that the changes the government had made in the neighborhood were not effective. Category 7 includes a response in which a resident desired to tell city officials that there were residents who were planning not to sell.

For the sake of residents’ privacy, the list of responses to questions 32a, 35a, and 36a will not be listed here due to the potential identifiability from the specific responses.

Qualitative Investigation

In 1630, John Winthrop, in addressing his Puritan brethren as they, fleeing religious persecution in England, sought to begin their voyage to the New World, famously marked the new civilization as a “city upon a hill.”²² Looking back through the annals of the past 100 years, the same may be said of Lincoln Park. In a world of southern segregation, the options and prospects of young African Americans were severely limited. “Separate but equal” failed to live up to the latter half of its phrasing from water fountains to buses. Enter Lincoln Park. Upon a cornfield that had been deemed unsuitable for use as a tuberculosis hospital, the neighborhood and its attached park of the same name was christened in 1918 with great promise of being a place of security for the African American community.²³ Twenty years later, it was clear that it had lived up to the excitement. Resident Ruth Thomas fondly reminisced in a 1995 *Chattanooga Times* column, “Everything we needed was in that park... Everybody went there. It was very family-oriented, and back then families were strong and tight. Everybody knew everybody.”²⁴ One cannot truly begin to understand what Mrs. Thomas meant in saying that the African American community had everything they needed in that park until reading what was included in

²² (Winthrop, 1630)

²³ (Shearer, 1998)

²⁴ (Casteel, 1995)

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the park. Included in the park were clay tennis courts, baseball fields, amusement park rides, including a Ferris Wheel and swing ride, a dance hall, soul-food restaurant, a small zoo stocked with monkeys and a bear, a sunken garden, and a small golf course, to name a few of its features.²⁵ And these amenities were not your typical example of “separate but equal” staples. The baseball fields were equipped with floodlights—the only one of its kind with features like these available to African Americans in the South—that attracted players from all over, including Hall of Fame legends such as Willie Mays and Jackie Robinson.²⁶ The amenities were of such quality that buses would line up from Atlanta and surrounding cities so that southern African Americans could take part in the festivities.²⁷ The *pièce de résistance*, the crown jewel of the park, was the Olympic-sized swimming pool located upon the grounds, “the first and only Olympic-sized swimming pool for African Americans in the South.”²⁸ Upon closer consideration, it became apparent that Lincoln Park, with all of its attractants, fell in line with the rest of amenities often afforded African Americans of this era in that it, too, failed to follow the dictum of “separate but equal.” But in a rare occurrence, it was because the African Americans’ “collective backyard” outshined the amenities available in many of the surrounding parks and recreation areas for White residents. The aforementioned swimming pool and bathhouse, which was funded by city and federal Work Progress Administration (WPA) funds and completed in 1938, dwarfed the large pool found in adjacent Whites-only Warner Park.²⁹ To give a hint as to the size and significance of the park, on one July 4th day of festivities, a crowd in the magnitude of 15,000 people were expected to be at the park to celebrate.³⁰ Lincoln Park was the place to be

²⁵ (Casteel, 1995)

²⁶ (Knapp, 2018, p. 82)

²⁷ (Shearer, 1998)

²⁸ (Knapp, 2018, p. 81)

²⁹ (Shearer, 1998)

³⁰ (Shearer, 1998)

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for African American southerners. This southern Harlem—both the park and neighborhood—were a light shining brightly against the dark night of segregation. But it is when the day comes that the light begins to lose its comparative brilliance.

While the end of segregation heralded the beginning of momentous times for the African American community and the country as a whole, it also signaled the beginning of Lincoln Park's decline. When in 1967, freshman Mayor Ralph Kelley announced all city amenities "open to all," it also meant that Lincoln Park, the locale that had stood as the city shining upon the hill, began to grow dim as money was reinvested towards facilities such as Warner Park.³¹³² The community also began to decline as "the results of African American outmigration included the breakdown of what had been historical, centralized, tight-knit communities."³³ This combination of a disinvestment of funds and of people led to a general degradation in the status of the park. Eventually, city officials saw little-to-no value left in the park and no longer saw the park as having purpose in its own right. The *Chattanooga Times* would go on to report: "The City Commissioner said the use of Lincoln Park has been gradually phased out, except for two ball fields there, with the recreational needs of the community being served at the nearby Carver Center and Warner Park. The Lincoln Park swimming pool has been long closed. The tennis courts have not been repaired because new and better ones are available at Carver Center and Warner Park. And the little-used recreation center at Lincoln Park has finally been closed."³⁴ These remarks by the county commissioner, however, overlook and greatly underestimate the importance and significance that Lincoln Park had in the minds of the African American

³¹ (1963-1969 Ralph H. Kelley)

³² (Knapp, 2018, p. 162)

³³ (Knapp, 2018, p. 162)

³⁴ (Wilcox, 1979)

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community in Chattanooga. They also overlooked the impact divestment of city funds away from the park had on the park's declining status in a self-fulfilling city prophecy. While segregation may have technically ended in 1967, the effects the years of "separate but equal" did not dissipate overnight, making it important to keep southern Harlem alive and well. Nonetheless, the decline of Lincoln Park would leave it open to two primary challenges that would shape the community for the next half century: Erlanger and Central Avenue.³⁵

Lincoln Park's history cannot be understood without an awareness of Erlanger Medical Center. The two have always been neighbors, but in the early 1980s, Erlanger was looking to expand. For hospital administrators, the public space available at Lincoln Park was an alluring possibility. In looking to expand, the hospital bought up 21 lots in the surrounding area beginning in the late 1970s, only a decade after integration, nearly a dozen of which were located in the Lincoln Park neighborhood.³⁶ It was at this time that the hospital entered into negotiations with the city for a land swap. The hospital would deed land in Alton Park to the city. In return, the city would hand over 10 acres of land located near the hospital: Lincoln Park. Though Erlanger had already been storing their equipment on a portion of the park land, Hamilton County had transferred all of the park to Erlanger by 1981. As Elizabeth Knapp reports, "By 1985, Erlanger Medical Center's campus had expanded by 500,000 square feet. The additional square footage included a 1,200-car parking garage, two multipurpose buildings, five additional

³⁵ It is important to note that the purpose of this study is not to provide a comprehensive review of the history of Lincoln Park and, most pertinently, the detailed efforts its residents took to protect their neighborhood and park. Instead, our purpose is to study examples of potential coercion and to provide the historical context needed to do so faithfully. For a more in-depth study of the former, we refer the reader to the primary newspaper sources and to Courtney Elizabeth Knapp's 2018 *Constructing the Dynamo of Dixie*.

³⁶ (Sprayberry, 1995)

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floors above the Children's Hospital, a combination energy plant and laundry facility, and six additional floors to the west wing of the medical center."³⁷

It is difficult to overstate the impact the removal of their park, once a prominent symbol of African American cohesiveness and victory in the midst of segregation, had on residents. A careful reading of residents' stories, which can be found in newspaper articles archived in the Chattanooga Public Library or an engagement of in-person conversations with residents, will quickly bring an observer to the understanding that the residents of the neighborhood view the park and residential area as one and the same. The park should be viewed as an extension of the neighborhood itself, as a neighborhood amenity would. The park then immediately is viewed to affect neighborhood morale and property value, both of which are factors involved in gentrification and certainly in any efforts that may be undertaken to coerce residents to leave their homes prematurely. As the reader will find as this discourse continues, the line between the park and neighborhood is so blurred that being able to make a distinction between the fate of the two is next to impossible. While this study will not provide an in-depth account of the efforts residents took to fight for their park, it must be noted that they fought vehemently for decades. This was not merely a park. Lincoln Park was part of home. Community leader, Bessie Smith, who was lovingly referred to as "Mother" by Lincoln Park residents, said, "We were always close neighbors, but we didn't see the need to come together until Erlanger started buying up all the homes."³⁸ Residents coalesced around a common goal and rallied for their neighborhood, working to fix up houses and band together to keep more homes from being sold.

³⁷ (Knapp, 2018, p. 164)

³⁸ (Sprayberry, 1995)

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Though the relationship between the neighborhood and the hospital has been rocky throughout the past half century, there have been bright spots. After Lincoln Park residents banded together in the mid-80s, the hospital agreed to refrain from continuing to encroach upon the neighborhood. In the early '90s, the hospital founded the Erlanger Community Partnership (ECP), which had the goal of “restoring a portion of the historic parks into a usable ‘public’ space.”³⁹ Using \$30,000 in funds from the City’s Department of Economic and Community Development, the ECP deeded back a small piece of land to the city in order to build a replica of Lincoln Park’s original stone archway, installed a basketball court and tennis courts, and installed picnic tables and grills. The agreement between the Lincoln Park neighborhood and the ECP was that the Lincoln Park Neighborhood Improvement League, a neighborhood task force founded and comprised of Lincoln Park residents, would keep up the condition of the grounds.⁴⁰

Even with improvements made by the hospital, it was clear to residents that the park and the neighborhood were not what they used to be. As one *Chattanooga Times Free Press* reporter put it, “Since [the time of the land swap], Erlanger has allowed residents to use the park for picnics and occasional neighborhood meetings but has made clear that the land is still its property. Erlanger has required the neighborhood association to purchase liability insurance for any events held in the park if more than 10 people will attend.”⁴¹ As one resident we talked to reported, that liability insurance costs an excess of \$400 per event. The above-referenced article goes on to describe an event requested by an activist group “that encourages low-income residents to organize to oppose racism and poverty” with an expected tally of 400 to 500 people in attendance. Erlanger then marked off the Park with yellow construction tape and stationed

³⁹ (Knapp, 2018, p. 168)

⁴⁰ (Knapp, 2018, p. 168)

⁴¹ (Johnson, 2016)

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security guards at the entrance to keep people from accessing the Park on the day of the event. “Making things worse... [the next day], a group of young White men and women played kickball and bicycle polo in the park with no interference from security guards.”⁴² This served as another example to the residents that their park had been taken from them, their stake in their community removed.

Lincoln Park’s story with Erlanger does not end there. In 2013, Mayor Andy Berke announced that he had negotiated an agreement with the hospital for a new land swap, one that would involve the hospital donating five acres of the original park to the Trust for Public Land, which would restore the property before giving it to the city, which would keep it up as a public city park.⁴³ Though the hospital’s Board of Directors had not yet approved the swap, they would later go on to do so. The promise had been made that Lincoln Park residents would finally receive part of their park back. Though it was only half of what had originally comprised the park, it was a victory nonetheless.

This paper is being written in 2023, a decade after then-Mayor Andy Berke first made the promise “that the land under his feet would once again belong to the community.”⁴⁴ As the park stands today, the basketball court built for the neighborhood in the nineties is an Erlanger parking lot devoid of any hoops, the tennis courts are nowhere to be found, the stone picnic tables are broken, and the grills in disrepair. Lincoln Park residents, still having to pay liability insurance for gatherings of more than 10 people, retired their annual neighborhood gatherings during the Covid-19 pandemic. And the land still remains under Erlanger’s ownership. For a neighborhood used to false promises, the results of Mayor Berke’s remarks come as no surprise. Yet, it is

⁴² (Johnson, 2016)

⁴³ (Lukachick & Putman, 2013)

⁴⁴ (Lukachick & Putman, 2013)

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important to record that Erlanger has not been the only key hurdle Lincoln Park residents have looked to take on.

Shortly before Erlanger would petition the city government to cede Lincoln Park in a land swap, County Commissioner Conrad remarked, “After studying all aspects I feel compelled to reject the destruction of Lincoln Park and the devastation of the Fairhills-Riverview section of North Chattanooga. I am flatly opposed to this route for several reason. First, people are my top priority. Secondly, there are other, better alternatives. Third, we must preserve and improve existing park space in our city. Most people want progress. So do I. But at what price? I am unwilling, in the guise of progress, to desecrate our environment.”⁴⁵ The commissioner was responding to a 1974 request by state-employed engineering firm Hensley Schmidt Inc to declare Lincoln Park as “surplus” land so that Central Avenue may be extended through the existing park land.⁴⁶ With the commissioner’s dissent, the Central Avenue extension plan was canned and Lincoln Park residents turned their attention to protecting against Erlanger’s advancements. That was until a 2011 *Chattanooga Times Free Press* article announced the city’s plan to extend Central Avenue through Lincoln Park to Amnicola Highway via federal funding. The neighborhood that was to be affected by such an extension found out the same way that everyone else did: through the newspaper.⁴⁷ Yet, projects such as these being funded by public monies are supposed to include a time of public discussion before moving forward. As Elizabeth Knapp reports,

Though the Central Avenue extension was slated to use state and federal transportation dollars and was therefore subject to the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

⁴⁵ (Conrad Opposes Engineers on Closing of Lincoln Park, 1974)

⁴⁶ (Knapp, 2018, p. 163)

⁴⁷ (Knapp, 2018, p. 169)

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and Title VI antidiscrimination stipulations, city officials and their consultants had not made neighborhood residents explicitly aware of the public comment period leading up to the approval of public funds. When leaders of the Neighborhood Association subsequently expressed their surprise and disapproval of the proposed route through their historic park, they were told that the project had been in the works for forty years and was unstoppable. Even though the funds had not yet been approved at the time of the 2013 City Council meeting described by Rankins, Chief Engineer Bill Payne was quoted in the Times Free Press as saying, “The goal isn’t for residents to say if they want the Central Avenue extension but to help the city determine the community impact it will have. It’s not necessarily a question of ‘do you want this or not.’⁴⁸

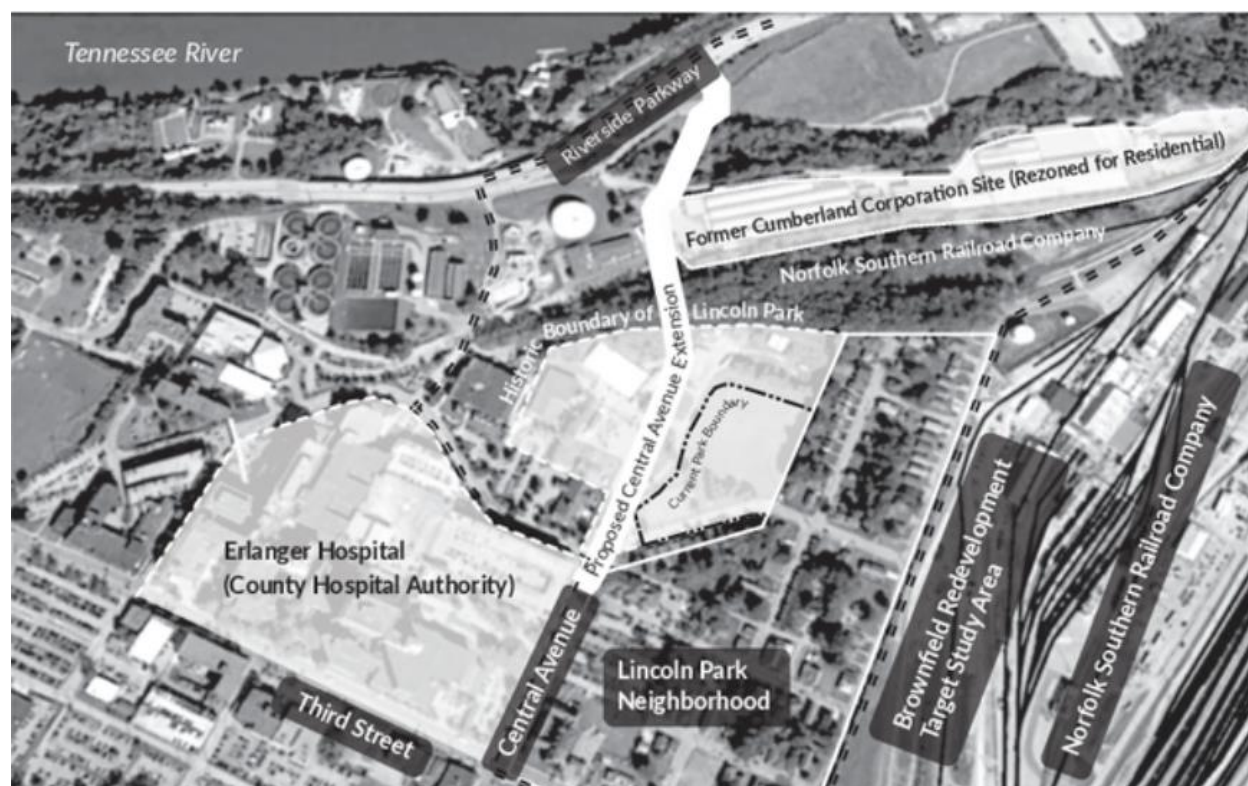


Figure 1: One of the routes proposed by the city government for the Central Avenue extension plan. (Knapp, 2018, p. 114)

⁴⁸ (Knapp, 2018)

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In one of the many subsequent meetings that residents, assisted by Chattanooga Organized for Action, (COA), would go on to have with city officials, “COA organizers mentioned the possibility of a Title VI antidiscrimination complaint; then deputy chief of staff Jeff Cannon ultimately conceded that the City had been given more than fifteen different options for the Central Avenue extension by consultants, several of which did not bisect the historic park space, and promised to share them with concerned residents.”⁴⁹ Through fighting that continued even after Mayor Andy Berke’s promise of securing the park for the community, the residents of Lincoln Park were, in the end, able to stave off another encroachment upon their community. There is no doubt that they had to fight against encroachment and intervention at every turn. The question that remains to be answered is whether or the actions of Erlanger and the city constitute coercion.

Quantitative Results

Correlation Number (CN)	Factor 1	Factor 2	Correlation Coefficient
1.	Closeness of community	Grew up in Chattanooga	.5126
2.	Perceived transition toward higher percentage of wealthy residents	Length of residency in Chattanooga	-.60636
3.	Resident rents rather than owns the property	Length of residency in Chattanooga	.60299
4.	Age	Length of residency in Chattanooga	.63516
5.	Age	Length of residency	.54266

⁴⁹ (Knapp, 2018, p. 178)

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6.	Answer why they've considered leaving house	Primarily buys groceries at the butcher	.56235
7.	White landlord	Have considered leaving house due to general, negative reasons	.50918
8.	Perception that the community has grown closer	Perception that the demographics have shifted from African American toward Caucasian	-.61277
9.	Perception that the community has grown closer over time	Current closeness of community	.66102
10.	Perception that the community has grown closer over time	Frequency of being asked to sell	-.71685
11.	Perception that many of the core families are still in Lincoln Park	Age	-.52862
12.	Frequency of being asked to sell	Perception that the demographics have shifted from African American toward Caucasian	.72281
13.	Renting Property	Frequency of being asked to sell	.60338
14.	Positive view of landlord	Responsiveness of landlord	.8019
15.	Has been asked to sell	Shops at Publix for groceries	-.586
16.	Has been asked to sell	Time of commute to store	.5715
17.	Frequency of being asked to sell	Frequency of grocery shopping	-.633
18.	Has considered selling	Remodeling is the primary factor keeping resident from selling	-.537
19.	Has considered selling	Frequency of grocery shopping	-.535
20.	Would like to sell	Remodeling is the primary factor keeping resident from selling	.683
21.	Would like to sell	Answer they remember officials' names	.966
22.	Would like to sell	View of city officials	-.968

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23.	Would like to sell	Is currently employed	.5547
24.	Would like to sell	Square footage of house	.51821
25.	The family history of the house is the primary factor keeping the resident from selling	Primarily shops at Roger's Groceries	.56235
26.	Unreasonable offers are the primary factor keeping the resident from selling	View of city officials	-.7559
27.	Remembers city officials' names	Is currently employed	.79738
28.	View of city officials	Highest level of completed education / professional training	-.854
29.	View of city officials	Home value	-.8825
30.	View of city officials	Square footage	-.9766
31.	Number of people living in the household	Number of kids in the household	.72225
32.	Home value	Square footage	.59811
33.	Home value	\$ / Square Foot	.55649

Table 1: Highly significant correlations

There were 85 lived-in homes in Lincoln Park at the time of the surveys. We collected 40 surveys, resulting in a 47.5% sample size. This gives us a 95% confidence interval with a margin of error of 11%. Because there is such a small population, we were unable to run regression analyses. Instead, we used simple correlation metrics and found that each of the results listed above were statistically significant.

When looking at the quantitative data, there are three general findings that stand out in terms of significance and clarity. The first of these is that, rather than ethnicity, socioeconomic status appears to be the driving determinant in dividing residents' views of the neighborhood and

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the internal and external factors at play. Note that the ethnicity of the resident, asked in Question 38 in the survey, was not once significantly correlated with another survey question, implying that differences in residents' sentiments of the neighborhood are not divided primarily along ethnic lines (i.e. African Americans overwhelmingly answered in one way while Caucasians overwhelmingly answered another way). If this were the case, we would expect to see strong correlations grounded in ethnicity. Instead, we see strong differences in views stemming from factors such as home value (CN 30), square footage (CN 29), and highest level of completed education / professional training (CN 28). Consider how strong these correlations are: a higher square footage of a home and a negative view of city officials are correlated with a coefficient of .9766 (CN 30); a high home value is correlated with a negative view of city officials with a correlation coefficient of .8825 (CN 29); and a high level of completed education / professional training is correlated with a negative view of city officials with a coefficient of .854 (CN 28). Correlation Number 27 also serves as a potential indicator that a similar socioeconomic divide may dictate civic engagement, as well: residents' responses that they did remember the names of city officials who had campaigned at their door and that they were currently employed yielded a correlation of .79738. These results beg the astute reader to consider what this may indicate about the way that city officials market themselves and their policies to neighborhoods and communities, particularly to lower-income residents. Is the difference in views between low- and higher-income groups due to differences in policy applications (i.e., city officials are benefiting low-income residents more than high-income residents, which is the cause of the difference in the two groups' views of city officials) or astuteness (i.e. the more trained residents are seeing city officials' promises as a veneer)?

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The results are also in line with the findings of McKinnish et al. insofar as they buttress the assertion that income rather than race is the driving piece at play in gentrification.

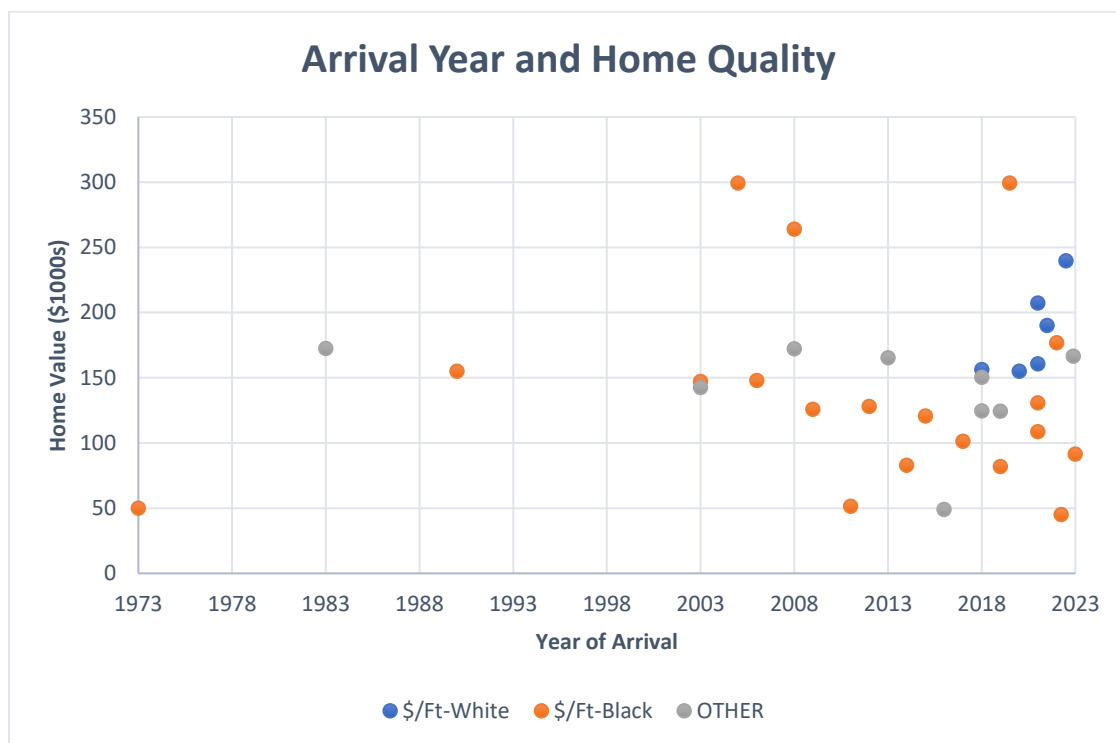


Figure 2

The above graph—Figure 2—provides some nuance in the discussion around ethnicity. Derived by calculating the ethnicity and arrival date of residents, along with the value of their home by square foot, we were able to track changes in the incoming residents' home values. There are a couple of points here worth noting. First, there is a notable influx of White residents taking place over the past five years. In fact, White residents account for 37.5% of home purchases/rentals since 2018 while accounting for 0% the 45 years prior. These numbers are likely not true representations of the data as they inherently self-select residents who are still living in the neighborhood and who responded to the survey. Nonetheless, there is a clear trend apparent. Secondly, while White residents are comprising a trend of increasing home values, the top three

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most valuable homes in the neighborhood are owned by Black residents, one of whom moved into the neighborhood within the five-year window previously discussed. Finally, there does not appear to be a change in the general trend of Black residents' entrance patterns into the neighborhood. Nonwhite respondents continue to be the primary residents moving into the neighborhood, indicating that the new entrance of White residents has not disrupted their purchasing and renting patterns to-date.

The second finding from the quantitative results is that there is a negative association between outside interactions with residents and residents' views of the neighborhood, indicating that an increase of intervention may sour residents' sentiments of the community. Consider that CN 10 shows a high frequency of being asked to sell their homes is correlated with a perception that the community has not grown closer over time by a correlation coefficient of .71685 and that CN 12 reveals that a higher frequency of being asked to sell corresponds with an increase in a resident perceiving that the community demographics have shifted from African American to Caucasian by a coefficient of .72281. While we must be cautious not to confuse correlation with causation, these correlations lend credence to the potential that a third party's (e.g. a developer's) interactions with residents may adversely influence the residents and even potentially encourage them to leave the neighborhood prematurely. This finding certainly indicates an opportunity for coercion as we have defined it. Also notable is Correlation Number 22, which holds a -.968 correlation coefficient between a resident's desire to sell and their view of city officials. A correlation of this magnitude demonstrates that it is not only developers' efforts that may influence a resident's intentions to stay in the community but those of city officials, as well.

Finally, the third finding from the quantitative analyses is derived from the absence of data rather than the presence. When beginning this research, one of the ways we saw coercion as

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potentially occurring on the part of the city and landlords/ developers was by a neglect of utilities and general amenities. More specifically, we expected to see a high rate of outages and slow responses to remedy said outages. This clearly is not the case in Lincoln Park. Though not represented in the correlations, there was an overwhelming indication that outages were few and far between, if not nonexistent, and that, in the case of the occasional outage, the situation was promptly resolved. There was not a single survey response that responded in a manner contrary to this pattern. While this does not rule out every potential of coercion within Lincoln Park, it indicates that this is not one of the avenues currently being exploited.

Conclusion

Having now employed both prongs to study the potential of coercion within Lincoln Park's it is now necessary to combine all of the information and begin answering the dual set of hypotheses. The first set of hypotheses revolved around the question of whether or not Lincoln Park is in a current state of gentrification. Null hypothesis 1 is "The area of question is not under a state of gentrification" and alternate hypothesis 1 is "The area of question is under a state of gentrification." In this case, due to the high number of new, market-rate builds observed during canvassing walks through the neighborhood and to the highly diverse levels of housing prices as recorded from Zillow, we are rejecting the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis that Lincoln Park is under a current state of gentrification. Because the specific analysis of whether or not Lincoln Park is currently gentrifying under strict definitions is not the driving goal of this paper, as it is for some of the papers covered in the Literature Review, the criteria is lower for this study in determining whether or not the neighborhood is gentrifying. In this case, a simple preponderance of the evidence is sufficient to carry the day and state that Lincoln Park is, in fact, currently undergoing gentrification. This much is clear both from Figure 2, which

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indicates an increasing trend of residents' arriving in higher-quality housing in recent years and the quality of new builds in the neighborhood, which are not captured by the graph as the residences have not yet been sold but clearly demonstrate a continuation of the trend.

Turning now to the heart of the matter presents a different degree of scrutiny that must be met. In addressing null hypothesis 2, "There is no coercion present in Lincoln Park's gentrification process," and alternate hypothesis 2, "There is coercion present in Lincoln Park's gentrification process," the level of evidence that is needed to reject the null hypothesis for alternate hypothesis is much higher than that required for the first set of hypotheses.

In answering the question of whether or not there is evidence of coercion at play in Lincoln Park's gentrification process, it is necessary to employ the findings of both this study's research prongs. While one is unable to draw clear conclusions as to the existence of coercion from the quantitative survey data analyses alone, they play an important role in shedding light on the significance of what was discovered through the qualitative investigations. From the investigations, there are two key takeaways that help speak to whether or not there is conclusive evidence of coercion in Lincoln Park's gentrification process. The first is the influence that outside forces have on residents' view of their community. As discussed in the qualitative results section, the high associations between external factors such as politicians and the number of times outsiders ask residents to sell and residents internal perception of their community is a concerning finding. When talking with Dr. Terry Ladd III, pastor of nearby First Baptist East 8th Street, on his take on the presence of coercion, he stated, "In my experience, it doesn't really take much coercion." The effect that outside forces can have on internal players can quickly wear down residents' resolve. This is especially true, Dr. Ladd observes, in the case of younger residents and those who may have just inherited a parent's house. But the most concerning factor

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is the second takeaway, which becomes especially clear when looking at the correlation between education level and residents' views of city officials. Recall that the higher the education level of a resident, the lower their view of city officials, *ceteris paribus*. Dr. Ladd explained, "Coercion is easy when you're not really knowledgeable about the process. Because our community is not really homeowners, we don't really understand that process. So it's easy to come in and say, "I'll give you \$20,000, not understanding that the land is worth more than that." When the Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association began to collect data on their residents, one statistic came glaring through: the vast majority of residents were renters. Renting significantly reduces the power a person—and therefore, a community—has over their own path. When a community does not have collective experience owning homes, it also means that the nuances of markets and value are easily lost, making it easy for those of lower education levels to be taken advantage of by those in power as they rent or are evicted at the landlord's will. While Lincoln Park has been blessed over the years with historically strong leadership from people like Bessie Smith, the divide of distrust that falls along educational lines is telling.

We found through the qualitative probe that, at multiple junctures, Lincoln Park residents were confronted with encroachment on their community by outside forces. The two prime cases in which coercion is most likely to be present in a blatant form come 1) when the city and Erlanger reneged on its promise to return the park back to the community and 2) when the city attempted to move forward with the renewed Central Avenue extension push without notifying residents of the public discussion time. Erlanger's and Mayor Berke's failed promise broaches the line of coercion, as it effectively served to further wear down residents' resistance and fight for their community. After half a century of fighting, residents are now quite tired and demoralized. As gentrification has begun in their community, very few still have the hope and

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vitality to fight it as they did when Erlanger began buying up homes in the 70s. It seems as though the air has been deflated and new expensive builds are popping up around the neighborhood, another reminder to long-term residents of how much has changed and how inevitable further change seems. This being said, the lack of information on why the promise fell through leaves researchers wondering and unable to construct an accurate picture of the true intent of the involved parties. Intent is an important aspect of coercion. The latter example is arguably the most blatant recorded instance of coercive tactics employed by the city and its subsidiaries to move its agenda through Lincoln Park without federally mandated community involvement. COA seems justified in threatening action along Title VI antidiscrimination legislation bases, which appears to have played an integral role in shutting down the extension efforts.

It is critical to remember the guideposts of this work in answering the final set of hypotheses. For the purpose of this endeavor and in an effort to provide a definition for coercion that may be used in future economic research, we have defined coercion as attempts by third parties, such as cities and developers, to artificially accelerate the natural housing cycle. Involved in this definition is intent and an end goal being the specific acceleration of the housing cycle. The end, then, is to turn people out of their homes before their homes have reached the point of genuine hazard or before the residents would like to sell when powered by their own desires. As such, while we do believe that there is a more general coercion that has been at play on the part of the city, specifically the less-than-honest dealings with Central Avenue, it does not seem that the end goal was to accelerate the natural housing cycle with the intent of turning people out of their homes. We therefore cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no coercion involved in Lincoln Park's gentrification process. In the end, due to the specific constraints we have imposed

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upon our definition, there is not enough conclusive evidence to indicate coercion on a housing and development front.

In seeing the high correlation between residents' view of the neighborhood and efforts by outsiders to ask residents to sell their homes, this use of frequent requests has come onto our radar as a potential source of coercion. In this study, however, we do not have the means to capture the number of times, source, and nature of such consistent requests. It does seem possible, however, that these requests cross the line from being a part of the natural housing cycle to entering the territory of coercion, unduly influencing residents to sell their homes. The topic deserves more specific study, but it shows potential of being defined as coercion in certain situations.

While there has been little-to-no economic research on the topic of coercion within the broader study of gentrification, it is our sincere hope that this paper will help move the needle in the conversation, perhaps providing at least a definition of what coercion may look like within the housing and development process. While anecdotal accounts can be emotionally persuasive, it is important that economists enter the sociologically dominated fray and provide the hard facts and analyses necessary to promote positive change on both local and broad levels. As we grope along towards a bumbling, imperfect form of progress, may we help shine a sliver of light along the way.

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Appendix I

Urban Understandings Survey

Resident Survey

CONNECTION TO NEIGHBORHOOD

1) Did you grow up in Chattanooga?

Yes

No

1a) if Yes... Where in Chattanooga?

1b) if No... When did you move here?

2) How long have you lived at this residence?

3) If applicable, where did you live before?

4) If applicable, how has the neighborhood changed since you first moved here?

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5) How would you describe the neighborhood as it is today?

6) Have you ever considered leaving this house?

Yes

No

6a) if Yes... Why?

6b) if Yes... Where would you move?

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7) If you left this neighborhood, what would you miss the most?

8) [*Question 8 was removed but left on for the sake of consistency in numbering*]

In answering the following questions, please choose between:

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Agree, (4) Strongly Agree

9) “Since moving to the neighborhood, the community has grown closer.”

___ (1) Strongly Disagree, ___ (2) Disagree, ___ (3) Agree, ___ (4) Strongly Agree

10) “Since moving to the neighborhood, many of the core families in the community are still here.”

___ (1) Strongly Disagree, ___ (2) Disagree, ___ (3) Agree, ___ (4) Strongly Agree

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11) “Since moving to the neighborhood, the demographics have shifted from African American to Caucasian.”

___ (1) Strongly Disagree, ___ (2) Disagree, ___ (3) Agree, ___ (4) Strongly Agree

12) “Since moving to the neighborhood, wealthy residents make up a higher percentage of the neighborhood than lower income residents.”

___ (1) Strongly Disagree, ___ (2) Disagree, ___ (3) Agree, ___ (4) Strongly Agree

13) How tight-knit would you describe the community as it currently is on a scale of 1-5?

___ 1, ___ 2, ___ 3, ___ 4, ___ 5

OWNERSHIP AND LANDLORD

14) Do you rent or own this property?

Renting

Owning

...if renting:

15) On a scale of 1-5, which number most closely matches your view of landlord, with 1 being the most negative and 5 being the most positive?

___ 1, ___ 2, ___ 3, ___ 4, ___ 5

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16) On a scale of 1-5, how responsive is your landlord when repairs are needed, with 1 being the least responsive and 5 being the most responsive?

___1, ___2, ___3, ___4, ___5

17) Has your landlord ever tried to evict you?

Yes

No

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17a) if Yes... May I ask on what grounds they attempted to evict you?

18) How long have you been renting from this landlord?

19) May I ask what ethnicity your landlord is?

...if owning:

20) Have you been asked to sell?

Yes

No

20a) If yes, how often have you been asked to sell?

Annually

Quarterly

Monthly

Weekly

Multiple times a week

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21) Have you considered selling?

Yes

No

22) Would you like to sell?

Yes

No

23) What is the primary factor keeping you from selling?

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INFRASTRUCTURE/UTILITIES

24) Which of the following utilities do you pay for?

Electricity

Gas

Water

Sewer

Cable

Telephone

Internet

25) Excluding times stemming from overdue bills, how often do you experience outages in your utilities?

Annually

Quarterly

Monthly

Weekly

Multiple times a week

26) How quickly are your power outages typically resolved?

Within 1 hour

URBAN UNDERSTANDINGS

- Between 1 and 3 hours
- Between 3 and 8 hours
- Between 8 and 24 hours
- More than a day

27) How often do you shop for groceries?

- Once a month
- Once every two weeks
- Once a week
- Twice a week

28) Where do you typically shop for your groceries?

29) How do you typically get to the grocery store?

- By walking
- By bicycle
- By bus
- By car

29a) If by bus, how often do the buses run?

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Less than every five minutes

Every 5-10 minutes

Every 15-30 minutes

Every 30 minutes to 1 hour

Over every hour

30) How long is your commute to the store?

Less than five minutes

5-10 minutes

15-30 minutes

30 minutes to 1 hour

Over 1 hour

31) I plan to talk to city officials. Is there anything you would like for me to pass on?

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POLITICIANS

32) Have city officials running for office come to the neighborhood or your door to campaign?

Yes

No

32a) if Yes... Do you remember their names?

32b) if Yes... On a scale of 1-5, how would you describe your views of these city officials with 1 being the least favorable and 5 being the most favorable? If you do not have an opinion, please say "No opinion"

DEMOGRAPHICS AND INCOME

I'm going to finish by asking some basic information about you. Again, you can decide not to answer any question.

33) What is your age?

18-25

26-33

34-41

42-49

50-57

58-65

66-73

74-81

82-89

90+

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34) How many people live in your household?

35) If applicable, how many kids do you have?

35a) if Any... Where do they attend school?

36) Are you currently employed?

Yes

No

36a) if Yes... What is your profession?

36b) if Yes... How many jobs do you work?

37) What is your highest level of completed education or professional training?

Did not complete high school

High school Diploma or equivalent (GED)

Associates Degree

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Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Doctoral Degree

38) How would you best describe yourself? You are welcome to select multiple choices or none at all.

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian

Black, Brown, or African American

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White

Other (Please Specify) _____

Prefer not to say