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Discerning the Invisible in a Group Portrait of Stability: An Ethnography of the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood

Lisa Marie Wheeler
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Read and approved by:

Thesis adviser(s)   _Susan M. Kemp_____   4/6/99
                                                      Date

_____   Date

Reader(s)   _Paul R. Hanson_____   4/6/99
                        First Reader   Date

_____   Date
                        Second Reader

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Discerning the Invisible in a Group Portrait of Stability:

An Ethnography of the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood

A Thesis

Presented to the Department of History

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

and

The Honors Program

of

Butler University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for Graduation Honors

Lisa Marie Wheeler

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PROLOGUE

Ethnographer [L.W.]: *How would you describe your neighborhood?*

Informant: *I like to tell people I live in a neighborhood that has a crack house on one
corner and the governor's mansion on another.*

      This was not a common response to my question, but most "Butler-Tarkington"

residents would recognize it right away as a description of their neighborhood. When

asked how they would describe the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood, most residents give

a very different response: they describe it as "integrated," "stable," and "diverse." This

interested me because when I began learning about the neighborhood by studying the

demographic statistics and walking through its streets, I would not have considered it to

be "integrated" or "diverse." It seemed to me that the African-American population was

concentrated in the southern end of the neighborhood, with the northern end being

primarily inhabited by white residents. Furthermore, almost all of these residents were

American. These observations were supported by the demographic statistics published by

The Polis Center, an urban research center located at Indiana University-Purdue

University at Indianapolis (IUPUI). To me, "diversity" means a mix of people from all

over the world living together, and "integrated" means an even distribution on every

neighborhood block of African-Americans, Whites, Asian-Americans, and so on.

However, because this response was so frequent, it was clear that residents do consider

their neighborhood to be integrated and diverse. There was an inconsistency between

what I observed and what I was told. More importantly, as shown above, there was a

sharp contrast between how different residents described their neighborhood. I was intrigued by this particular informant's astonishing description of his neighborhood, but the real intrigue lay in discerning how residents of the same neighborhood could perceive their community so differently.

As I began this ethnographic study, I learned the necessity of separating my perspective as an outsider (the *etic*) from residents' perspectives as insiders (the *emic*). This useful distinction of *emic/ etic*[1] was developed by anthropologist Marvin Harris in the 1960s, when ethnographic experience was the "cornerstone of authority in American anthropology." (Warms 1996:282) Emic understanding refers to meaning as it is perceived by the natives of a culture and, by definition, is culture-bound. In contrast, etic understanding is arrived at by empirical investigation and is aimed at enabling anthropologists to make generalizations that are cross-culturally valid. (Warms 1996:285) I must emphasize right away that this is by no means an exhaustive study of many urban settings, intended to culminate in cross-cultural generalizations. Rather than trying to situate this particular neighborhood in a greater context, I am concerned with trying to understand the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood on its own terms. As Geertz (1973) writes, "Society's forms are culture's substance." (28) I learned to separate the *emic* and *etic* to determine Butler-Tarkington's social form, first recognizing my own assumptions that the terms "integrated" and "diverse" were used in reference to racial makeup. When residents use the words "integrated" and "diverse" they are not referring only to racial makeup, but also to socio-economic makeup, age, religion, profession or occupation, and residential lifestyle (homeowner or renter, size of home).

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[1] The terms *emic* and *etic* were first coined in 1954 by linguist Kenneth Pike. (Warms 1996:285)

When I began research for this thesis, I intended to focus on residents' own perspectives of integration. With its reputation for being integrated, I thought the best way to learn about this group of people would be to focus on this. I structured my interviews using open-ended questions that centered on attitudes toward integration and diversity as the appropriate point of entry to understanding typical interactions. I found that, while the neighborhood's history of integration is at the roots of its sense of community, it is not the only or the most important factor that contributes to what is really important to residents: the stability of their neighborhood. To fully understand the culture of this geographic area, it is essential to consider the various factors, as they are identified by residents, that combine to build and maintain the stability of Butler-Tarkington.

The purpose of this ethnographic study has been to learn about the sub-culture of the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood: who the people are who live in its geographic boundaries (according to each other) and how they experience and construct their community. Although residents recognize to some degree that their neighborhood is fragmented into smaller areas, most emphasize a sense of belonging to the neighborhood as a geographic whole, taking pride in its reputation for stability, diversity and integration. The "strong sense of community"[2] and stability that residents often say they enjoy relies on common interests and a shared goal among active residents to make Butler-Tarkington the kind of neighborhood in which they want to live. I show that community is built on the one hand by the cooperation of neighborhood institutions that pull different residents together within a common sense of order. Cohesion among

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[2] Throughout this text, quotations not attached to direct citations are words given to me repeatedly by different residents in reference to their neighborhood.

residents is also reinforced on the other hand by the tensions that exist between different

kinds of residents and through the resolution of conflict when it arises.

This ethnography is the culmination of an extensive, although not an exhaustive,

study. I have not yet been able to explore many aspects of the neighborhood as fully as I

would like. Like other anthropologists, I have found that the more time one spends "in

the field," the more questions one has to investigate. I was able to learn much more about

Butler-Tarkington's churches and community service organizations, for example, than

about its schools and businesses. This must be pointed out because, as with any

ethnography, the findings reported reflect the experiences of the anthropologist, rather

than the total experiences of the people within the culture studied. While I have tried to

learn as much about Butler-Tarkington as possible, there are limitations. Where those

limitations are considerable, I have noted what further research would be especially

useful. This ethnography is ultimately a portrait of the neighborhood as I see it. It is,

nonetheless, a portrait in which the residents of Butler-Tarkington will recognize

themselves.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE
An Ethnography of Butler-Tarkington

INTRODUCTION: A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

While working on the first drafts of this thesis, I came across an interesting "letter to the editor" in the Butler University student newspaper. Written by a resident to address Butler University students about off-campus living, it succinctly echoed several important themes in the systems of meaning in Butler-Tarkington that had been emerging from my research. The resident was unsatisfied with an article about off-campus housing that appeared previously in the same weekly newspaper, *The Butler Collegian*, because he or she felt it did not sufficiently emphasize "a big factor about off-campus living: BEING a neighbor." The writer asserted that "an influx of student renters" in the past two years has made the neighborhood "increasingly unpleasant" and listed complaints about disturbing noise from frequent parties, trash and litter, vandalized and damaged property, unmown lawns, poor property upkeep, and unfriendliness. The resident continued, "I feel sorry for people who have lived here for years, caring for families and homes, and making Butler-Tarkington a nice place in which to have a college." He or she closed the letter by imploring students who choose to live off-campus to "act like a neighbor," adding that "none of us have been hired by Butler to teach 'Living 101,' but we'll support your first effort to live on your own if you recognize and respect our rights." The letter was signed "A Neighbor" (*The Butler Collegian* 1999:5).

On the surface, this letter seems to be a simple complaint from a resident who is tired of having his or her sleep disturbed by "sometimes loud and boisterous" students. A closer reading, however, reveals the epistemology of the neighborhood, the meanings,

understandings, and expectations that are threads in the fabric of the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood. Reading the letter in this way follows Geertz's (1973) theory of thick description. Geertz gives importance to the distinction that appears in the experimental or observational sciences between "description" and "explanation"-

> between setting down the meaning particular social actions have for the actors whose actions they are, and stating, as explicitly as we can manage, what the knowledge thus attained demonstrates about the society in which it is found and, beyond that, about social life as such...In ethnography, the office of theory is to provide a vocabulary in which what symbolic action has to say about itself-that is, about the role of culture in human life-can be expressed (1973:27).

The letter introduces us first of all to the spatial geography of the neighborhood, clarifying that residents identify separate groups of people and geographic areas in the neighborhood. It is written by an individual who uses the nouns "we" and "us" to address students on behalf of the Butler-Tarkington residents. In this case, even though both students and residents live in the neighborhood, they are separated conceptually into two groups: those who live in the area that is Butler University's campus (students) and those who live in the surrounding neighborhood (residents). At the same time, this letter is intended to resolve the tension between the two groups, informing students how they should behave so that they can be embraced as residents. This reveals the tension to negotiate the identities of different kinds of residents from different areas so that Butler-Tarkington's sense of community as a whole can be established.

In terms of social geography, residents actively construct their reciprocal relationships with the various institutions in their neighborhood to make their neighborhood "stable". Interactions that "build community" in Butler-Tarkington take place on three levels: between residents as neighbors, between residents and

neighborhood institutions, and between neighborhood institutions. The Neighbor who wrote this letter referred to those interactions, stating that Butler-Tarkington residents have been active in "making Butler-Tarkington a nice place in which to have a college". He or she also commented to the students, "You may find homeowners here are interesting people if you bother to get to know us," expressing an interest in building closer relationships between residents (homeowners, families, and Neighbors) and students (mostly single renters). This points out that residents as a group consider how they can build community by recognizing and meeting the needs of other residents. In so doing, they are able to impose a sense of order and a shared identity on the entire neighborhood.

The cohesion among some Butler-Tarkington residents results partly from their shared expectations of other residents (including students who move off-campus) to behave in certain ways. In this short letter, some commonly cited expectations that hold parts of this community together were listed: property upkeep, preservation of the peaceful and quiet environment, and friendliness. To Butler-Tarkington residents, the important role of "neighbor" is an active one. To be identified among residents as a "Neighbor" (with a capital "n"), one must "*act* like a neighbor." This is another way that separate groups are identified since residents distinguish "*good neighbors*" and "*problem residents*" by how well they conform to these shared expectations. By organizing to enforce these shared expectations of property maintenance, residents have the sense that they are acting out of a common interest, which reinforces the sense of community of the neighborhood as a whole.

To maintain the sense of community that residents as a group construct through shared expectations and social interaction, residents cooperate to resolve conflict. This functions as a unifying factor in Butler-Tarkington. Residents often use different modes of communication, such as newsletters, newspapers, and meetings, to publicly express opinions and expectations in an attempt to prevent or resolve conflict. By attempting to reach a consensus around different issues, such as miscreant neighbors, a sense of community is created. By asserting neighbors' expectations of student renters, this individual is reinforcing the bonds that hold some residents together. If students choose not to respond as the neighbors request, they will be identified as a group that is a problem. If the students conform to neighbors' expectations, they are more likely to be accepted as neighbors themselves.

These themes, implicit in this letter to the editor, serve as windows to the culture of the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood. Looking closely at each of them, the patterns of meaning that define the neighborhood to residents become clear. An understanding of this neighborhood begins by identifying who the people are who make up the neighborhood and how they identify each other. To identify the social and spatial mental maps of residents helps outsiders to understand how residents experience their neighborhood. By examining the expectations and understandings that serve as guidelines to interaction for the residents, we can determine what holds this neighborhood together as a "community." Furthermore, an important part of determining how this sense of community is built is understanding interactions between residents and neighborhood institutions, such as churches, schools, and community service organizations. Once it is clear how different residents interact with each other

and neighborhood institutions to incorporate different areas into Butler-Tarkington as a "stable" community, I will show how the fundamental understandings residents have about their neighborhood can be seen to direct residents' actions to maintain stability when conflict arises.

METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

I have been fortunate to have had the chance to research the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood over several years, making it possible to gather a large amount of *qualitative data* to add to the available *quantitative data* on the neighborhood. This ethnographic research has two parts: field work and archival/library research. The majority of the *qualitative data* I used came directly from my own field work, which depended upon participant observation and structured interviews. I used both focused and open-ended questions in these interviews to learn as much as possible about the residents and their neighborhood from their point of view. In one case, I wrote the life history of a long-term resident, Mrs. Evelyn Mason, following extensive participant observation and structured interviews. I also found it useful to map the social and spatial landscapes of the neighborhood as residents perceive them. My archival/library research included researching the history, demography, and geography of the neighborhood using information compiled by The Polis Center. I also used case studies of other Indianapolis neighborhoods (collected by The Polis Center) and published accounts of neighborhoods within the United States and without to learn what makes Butler-Tarkington unique.

I conducted research over several years with different focuses, but used all of the information gathered when researching this thesis. Specifically, as a student in an urban

anthropology/urban geography course at Butler University (Fall 1996), I conducted brief

structured interviews with five residents, plotted the mental maps of two others, acted as

a participant observer of a dance school in the neighborhood, and conducted numerous

in-depth structured interviews with Evelyn Mason with the purpose of writing her life

history. As a Polis Center researcher for the Faith and Community Project (1997), I

completed census information for three Butler-Tarkington churches, attended several

Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association meetings, neighborhood community

events, and church services as a participant observer, and interviewed people associated

with ten different social service organizations, clergy of three churches and numerous

other residents. I also consulted regularly with three other Butler-Tarkington researchers

to write and present to the city a large paper that explained our findings. While

researching my thesis, I was a participant observer at Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood

Association meetings, Neighborhood Connect meetings, a large public meeting, two

neighborhood restaurants, one church service and a group tree planting effort in the

neighborhood, and I conducted in-depth personal interviews with ten residents.

Additionally, I lived in the neighborhood for two and a half years, worked at the

International School of Indiana in the neighborhood for two years, and still attend Butler

University, which means I spend a large amount of time in the Butler-Tarkington

neighborhood. Anytime I am in the neighborhood, I am a participant observer.

Intellectual Debts

A number of texts have informed my thinking and approach to this study, from

readings in both urban and anthropological theory to ethnographies of urban settings

around the world. I discuss first a number of anthropological theory texts because they have been pivotal in this ethnography. My methodology is drawn largely from Franz Boas (1920,1996), known for the rigorous scientific approach he brought to ethnographic fieldwork. Theoretical claims, he believed, could not be supported without the collection of large amounts of data (1996:134). Trained very much in the Boasian tradition, I have tried to collect as much data as possible. This can be a stumbling block when research is limited (as it usually is) by time constraints. In each of the different research projects that make up the total of this research, I found it extremely difficult to tear myself away from the field to focus on analysis. I always wanted more data, and I probably always will. I note throughout this thesis where additional research would be particularly useful. I have, at the same time, gathered enough data to begin theorizing my findings. I have used *The Cultural Experience,* edited by James P. Spradley and David W. McCurdy (1988), as a helpful guide to effective techniques of ethnographic study that make theorizing possible.

My theoretical approach is drawn largely from Clifford Geertz (1973,1996), who is known for his use of thick description and for pointing out the possibilities of reading culture as text. He tries to recreate, in articles such as the well-known "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," (1973) the context in which actions take place in order that the reader may share, as much as possible, in the context in which cultural meaning is created (1996:464). I share his view of culture as shared codes of meaning that are acted out, and point out throughout this text where I have followed his theoretical approach to interpreting culture (1996:474).

The ideas of Post-Modernist anthropologists Renato Rosaldo (1989,1996) and Vincent Crapanzano (1986,1996) have stimulated my thinking because they question the

limitations of researcher objectivity in ethnographic writing. This was an important point

to consider since I lived in the neighborhood both before and during my research.

Rosaldo's article "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage"(1989,1996) has been particularly

useful in helping me sort out my position as both insider and outsider. Rosaldo describes

in this article the almost unbearable sorrow he felt after the accidental death of his wife in

the field. He explains that this experience led him to a visceral understanding of why

Ilongot men take heads after the death of loved ones, an understanding to which no

amount of intellectual study would have led him(1996:481). Warms and McGee (1996)

paraphrase Rosaldo's fundamental implication that

> the accounts produced by ethnographers depend upon their positioning, that is,
> the vantage point from which they view and analyze society. Their positioning is,
> in turn, contingent on their life experiences rather than being derived from any
> uniform application of scientific method (487).

I have considered Rosaldo's ideas as they relate to Crapanzano's (1986,1996), who

pointed out that researchers are limited because they cannot draw their analysis from the

total experiences that make up a culture (498-512). While some of my experiences are in

part an insider's experiences, I do not have access to every experience of every Butler-

Tarkington resident. My research is ultimately limited, in this way, to an outsider's

perspective.

The catalyst that enabled me to pull a lot of my data into theoretical analysis was

the work of Philip Carl Salzman (1999), who argues the usefulness of "event

anthropology." The most interesting observations throughout this research have been

those made at public meetings, where numerous residents came together to interact. It

was not until I explored Salzman's ideas that I was able to pull together the perspectives

of individuals to see how they become culture by directing how people interact. He writes:

> ...People do not live in static, stable environments with constant, predictable conditions. In real life, things happen, and these things (or events) sometimes impose circumstances that transform people's lives(1999:3).

Salzman helped me understand how integration, as a past event, continues to shape the lives of residents today, which is discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

A number of urban anthropology/urban geography texts have been useful in helping me understand Butler-Tarkington as an American neighborhood. Those that discuss the anthroplogy and geography of American urban settings are Sidney Brower's *Good Neighborhoods* (1996), Lyn H. Lofland's *The Public Realm* (1998), and Constance Perin's *Belonging in America: Reading Between the Lines* (1988). These texts examine the anthropology of urban settings throughout America, focusing on urban geographical and social organization and the systems of meaning that Americans use to define and construct their cities and neighorhoods. Constance Perin, of these three, has been the most useful in terms of writing this thesis. She points out that Americans' cultural landscapes reproduce our cultural conventions exactly:

> Among the most familiar lines Americans draw are those between their personal and public lives, between their own families and everybody else's, between their house and their neighbors'...The very iconography of American suburbs- their predictable configurations of single-family houses, fences, hedges, and lawns- signals some of the ways people control their experiences of anything and anybody 'too' different from themselves and too much of a departure from the concepts supplying the meanings they live by (1988:25).

These ideas were particularly helpful in enabling me to see how the social and spatial maps of Butler-Tarkington are related, as is discussed in chapter three. In contrast, John Gulick's *The Humanity of Cities* (1989), Witold Rybczynski's *City Life* (1995) and

Elizabeth Fernea's *A Street in Marakesh* (1975) have been useful for their descriptions

and analyses of urban settings around the world, which have helped me focus on what

makes American cities different from cities around the world and more like each other.

Studying Butler-Tarkington in comparison to the cities they wrote about, I have found

that this neighborhood is as fascinating from an anthropological perspective as any other

urban setting around the world.

The provocative urban theory texts of William Julius Wilson (1987,1996),

Norman Fainstein(1993,1996), and W. Dennis Keating (1996) stimulated the process of

critical thinking through which I have chosen my particular approaches to studying a very

particular aspect of the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood: racial and socio-economic

integration. As Susan Fainstein and Scott Campbell (1996) summarize, "Wilson's

(1987,1996) extremely influential book, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, stimulated an

extraordinary research effort to investigate the extent, causes, and consequences of

ghettoization," arguing that the "appropriate lense with which to examine the economic

situation of African Americans is class, not race" (1996:189,217). Norman Fainstein

(1996:189) argues the opposite, maintaining that racial discrimination continues to exact

a toll even among those who have moved up in the socio-economic structure. Dennis

Keating (1996:190) moves beyond this debate to examine the potential to achieve racial

diversity in American suburbia. He emphasizes the role of fair housing organizations in

achieving, and also in preventing, the stability of integrated communities. While the

ideas of these writers has shaped my thinking about the neighborhood, I have not found

their particular arguments of race versus class to be especially salient in the context of the

Butler-Tarkington neighborhood. Unlike Keating, Wilson, and Fainstein, I am more

interested in how residents interact in and perceive their own integrated context than how the neighborhood itself fits into the larger context of integration in America.

While the texts listed provide the disciplinary and informational bases for this thesis, the material of this ethnography draws entirely from my own fieldnotes. These texts informed my thinking in a broad way, helping me to situate my findings of Butler-Tarkington in a larger context. At the same time, my purpose is not to show how the neighborhood fits into a larger context, but to understand it on its own terms. For this reason, I do not often cite directly from the texts. Instead, I summarize their ideas where necessary to trace how those ideas influenced my analysis of neighborhood observations and informants' comments. This approach draws from Clifford Geertz's theory, mentioned earlier, that culture can be read as text. Geertz writes:

> Ethnography is thick description...The ethnographer is faced with...a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render. And this is true at the most down-to-earth,...field work levels of his activity: interviewing informants, observing rituals, tracing property lines, censusing households...writing in his journal. Doing ethnography is like trying to read...a manuscript--foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior (1973:10).

While this ethnography is grounded in well-known texts, the manuscripts of my field work, written from tape-recorded interviews and participant observations, are the texts that give this ethnography its shape.

CHAPTER TWO
From German Village to Integrated Neighborhood: An Overview of Butler-Tarkington History

A brief sketch of the history of Butler-Tarkington describes how this area

emerged as an identifiable neighborhood in the city of Indianapolis. Butler-Tarkington is

a predominantly residential neighborhood on the near northwest side of Indianapolis

bounded triangularly by 38th Street to the south, Meridian Street to the east, and

Michigan Road and the Central Canal to the west (see Appendix A). The pointed

northernmost boundary is formed by the convergence of the Canal and Meridian Street.

An informational publication about Butler-Tarkington prepared by The Polis Center

(1996), which serves as the main source of historical information for this study, explains

that the neighborhood derives its name from Pulitzer prize-winning Hoosier author Booth

Tarkington (who resided on Meridian Street from 1923 until his death in 1946) and

Butler University (located approximately in the middle of the neighborhood since the

1920s). Initially formed from a consolidation of nineteenth-century farms and orchards,

the neighborhood covers roughly 930 acres today and remains a residential community

(The Polis Center 1996: 3,19).

Settlement of the area began as early as the 1840s when a small group of mostly

German farming families set up a farming village. They settled in an area that is now

known as Illinois and 38th Streets, but at the time the area was marked only by a large

grove of sugar maples. The settlement became known as Mapleton and provided a

popular rest stop for those traveling from Indianapolis, which was about three miles to

the south at the time, and Broad Ripple to the north. In the 1860s, Mapleton was further

connected to Indianapolis when the city built a street railway that extended to the newly

purchased site of Crown Hill Cemetery (The Polis Center 1996:3). By the 1880s,

Mapleton had a post office, general store, school, livery stables, and the Sugar Grove

Methodist Mission. Most of the close-knit population of 300 people lived in the corridor

between Meridian Street and Crown Hill Cemetery, where life,

> as long-time residents recalled decades later, revolved around church socials,
> annual sausage-and-sauerkraut community dinners, walks through fields on the
> way to school, visits from gypsies along the creek, men socializing at a local
> store, and winter sleigh rides (The Polis Center 1996:3).

Around the end of the nineteenth century, electric street railways began to change the

lives of those who lived on the farms and orchards of Mapleton. The 246-acre Adam

Scott farm along the Central Canal was purchased by the Citizens Street Railway

Company in 1889 for the purpose of building a "suburban park." The following year,

Maple Road became 38th Street as the streetcar lines extended north, passing Crown Hill

Cemetery to the newly built Fairview Park. By the turn of the century, farms were being

replaced by new "suburban houses." Most of these "small, narrow homes" were built

near the street along the streetcar line to the park- forming what is known as a "streetcar

suburb." Between 1899 and 1909, as Meridian Street emerged as the "address of choice"

for the city's elite, no fewer than ten housing additions were planned along Meridian

Street between 38th and 50th Streets. It was the 1930s by the time the North Meridian

Street Corridor- located between 40th Street and Westfield Boulevard- had become the

most exclusive residential neighborhood of the city. In the meantime, during the 1910s

and 1920s, a middle-class area had developed in the south central portion -located north

of 38th Street and along Illinois Street, Capitol Avenue, and Boulevard Place- of what is

now the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood. Butler University purchased Fairview Park in 1928 and relocated the following year to the 300-acre Fairview Campus (The Polis Center 1996:3-4). This stimulated a second surge of middle-class home building in the neighborhood. By 1940, Butler-Tarkington was "essentially developed" and had a population of 12, 244 people, 96.3 percent White and 3.6 percent Black (The Polis Center 1996:36). By this time, the "fundamental character of the neighborhood as a middle-class residential area" was already well established (The Polis Center 1996:4).

The neighborhood remained stable from the 1920s to the 1950s as a middle-class neighborhood composed of almost all white residents. By the mid-1950s, the population began to change. All over the United States, court decisions arising out of the civil rights movement were beginning to open previously all-white neighborhoods such as Butler-Tarkington to people of color. At the same time, population pressures occurring south of 38th Street stimulated the city's resident Black population to move northward. Evelyn Mason, an African-American resident who has lived in the neighborhood since 1951, made the important point that African-Americans found it difficult to buy property in the neighborhood, even as the civil rights movement grew. Nonetheless, they found ways to buy property and began moving into the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood. Evelyn Mason and her family were able to buy property from an African-American family that had already moved into the neighborhood.

In response to the appearance of a few African-American residents, including Evelyn Mason's family, long-term residents began to move out of the neighborhood, usually heading north and west. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as "white flight". Evelyn Mason explained that "blockbusting" and "panic selling" became

common practice, as realtors attempted to profit from the ignorance and fear of white residents, relying on peer pressure and encouraging whites to move so they could sell new property to them and their old property to blacks. While she did not recall any violent racial incidents, she said those who wanted to leave "made it known." According to her, they would talk amongst themselves, which was reflected in the media, and then one morning there would suddenly be three or four houses on the same block for sale. The population of Butler-Tarkington changed rapidly as more and more white residents left. By the mid-1970s, the white population had declined by nearly 30 percent, while the proportion of African-Americans had increased to comprise 30 percent of the resident population. Butler-Tarkington's total population is 13,211 according to the latest available census (1990), with about 63 percent White and about 37 percent Black (The Polis Center 1996:36).

In response to the growing tension in the neighborhood, in 1956 a small group of residents, both African-American and White, formed the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association (BTNA). Their stated goal was to "conserve and improve the neighborhood by promoting cooperative efforts among residents, schools, churches and civic groups" as an "inter-racial association" (Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association, Inc. cir.1970). When Evelyn Mason joined the BTNA, as one of many block chairpersons in 1957, its chief purpose was to talk about blockbusting, taking its first steps toward fulfilling its ultimate goal of preserving the quality of the neighborhood while developing a sense of community. Evelyn told me that this association, whose membership cut across "racial, social and economic boundaries," first attacked blockbusting by having public meetings to which they would sometimes invite outside

speakers, hoping to encourage communication among the residents (The Polis Center

1996:5). More directly, they worked with realtors in an attempt to make clear their

position that, as an integrated neighborhood, they would not tolerate realtors who

attempted to profit by encouraging and pressuring whites to leave. This neighborhood

association is still active today, making it the oldest continuous neighborhood association

in the country, according to Kent State University. The association no longer has to

address the issue of white flight, but they use many of the same activities that were useful

in the 1950s to fulfill their goals today. These include the publication of a newsletter,

public land-use planning, and the organization of recreational activities and monthly

meetings to address neighborhood concerns. The BTNA is often credited with having

helped the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood earn "a reputation as one of the city's more

stable neighborhoods...and as an example of successful racial integration" (The Polis

Center 1996:5). Today, both insiders (residents) and outsiders (non-residents) alike

recognize Butler-Tarkington as an integrated and stable middle-class, residential

neighborhood.

CHAPTER THREE
Spatial Geography

In this chapter, I describe the spatial geography of Butler-Tarkington as it is perceived by residents. While Butler-Tarkington is identified as a geographic whole in part because of its shared history, it is made up of several smaller geographic areas, each visibly distinguished by its landmarks and residential lifestyles. At The Polis Center, researchers identify landmarks as physical entities, such as buildings or parks, that stand out from the landscape of an area, distinguishing different geographic areas. Residents use landmarks to navigate their neighborhood, explaining for exmple that they walk their dogs "along the Canal" or live "next to Fairview Presbyterian Church." Landmarks in Butler-Tarkington are public spaces where people from all over the neighborhood interact, such as churches, parks, schools and businesses. I need to learn more about the schools and businesses of Butler-Tarkington to make this discussion of spatial geography more thorough, but for now a good sense of the spatial geography can be determined by a discussion of the landmarks about which I know more: churches and community service organizations. I begin my discussion of Butler-Tarkington's spatial geography by showing how its obvious diversity, defined by different landmarks, led me to perceive the neighborhood as several different neighborhoods initially and how my perspective seemed to conflict entirely with the residents' views. However, over time I learned that, to some degree, my impressions coincided with residents' mental maps of the neighborhood. Most of this chapter is a description of what the "visible neighborhood" is and how different areas are distinguished as "invisible neighborhoods."

I borrow the concept of the "invisible neighborhood" from Constance Perin (1988:25-62), but do not use the term exactly as she does. Perin describes the invisible neighborhood as one that is bounded not geographically, but socially. Pointing out that "neighbor" is an ambiguous term to Americans, she writes that a "clear sense of community" is experienced only when ambiguous relationships are more clearly defined. Americans define relationships to neighbors according to what she recognizes as the core concepts of our society, all belonging to our "American system of personal relationships": Intimacy, Trust, Obligation, Choice, Reciprocity and Love, among others. To Perin, who studies American neighborhoods in general, "relationships with neighbors always include some other relationship" so that the word "neighbor" itself carries "no predictable meaning." Instead, Americans categorize their neighbors as

> Relatives, Friends, Lovers, Acquaintances, Enemies, Strangers...[and] the meaning of each allows us to outline our expectations of each other's actions and to behave accordingly (1988:27).

Invisible neighborhoods are then circumscribed by different kinds of relationships that are independent of locality, thereby free from geographic bounds.

Studying the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood, however, I found that there is a geographic component to "invisible neighborhoods," based on visible diversity. My use of the term "invisible neighborhoods" derives from the fact that, to Butler-Tarkington residents, "neighbor" is not ambiguous for it carries with it very clear expectations (see Chapter Five of this thesis). The relationships that for Perin define 'a sense of community' for Butler-Tarkington residents are tied to locality. This does not mean, however, that the areas neighbors recognize are automatically rendered visible. In Butler-Tarkington, these areas are "invisible neighborhoods" because residents negotiate

the sense of community of each area to emphasize a sense of community circumscribed
by the formal geographic boundaries of the neighborhood instead.

(SOMEWHAT) DECEIVING FIRST IMPRESSIONS

As a student of Butler University (in the middle of the Butler-Tarkington
Neighborhood), I often walked, jogged or bicycled through its streets. I walked south of
Butler University's campus every day to work as a childcare assistant at the International
School of Indiana (then located at 615 West 43rd Street) and had the impression that the
residents of this area (between Sunset Avenue and 42nd Street) were predominantly
African-American. I often saw groups of African-American school children playing
together in their yards and the street in front of their homes or elderly African-Americans
taking walks. I sometimes rode my bicycle east of the campus to Illinois Street and then
north to a business district located at 56th and Illinois Streets. Larger homes and more
expensive cars suggested residents of this area seemed to be a bit wealthier and I saw
only middle-aged white residents in the area, walking their dogs and gardening.
Occasionally, I took the sidewalks northwards on Meridian Street, where residents were
rarely seen. This area has much more traffic than the other two areas mentioned, and
much larger homes set farther back from the street and farther apart from each other.
Based on these observations, I was surprised when I learned that all of these areas were
part of the same neighborhood with a shared reputation for being integrated. In addition,
while working for the Polis Center, I learned that fellow Butler-Tarkington team
researchers were also intrigued by the disparity between their impressions as outsiders,
which coincided with my own, and the residents' perspectives as insiders.

As I began my research, I specifically asked residents to describe their community, rather than their neighborhood, seeking to learn the geography of the sense of belonging residents feel. Relying on my first impressions of the neighborhood, I expected to find that residents associate more with the immediate areas surrounding their homes than with the overall neighborhood. This was absolutely not the case. Time and again, I was baffled when residents from different areas of the neighborhood told me that they considered themselves to be Butler-Tarkington residents. When asked what the boundaries of their neighborhood are, they always repeated exactly the "hard boundaries" that serve as the official borders of the neighborhood. Furthermore, when asked to describe their neighborhood, they almost always described it as "integrated" first. In short, during the first few stages of my research, none of the informants' responses matched my impressions of the neighborhood.

It was not until I had completed a year and a half of study of the neighborhood that an informant said something that might bridge this gap in perspectives. At the end of my last formal interview as a Polis Center researcher a former youth pastor for Fairview Presbyterian Church commented spontaneously that "Butler-Tarkington is probably three or four separated neighborhoods." This provided my first glimpse at an alternative understanding of the neighborhood. Not only do residents recognize separate areas of their neighborhood (as I did), but they use the tension between those separate areas to emphasize their neighborhood's cohesiveness as a whole. My first impressions were then not entirely misleading. Throughout this thesis, I discuss how residents actively cultivate a sense of community that depends on a common understanding of the social and physical landscape of their neighborhood. That discussion floors on the following

description of the geography of the neighborhood, as it exists in the mental maps of the residents.

A DUAL REALITY

The geography of Butler-Tarkington can be described as a dual reality in that the visible neighborhood is made up of several "invisible" neighborhoods. The visible neighborhood is circumscribed by "hard boundaries," while the invisible neighborhoods are defined by "soft boundaries," based on visible differences between various landmarks and residential lifestyles. Each invisible neighborhood is described here as residents perceive them, according to the landmarks (see Appendix B) and types of residents that make each area distinctive from the others.

From the perspective of urban geography, the "hard boundaries" that emerged over time to define the neighborhood make sense: 38th Street, Michigan Avenue, Meridian Street, Westfield Boulevard and the Canal are all physical entities that clearly separate geographic space by inhibiting the flow of traffic from the area inside the boundaries to the area outside the boundaries. For example, 38th Street is a two-way, six lane street that is highly trafficked, limiting interaction between the north and south sides of the street. Likewise, the Canal is too wide to be crossed without a bridge and acts as a physical division between the west side of the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood from the adjacent neighborhood Rocky Ripple. Relative to many Indianapolis neighborhoods, Butler-Tarkington is an integrated neighborhood since, in terms of numbers, a fairly equal number of African-American residents and White residents live there. At the same

time, to outside observers, those two groups of residents seem more spatially

concentrated and separate than integrated.

Butler University

Butler University's campus is the most clearly defined of the "invisible"

neighborhoods because it has official boundaries that demarcate between land owned by

the university and the rest of the neighborhood. More importantly, its landmarks make

the university an important, and separate, part of residents' mental maps of the

neighborhood. Residents recognize Butler University as an area that has brought "a

number of important educational, cultural, scientific, and sports facilities" into the

neighborhood over time. In 1928 Butler Fieldhouse (now known as Hinkle Fieldhouse)

was built, making it the nation's oldest college basketball arena. After World War II,

the Holcomb Observatory (1954) was built and then both Clowes Memorial Hall and

Irwin Library in the 1960s (The Polis Center 1996:10). These physical landmarks are

also social landmarks, since all of these buildings attract residents (and non-residents)

onto the Butler University campus and into the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood,

whether it is to see a Butler University basketball game in Hinkle Fieldhouse or see a

Broadway musical in Clowes Hall. Irwin library is often used by residents since the

neighborhood lacks a municipal library. Another landmark is Holcomb Gardens (near

the Canal). With its fountains, small pond and carillon, as well as bridges to the canal

path and intramural sports fields on the east side of the canal, and it is widely used by

the community. Families and individuals take advantage of this public outdoor space in

all seasons as a place to walk their dogs, read, jog, or have a picnic. All of these

landmarks distinguish this area from the rest of the neighborhood and serve as public space where residents occasionally interact.

Butler University's campus is home to around 1,400 students who live in dormitories. About 700 more live on the periphery of the campus in fraternities or sororities. Most students do not know anything about the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood, even though they live within its boundaries. The majority of students, including those that choose to live off-campus, do not have many connections with neighborhood individuals or organizations. Students who live off-campus usually rent apartments or houses, and are thus part of another group residents identify in opposition to themselves: renters versus homeowners. Another distinctive group is made up of Butler University professors who live in the neighborhood. Most professors live in the middle and south sections of the neighborhood so that they can walk to work. Several told me their neighbors recognize them as professors. A political science professor from the 40th block of Rookwood told me, "Everybody in my neighborhood knows that I'm a professor" even though he does not remember ever telling anyone. He shared this with me to show that residents are very aware of Butler University's presence in their neighborhood. Another professor who moved onto the 42nd block of Graceland about a year ago told me that

> People look at me differently as a professor because Butler University is respected...Butler-Tarkington people like that Butler is there so I'm OK...I'm a prof. That goes.

Students and professors who live in the neighborhood and travel onto the Butler campus every day blur the soft boundary between space that belongs to Butler University and the surrounding residential space of the neighborhood itself.

Meridian Street

Meridian Street, which stretches from the south boundary to the north boundary
of the neighborhood is a second "invisible neighborhood". Just as 38th Street is said to
divide the city of Indianapolis into the north and south, Meridian Street divides the city to
east and west. This street is distinctive because it is well-known for its "expansive and
expensive" homes, including the landmark of Indiana's governor's mansion; according to
a 1992 *Indianapolis Star* newspaper article (1992:5), houses along this street can easily
sell in excess of half a million dollars. The street itself is promoted by the Meridian
Street Historical Foundation, which holds an open house of selected homes each
December attracting outsiders into the neighborhood to tour the large, impressive homes.
I was startled when, soon after meeting a resident from Meridian Street and expressing an
interest in asking her a few questions, she immediately offered to show me around her
home. Residents along this street are accustomed to the fame of living in this area, and
Butler-Tarkington as a whole enjoys the fame of having this street in its neighborhood.
One resident identified Meridian Street residents as people with "high incomes," while a
former resident identified them in the following way:

> Those in the larger houses are lawyers and professionals [who work] downtown
> and probably don't know much about the people who own shops on 40th Street
> and Boulevard. They're not gonna get their hair done or play in the parks down
> there.

Such comments show that the different geographical areas are also defined by what kinds
of residents live there, and how they differ from residents in other areas.

The South End

Not far from the grandeur of Meridian Street, working class homeowners began

constructing homes at the same time (the 1910s and 1920s) as Meridian Street was being

developed. Just north of 38th Street to around 42nd or 44th Streets is the third "invisible

neighborhood," which some residents refer to as the "south end" of the neighborhood. It

is here that the least expensive homes of the neighborhood are found, mostly cottages and

bungalows that sell for as little as $30,000 today. (*Indianapolis Star* 1992:5) Most of the

neighborhood's African-American residents live in this south end (see Appendix C).

Much of this property is family property that has been handed down through the

generations. For example, Evelyn Mason pointed to two houses on her block, the 39th

block of Byram, that had been owned by members of the same family for generations.

When the father of the family became ill, he moved out of the neighborhood to live with

one daughter and a second daughter moved from her house across the street into his

home. Her daughter then moved into that second house. Several residents told me

similar stories about how their homes had changed hands over the generations in the

same families. Although it includes the important landmarks of the North United

Methodist Church, Tarkington park, business districts and the Martin Luther King Multi-

Service Center, this area is best known as a "high crime" or "problem area" by most

residents. This means that some residents in this area are identified as "problem

residents," including juvenile delinquents, "problem renters" and delinquent landlords.

This area is currently the focus of extensive "revitalization" efforts that will be discussed

in Chapter Six.

The Middle and North Sections

Significantly, the middle section of the neighborhood is less often defined geographically and the north end has never been defined to me geographically by a resident. While residents did not talk much about these two areas, I argue that these two "invisible neighborhoods" exist because the "south end" is defined in contrast to them. The only distinction residents give between the north and middle sections is that the middle section tends to be more "mixed" in terms of race and socio-economic position, while the north end is "almost all white." The middle section is best described as the area surrounding and a bit north of Butler University (east of Sunset Boulevard and north of 46th Street to around 50th Street), which is the area that is home to most Butler University residents, faculty and professors who live in the neighborhood. Residents of this area are mostly homeowners, although there is a distinction between students and renters, mentioned earlier.

The most important landmark of this "invisible neighborhood" sometimes called the middle section is the "quad parishes," a group of four congregations in three buildings located within shouting distance of each other. Since moving into the neighborhood between 1930 and 1960, a result of rapid development, these churches have had a lot to do with the creation of a sense of community in the neighborhood. Fairview Presbyterian Church moved into a temporary structure at 46th Street and Capitol Avenue a bit earlier in 1924, following the merger of Fourth Presbyterian Church (Alabama and 19th Streets) and Grace Presbyterian Church (Capitol Avenue and 32nd Streets). The present building was completed in 1952 at the same site. In 1953, University Park Christian Church

dedicated its present building on the former site of the "Blue Farm" at 4550 North Illinois Street. This church, originally intended to serve the faculty and staff of Christian Theological Seminary, is visible from Fairview Presbyterian Church. Next, in 1939, the Catholic Diocese of Indianapolis placed Butler-Tarkington within the newly formed St. Thomas Aquinas Parish. It was not until 1969 that St. Thomas Aquinas Church moved into its present building at 4610 North Illinois Street, also less than a block away from Fairview Presbyterian Church (The Polis Center 1996:7). Furthermore, in 1984, the predominantly white congregation of University Park Christian Church agreed to share their building facilities with the predominantly black congregation of Faith United Christian Church. These four congregations, known as the "quad parishes" today by both residents and non-residents of Butler-Tarkington, make this part of the neighborhood distinctive.

The north end of the neighborhood, which stretches from approximately 52nd or 56th Street north, is less remarkable; a stable area, for some residents it is neither as outstanding as Meridian Street or problematic as the south end. The landmarks of this area include a well-kept business district known as the "Shoppes on Illinois Street" (around 56th Street and Illinois Street). The other landmark of the north end of the neighborhood is the Meridian Street United Methodist Church. Located at 5500 North Meridian Street since 1952, it sits at the northernmost point of Butler-Tarkington. This was constructed after the leaders of Meridian Street Methodist (located at the northwest corner of Meridian and St. Clair Streets) merged with the 51st Street Methodist Church in 1947, after the majority of Meridian Street Methodist Church members moved north of 38th Street (The Polis Center 1996:8). One long-time member of this church told me that

only about five percent of the congregates today live in the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood, with a much higher percentage coming from the neighboring Meridian-Kessler neighborhood. This church tends to associate less with the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood than other neighborhood churches. However, the property is relevant as a landmark for public interaction every summer, as the baseball fields located behind the church (facing Illinois Street) are used for Little League games for many Butler-Tarkington residents. One congregate noted, "Our church is probably more recognizable from the back than from the front by Butler-Tarkington residents."

NEGOTIATING IDENTITY

In this section, I show how Butler-Tarkington residents negotiate between the various identities of the "invisible neighborhoods" to establish the dominant sense of their neighborhood as an integrated and stable community. Significantly, certain residents are more willing to talk about the neighborhood's separate areas than others. It was tempting to focus on the comments of those residents who would support my impression that the neighborhood is more separate than integrated. I have a responsibility, however, to listen to all of the residents' voices, regardless of what most conveniently supports my initial ideas, to get as close to the residents' perspectives as possible. By paying attention not only to what residents say, but also to what they do not say, a richer understanding of Butler-Tarkington may be possible. I also examine the context in which comments are made, in order to show that residents are selective about how, when, and with whom they discuss these separate areas, usually emphasizing the identity of the neighborhood as a whole even while explaining how separate areas are recognized. In the rest of this

section, I pick the details of my observations apart, revealing how the many different

perspectives of residents blend into the dominant perception of the neighborhood as a

whole.

In the first half of my research, the only reference a resident made to the separate

nature of the neighborhood was a reluctant one. I asked Evelyn Mason if residents (like

me) recognize the south section of the neighborhood as very different from the rest of the

neighborhood. She responded that she makes a conscious effort never to refer to this

section as "the south end" because that emphasizes separateness. Significantly, she is a

long-time resident and one of the earliest board members of the Butler-Tarkington

Neighborhood Association. As one of the first African-Americans to move into the

neighborhood, she was a leader in the struggle of this group of residents to gain

acceptance. As such, she has been very active in the construction of the neighborhood as

a cohesive whole, constantly emphasizing similarities among residents to make the

neighborhood stable.

During the Faith and Community Project, researchers on the Butler-Tarkington

team were interviewing the same kinds of residents as I was interviewing: very involved

congregates, residents active in the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association, and

clergy. These kinds of residents, recognized within the neighborhood as "community

leaders" were the most accessible to us as outsiders working for a well-respected research

center. In short, we were researching from the "top down," seeking to learn about the

sense of community from residents who play active roles in constructing a sense of

community, without finding out much from residents who are not participants in the

BTNA or any of the churches. As a group, we hypothesized that the residents with whom

we spoke exhibited a sensitivity to the issues of integration and segregation, like Evelyn

Mason. The Butler-Tarkington team leader concluded in her final report that:

> Perhaps because they feared appearing prejudiced, or wanted to avoid belaboring
> race, few people openly mentioned this visible difference between the south and
> north or middle section of Butler-Tarkington. Also, Butler-Tarkington is known
> to have actively pursued, and to some extent achieved, racial harmony in the
> 1960s. Some individuals may have been reluctant to discuss race openly
> because they believed that it would minimize the community's past achievements
> in race relations.

This conjecture draws in part from William Julius Wilson's (1987:200) discussion of the

historical tendency for civil rights leaders, like Evelyn Mason[1], to be reluctant to make

deliberate references to race. My objective, however, is not to prove or disprove that

Butler-Tarkington is more segregated than integrated racially, but to learn more about

how different kinds of residents regard their neighborhood. In this last year of my

research, I selected informants who were not necessarily connected to churches or the

neighborhood association to get a fuller picture of how different residents perceive

Butler-Tarkington. Interestingly, I found these residents were more likely to talk about

the neighborhood as fragmented, and openly spoke about how the fragmentation may or

may not be connected to the issue of integration.

I have chosen to let residents speak for themselves at this point by using several

direct quotations to show how residents approach this topic. Unlike Evelyn Mason, some

people recognize separate neighborhoods, based on the different racial composition of

different areas. The former youth pastor for Fairview Presbyterian Church said:

> Butler-Tarkington is probably three or four separate neighborhoods...One from
> 38th Street to around 44th and Blue Ridge is a predominantly Black community

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[1] I recognize Evelyn Mason is a civil rights leader in Indianapolis and Butler-Tarkington for her efforts to
integrate the schools and the neighborhood.

that is fairly isolated, then another is from 44th Street to 46th and is an area that is more integrated...Then another is from 46th Street probably and over to Westfield, and Butler University is the fourth...The people in the center have learned to live in a more integrated environment.

At the same time, even if they use racial factors to identify different areas, residents never attributed this separation to race or racism directly. Residents explicitly eliminate racism as a cause, emphasizing instead that socio-economic differences are more likely the cause for fragmentation. The youth pastor continued:

Race might not even be the predominant factor; it could be more economic. That's the most visible...It's definitely cultural...This is probably not motivated by fear...I have never sensed fear in that neighborhood. People move into Butler-Tarkington because of feelings of being part of a community.

Similarly, a newer resident of the neighborhood said:

I see it as a divided neighborhood. There's above 46th and 43rd... I think it is finance first and race second... It's not a hateful division, but a bit of snobbery above.

As a newcomer on the 42nd block of Graceland Avenue, this resident sensed that residents from more affluent areas of the neighborhood disapproved of her choice to live in the southern section primarily because of the socio-economic, rather than racial, differences between the areas.

These two residents, and others who made similar comments, might have been more willing to discuss the fragmentation of the neighborhood because they are not actively involved with the churches or neighborhood association. I found that residents who are actively involved, as participants in the construction of a community that is meant to emphasize the neighborhood as a whole, discuss these topics in a less direct way. One long-time resident from the south section of the neighborhood who is active in

the neighborhood association inexplicitly revealed that he recognizes separate areas of the neighborhood. When asked what his neighborhood is like, he responded that his neighborhood "is around 42nd and Boulevard and a block west maybe, but there's a stigma I should say with anyone in that area being a social idiot." At the same time, when asked if he would describe Butler-Tarkington as integrated, he spoke of the neighborhood as a whole rather than the separate area he had identified as his neighborhood: "I guess I would have to because there is enough within the boundaries to justify it." Quickly adding that "an ideally integrated neighborhood would have that diversity that everyone is speaking of, like a dream come true," he seemed dissatisfied with the level of integration in the neighborhood, but unwilling to directly voice this dissatisfaction.

That informant's comments are evidence of the tension residents use to negotiate the identity of their neighborhood. This tension is between how they experience every day as insiders on the one hand, and how the neighborhood is known to outsiders in general on the other hand. As a result, representatives of the BTNA and other neighborhood institutions act on the assumption that it is in their best interest to promote its reputation as integrated and stable. When, at the end of the interview, I thanked the previously quoted informant for sharing his ideas with me, he said that he "didn't mind telling me what was on [his] mind" because he had seen from my continuous involvement in neighborhood events that I am "genuine and truly care about what's going on here." I had the feeling that he would not have been so candid about his perspectives if he were speaking to someone who did not seem as equally invested in the neighborhood as himself. On a larger scale, his response mirrors the neighborhood's

concern since the Association's efforts in the 1950s to promote its reputation for being

integrated and stable. A 1970 newspaper article stated that "the Butler-Tarkington area

has a population of 10,000 persons, of which 60 percent is Negro." It then went on to

give the geographic boundaries of the neighborhood as a whole (*Indianapolis Star*

1970:12). Polis Center statistics, however, show that the Black population was closer to

40 percent (The Polis Center 1996:36). Significantly, neither the article nor the Polis

Center statistics record the concentration of different residents in different areas, which is

an important reality in the lives of residents. At the same time, this corresponds to the

"visible" neighborhood's identity promoted by the BTNA, imposing a dominant sense of

order on the "invisible neighborhoods."

CHAPTER FOUR
Social Geography

While landmarks serve to diversify the neighborhood, making separate areas identifiable, those landmarks that are institutions also serve to unify those areas. These institutions, such as churches, community service organizations and the neighborhood association, address individual residents' needs on the basis that they are meeting the needs of the entire community, applying their sense of order on the neighborhood as a whole. This helps to explain why residents' descriptions of their community (their sense of belonging) coincide with the geographic whole of the neighborhood, rather than with separate areas. In this chapter, I discuss how the "sense of community" in Butler-Tarkington is built largely by interactions between residents and neighborhood institutions, as well as among neighborhood institutions themselves, to reinforce neighborhood cohesiveness. These interactions take place through community services organized by different neighborhood churches and the Martin Luther King Multi-Service Center. As part of the Polis Center's Faith and Community Project (1997), I focused on learning exactly how community service organizations and churches coordinate efforts to meet the needs of both residents and non-residents, and how those efforts contribute to the sense of community in the neighborhood. Much of the following discussion draws from our findings. We interviewed clergy, program coordinators, program facilitators, congregates, program participants and residents to find out how community service functions to strengthen and define this community.

Inseparable Church and Community

Some churches in the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood that have historically

contributed most to the sense of community through resident interaction are North United

Methodist, located along the south boundary of the neighborhood (3808 N. Meridian) and

the quad parishes of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, Fairview Presbyterian Church,

and the Faith United and Disciples of Christ Christian churches, located approximately in

the middle of the neighborhood (see Appendix B). I discuss these churches in particular

because I found them to be the ones that stand out to residents the most; there are several

other churches that are also active in community service, but they were less known than

these by my informants. Each of these churches shares the history of the neighborhood;

as changes occurred in the neighborhood, the congregations reflected and responded to

those changes. For example, the St. Thomas parish boundaries were drawn to be almost

the same as the boundaries of Butler-Tarkington, extending just north of the

neighborhood to 34th Street. Father Munshower of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

told one researcher that the congregation population has reflected the neighborhood

population over time in that the parish, like the neighborhood, tends to be mostly

"middle-class." Also, he said that the parish was very much influenced by the integration

of the neighborhood and that many members of the parish were involved with the process

of integration. In the 1960s people used the parish as grounds for developing

relationships with other parish members of a different race.

Butler-Tarkington history is also shared by Fairview Presbyterian Church, which

first moved into the neighborhood in 1924. The small size of the parking lot is a

reminder that this was once a "walking church," meaning that most congregates were also

residents of the neighborhood who lived within walking distance of the church. As the

population of the neighborhood and transportation options grew, some congregates began

to move farther away from the church. However, residents kept their ties to the

neighborhood by keeping ties to the church. At one church function, the 63rd annual

neighborhood Fish Fry, many congregates told me that their parents or grandparents had

once been congregates who lived near the church. Others told me that there is a tendency

for congregates to grow up in the church as residents of the neighborhood, move out of

the neighborhood as young adults, and eventually return to both the neighborhood and the

church. When asked why this stability in membership persists, I was told repeatedly that

ties to "family and friends are strong *in the neighborhood and the church.*" Respondents

always included their enjoyment of Butler-Tarkington's sense of community as a reason

for returning to the church (and neighborhood) or for staying there in the first place. It is

not possible to separate the communities of the church and the neighborhood to say that

one leads residents to remain part of the other. To residents who are also congregates of

Fairview Presbyterian Church, the sense of community they enjoy is a culmination of

mutual involvement between the church and the neighborhood. The continuity in the

church is a result of continuity in the neighborhood and vice versa.

Congregates of Fairview Presbyterian Church refer to their church sometimes as a

"neighborhood church" because of its long history of involvement with the neighborhood

in the form of community service. Most of the community service programs that are in

place today at Fairview were created in the 1970s and have changed over time to match

the changing needs of residents. Reverend Frank White was the pastor then and initiated

many of the programs that still exist successfully today with a focused emphasis on

community building between residents and congregates. A good example of this is the Mother's Day Out program, which began in 1974 and has become the Early Childcare Program. A past director of the program told me that Reverend White initiated this program because the church "had all this extra space and there were people in the neighborhood who needed the service." As residents' needs changed from a temporary childcare that would allow mothers to have a break to an all-day pre-school program, the church changed its program. One program director who lives and works just outside the neighborhood told me that the Early Childcare Program is one of the best pre-schools in Indianapolis and is widely associated with the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood.

Criss-Crossing Community

These churches are an integral part of the sense of community residents feel because the functions performed by participants of community service programs are the grounds upon which people get to know one another and become friends. Mapping the interactions that give shape to the sense of community in Butler-Tarkington results in a complex criss-cross pattern of insiders (congregates and/or residents) and outsiders (some congregates, some not). Church programs draw not only from the congregation, but also from the neighborhood population to serve the needs of the neighborhood as a whole. These programs also incorporate the efforts of non-residents, who may or may not be church members. All participants in service, whether insiders or outsiders, are also participants in the Butler-Tarkington community and carry the sense of community out of Butler-Tarkington when they leave the neighborhood. Similarly, many of the community programs themselves are well known throughout the community, at once extending and

reinforcing the identity of the neighborhood as a whole. Also, program coordinators

from different institutions throughout the neighborhood rely on each other to create what

I will refer to as an "institutional sense of community." Without the coordination of

various institutions at an administrative level, the personal interactions that bond this

community would not be possible. Significantly, because of the well-known reputations

of established programs, this criss-cross pattern matters even to residents who do not

participate in community service. Even if a particular resident does not participate in a

program, just knowing that it is there makes residents feel they are part of a community

in which residents care and are willing to work together to meet the needs of others.

It is over time that these criss-crossed lines are drawn as programs become

successful. In Butler-Tarkington, when program coordinators identify a great enough

need , their program is able to expand its services and extend its service boundaries to

include people who are residents of other neighborhoods near Butler-Tarkington. For

instance, another program that uses space at Fairview Presbyterian that emphasizes

building community with residents is Caring Community. The mission statement of this

program states that it is "an organization which provides volunteers to provide various

services for seniors in the Butler-Tarkington and Meridian-Kessler neighborhoods."

Since the resident population of parts of Butler-Tarkington is an "aging population,"

Caring Community was so popular that coordinators soon expanded to include A Caring

Place to their service. While Caring Community focuses on in-home care of elderly

residents, A Caring Place is an adult daycare designed to provide "socialization and

stimulation for the older adult," serving the needs of elderly residents (and their younger

families who are supporting them) in the Fairview Presbyterian Church basement. As of

the summer of 1997, eighty percent of the volunteers for A Caring Place were residents

of Butler-Tarkington, rather than congregates. Another Fairview program that has

changed over time is the Ben Ezra Senior Program. The program director told me that

when the program began it was intended to serve both residents and congregates.

Participants from the church and neighborhood invited friends to join so that today more

than half of the participants are neither residents nor congregates. Even if these

participants are "outsiders" in the sense that they do not live in the neighborhood and are

not members of the church, they are still participants in the community of Butler-

Tarkington.

The Geography of Cooperation

Many of Butler-Tarkington's best known and most successful church-based

community service programs rely on the cooperation of other churches to meet the needs

of residents. For example, Caring Community has its office space in the facilities that are

shared by two congregations: University Park and Faith United Christian churches (4550

North Illinois Street). The fact that these two congregations share the same building

itself is interesting, especially since one congregation is all African-American and the

other is eighty percent white, and shows that these two churches truly know what it is to

share. Pastor Riley of University Park told one researcher that the majority of their

outreach programs revolve around what he calls "ministry of facility," meaning that these

churches participate in community service by allotting user space to organizations to help

them perform their services. The facilities are used on a regular basis for another senior

citizens program known as Heritage Place and the Children's Habitat's Montessori pre-

school, and frequently for BTNA or Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. University Park

organizes some programs on its own in cooperation with organizations outside the Butler-

Tarkington neighborhood, such as giving food donations to Northwood Christian

Church's food pantry and providing volunteers for the Day Spring Shelter, a refuge for

women and children. Faith United Christian Church also organizes programs of its own,

primarily targeted to younger residents, such as a youth vacation Bible study, an aerobics

class, Friday night dances, and a liturgical dance class.

The geography of the neighborhood facilitates cooperation among different

institutions, making programs more supportable and successful. Each of the quad

parishes benefits most from their close proximity to each of the other facilities. For

example, Caring Community is an outreach project of the quad parishes and Catholic

Social Services, located outside of the neighborhood. A Caring Place, founded by

Fairview Presbyterian Church, uses space Fairview's basement for caregiving, but has its

administrative offices in the building shared by Faith United and University Park

Christian Churches. The Mother's Day Out program, which is now the successful Early

Childcare Program, serves participants from Fairview Presbyterian's facilities, but was

initially sponsored by what was known then as the Tri-Parish Council, the forerunner to

the quad parishes before University Park Christian Church moved into the neighborhood

in 1984. Heritage Place, which uses the shared facilities of University Park and Faith

United Christian Churches, was actually founded by cooperation between the Butler-

Tarkington and Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Associations.

Cooperation among church-based community service organizations also extends

to the Martin Luther King Multi-Service Center (MLKMSC), located just outside of

Butler-Tarkington's geographic eastern boundary. Located on the east side of Meridian Street near 38th Street, MLKMSC was the Butler-Tarkington Multi-Service Center until 1983 when it changed its name, reflecting the expansion of its service boundaries to include the nearby neighborhoods of Mapleton-Fall Creek and Meridian-Kessler. This institution sponsors a variety of programs meant to meet a wide variety of community needs, such as a peer court program for youth meant to teach young people "problem solving skills, team work and good citizenship." Today, the service boundaries have been expanded even more to include the United Northwest Area, Keystone-Monon, and Broad Ripple. MLKMSC staff regularly attend neighborhood association meetings of all areas in its service boundaries to keep apprised of community needs and concerns. Several MLKMSC board members are also clergy of area churches or board members of neighborhood associations. For example, Margaret Gross, a Butler-Tarkington resident who grew up in the neighborhood and returned after leaving twenty-five years ago to raise her children in the neighborhood, told participants she was attending a Butler-Tarkington public meeting as both a resident and a board member for the MLKMSC. Also, Reverend John Koppitch of Fairview Presbyterian Church served on the board of directors of the MLKMSC. Furthermore, neighborhood churches provide facilities and volunteers to run programs sponsored by the multi-service center, such as the MLKMSC summer camp for children which is held at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church each year.

Other neighborhood organizations that work with the MLKMSC and church-based community service programs include Butler University and the BTNA. Father Munshower of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church told a researcher that Butler

University has been involved with quarterly clergy meetings that are organized by MLKMSC, regularly sending the same representative, whom I have also seen at several BTNA meetings. The BTNA often uses neighborhood church facilities to hold their meetings. Also, as mentioned before, residents who are active in the BTNA are often neighborhood church members and board members and participants for other community service organizations. By participating with a variety of neighborhood institutions, these active residents, often referred to as "leaders," are interacting in several roles and offer the resources they know about from other personal involvement so that, in effect, many organizations are able to cooperate, even if they are not formally represented.

Institutions and Power

The institutions of Butler-Tarkington that are most powerful (the quad parishes, North Meridian Street United Methodist Church, Butler University, the BTNA and the MLKMSC) all play active roles in community service. Father Munshower described the neighborhood in terms of power to another Polis Center researcher:

> Butler University is a power in the neighborhood because it has money, a large amount of well-maintained property and a lot of clout with government and other connected people in the city. The BTNA has power because of the numbers of people who participate in it and because of its history. Churches have a combined moral power that contributes to the...stability of the neighborhood, especially where their memberships are civicly minded.

Father Munshower listed the MLKMSC and Caring Community as the two foremost community service organizations in the neighborhood, while pointing out that North United Methodist is "terribly important" because of its community outreach.

All of these institutions have the power to impose their sense of order on the

neighborhood as a whole because they are the ones drawing the service boundaries that

define the context in which residents interact. The criss-cross pattern of interactions is

localized onto a common ground circumscribed by their service boundaries, which are

drawn from the boundaries of visible neighborhoods rather than those of invisible

neighborhoods.

CHAPTER FIVE

Building and Maintaining Community

The foundation of the sense of community in Butler-Tarkington is the common interest of keeping property value up. Historically, residents have interacted to make known and enforce shared expectations to build and maintain community in a very literal way. When one long-time resident was asked if he expects anything from his neighbors, he responded, "Oh yes, basically I've expressed to them that you have to keep your property up...If you keep your property up, that's for the value of everyone." In this chapter, I show that standards of property maintenance are used first to identify different kinds of residents, and then to unite those different people into one community. For example, when asked how his neighbors are similar to or different from him, one resident responded that the main difference is that some are young and some are old, but that "the common interest most have is in their properties." While residents tolerate, recognize and even take pride in their diversity, as a group they demand one similarity: that every resident take responsibility for meeting neighborhood standards of property maintenance and appearance. One resident put it this way: "I don't feel I have to live up to expectations of others and yet there is an expectation to keep your house up." (*Indianapolis Star* 1992:5) The rest of the chapter shows how shared expectations serve as the guidelines that underscore a large amount of the interactions between residents that make the neighborhood a community.

AN HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD VALUE

The shared expectation of maintaining property according to neighborhood

standards has been the core of neighborhood cohesion in Butler-Tarkington since the

most recent major change the neighborhood encountered: the influx of African-

Americans and the challenge to successfully integrate the neighborhood beginning in the

1950s. Evelyn Mason explained that white flight was such a problem because

> there were whites who just did not think they should live next to blacks.
> They thought we are not all the same and that blacks devaluate property, destroy
> the neighborhood, and adversely affect the cosmetic appeal.

It was in response to those sentiments held by some white residents that the Butler-

Tarkington Neighborhood Association was started in the first place. Mrs. Mason told me

their goals today are similar to those with which they began: "to create and maintain a

neighborhood of which residents could be proud by encouraging residents to be civic-

minded" and to encourage people to protect property value with home-maintenance and

upkeep. It was by "proving they could be good residents," keeping their homes in good

repair and their lawns and gardens maintained, Mrs. Mason explained, that African-

Americans were finally accepted and respected as residents of the neighborhood.

Establishing and maintaining high property values has been a goal that links

residents from different parts of the neighborhood together ever since. In the 1970s,

property upkeep was central to the neighborhood's concerns as Butler-Tarkington

residents worked together to create a "plan for revitalization." According to an

Indianapolis Star newspaper article, about four-fifths of the housing in Butler-Tarkington

was built before 1940. The Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association estimated that, consequently, one of every 50 homes was "unsound." Eugene Selmanoff, chairman of the BTNA at the time, said "residents will have to 'push themselves' to bring their homes into compliance with housing, zoning, fire prevention, health and sanitation codes." He added that the plan was "workable providing the residents continue to be 'actively involved in determining the future of their neighborhood.'" (*Indianapolis Star* 1970:12) In a 1987 article, one resident of fifteen years was quoted:

I think my goal for the neighborhood is being actualized. The neighbors are putting so much work in on their properties. I see it as a real plus...What strikes me is that we have neighbors who are very involved (*Indianapolis Star* 1987:1).

By maintaining their own property, residents were (and are), in effect, participating in the maintenance of their community that will stabilize it for the future.

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

Residents are identified according to how well they conform to the shared expectation of keeping their property up, thereby participating in the community to achieve the neighborhood goals. The more active or "involved" residents are, the more they belong in the community as "good residents." Resident feel that the more "active" and "concerned" residents there are, the better the neighborhood will be. One resident, a widow who had lived in the neighborhood since 1963, said, "This is a very concerned neighborhood. That is what makes a good neighborhood - not to be nosy, but to be concerned." Oftentimes while doing my fieldwork, I heard residents commending active residents who keep their property up. At a Neighborhood Connect meeting in October where representatives from city departments, the neighborhood, and the Center for

Citizenship and Community (CCC) of Butler University were meeting to discuss how they could cooperate to enforce the city's formal zoning and health code standards in the neighborhood, a BTNA board member interjected as others listed complaints with some residents, "I want to mention that there are people who clean up." At a public meeting put together by the CCC and BTNA in January of 1999, director of the CCC Dr. Margaret Brabant noted, while showing slides of property damage in what residents recognize as a "problem area" of their neighborhood, that she knows one local resident has "taken it upon himself to cover the graffiti," referring to him by name. No one in the audience seemed to know him, so another participant in the meeting remarked simply that if anyone knows him, he should be thanked for his efforts. At the same meeting, another resident, complaining that the city was not meeting its responsibility of cleaning the streets in her area of the neighborhood, pointed out to the other participants (which numbered around seventy) that one resident, whom she called by name, had taken it upon himself to clean his entire street every month. By recognizing and commending "good residents" publicly, residents encourage other residents to follow suit and act as good neighbors themselves.

At the same time, residents do not assume every resident who is not maintaining his or her property to be a "bad resident." For example, one informant pointed out that some of the "offending owners are destitute," giving the example of a 60 year old woman who had to be evicted. When he said he "would love to have some social worker-type person who looks for resources" for people in such situations, residents who were participating in the meeting responded enthusiastically right away that "that's the kind of

thing that we could help with the churches." Residents differentiate between residents who are incapable of meeting their standards and those who are simply negligible.

WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

Today, the shared expectation to keep property up remains the basis for a large part of resident interaction on a variety of levels. Like the individual who wrote the letter to the editor, residents seek ways to encourage their neighbors to "act" like neighbors, participating in efforts to actualize their neighborhood goal of high property values as individuals, in groups, and in cooperation with a variety of organizations. At a Neighborhood Connect meeting in October, one resident asked city department representatives if they "rely on concerned neighbors" to identify and correct code violations. Residents were not surprised when the city department representative answered that residents can play a very important role in keeping property up to code standards. By asking this question, the resident was seeking to reaffirm the role that some residents have chosen to play. Residents respect their neighbors' privacy to an extent, but seek validation from the city's legal structure to keep tabs on certain aspects of their neighbors' lives, such as how well they maintain their property and to whom they choose to rent their property if they are landlords. The rest of this section outlines the process of maintenance that I observed Butler-Tarkington residents use.

Step One: Making Expectations Known

The first step residents take as a group is to let residents know exactly what is expected of them. While code enforcement is often called upon to help residents meet

their standards, residents rely on preventative measures first and foremost. As one city department representative put it, "I don't know if it's worth it to make a lot of legislation; I think it's better to cast a wider net, let it be known to all residents what is expected." In keeping with that recommendation, the BTNA works to make their expectations clear before problems occur first by introducing themselves, as neighbors and BTNA representatives, to new residents soon after they move in. They are friendly, rather than formal, Evelyn Mason pointed out, immediately giving new residents informational brochures on the BTNA, which outlines clearly that the residents of Butler-Tarkington expect residents to be sensitive to the values of the neighborhood. They invite new residents to become involved in neighborhood activities, such as social functions and BTNA meetings. Residents also work as a group with the management of rental property to let managers know what is expected of their renters. Evelyn Mason pointed out that it is in the managers' best interests to lease to those who are most likely to fulfill the neighbrhood's expectations because the residents, supported by such an active, capable neighborhood association, will find a way to discourage renters who are insensitive to their demands from staying. She emphasized the effectiveness of the BTNA in this regard by sharing with me an example of some young male renters who moved into the neighborhood:

> We were watching them at first, you know how young men can be, but they turned out to be good neighbors. These young men followed our example and were even out there working on their flower bed last summer!

Step Two: Policing the Neighborhood

The next step residents take, as individuals and as groups, is to monitor or "police" the neighborhood to "keep an eye" on how property is being maintained and

look for problems. The members actively and consistently monitor the neighborhood, looking for problems that could potentially devaluate property, such as cars that remain in one place for long periods of time. This is a key factor in the stability of the neighborhood; because the expectations of the residents are not ambiguous, stability is easier to maintain. There are definite "no-no's" as Evelyn Mason puts it, so every resident knows what it takes to keep the neighborhood a pleasant environment. For example, one summer residents noticed that a man was cooking food outside his yard because he had not paid his gas and electric bill. Evelyn Mason took the responsibility of representing the neighborhood to speak to him herself. She said they had warned him before, but now it was "time for the boom to come down." The man apologized and promised to take care of the situation, realizing he had to meet the demands of the other residents if he wanted to stay in the neighborhood. Another time, it had been brought to the attention of the BTNA that parents who were dropping off their children at the International School of Indiana (then located on 43rd Street) were blocking the driveways of residents, many of whom needed to get to work. So, early one morning, Evelyn Mason went herself to talk to the parents and let them know what problems they were causing. Mary Walker, a former president of the BTNA, is well-known among residents for her individual efforts to monitor the neighborhood. Participants in a Neighborhood Connect meeting recognized her as one that sets an example saying,

> She's something else, has been very helpful, very methodical in writing [her observations] down. She'd be a good person to give a seminar on how to document these violations. You live here and the inspector doesn't.

She told me that she "walks the neighborhood everyday," to let the residents know that she is paying attention to what is going on. She was quoted in a 1992 newspaper article

"We've got a few bad apples like every place else, but it's a family...It's a very diverse bunch here and we all admire and respect each other." (*Indianapolis Star* 1992:5) If residents comply with individual and group demands that residents maintain their property, they are accepted as part of the "family." Still, another way to be part of the "family" or community is to be active in protecting its interests as an active individual who pays attention to the property around him or her. While residents rely on the BTNA to help correct what they identify as problems once they have been identified, the role of the individual is ultimately the most important factor in the maintenance of the neighborhood. One resident emphasized this at a public meeting when he reminded residents to ask themselves, "What's my role in this?...how much am I willing to do?...This whole group, if this doesn't work, it's our fault, not the BTNA's."

Step Three: Know the Resources

Once "problem areas" are identified, the BTNA works closely with code enforcement of the Indianapolis Health and Hospital Department, Zoning, the Fire Department, and area police departments. Interest in maintaining property in their neighborhood comprised most of the business that was conducted at all of the neighborhood meetings I attended throughout my research. Sometimes residents organize groups to address problems to the city department, as was the case when residents were concerned about the poor repair of neighborhood sidewalks. One resident took the initiative to organize a representative group to address their concern to the city-county council:

> I will call board members and ask each of you to bring ten neighbors and we will go and just cause a ruckus! Our sidewalks need repair and we want commitment!

Other times, residents refer their problems directly to city department representatives for

advice before acting. Residents asked city department representatives "what could be

done" about landlords who are habitual offenders or continually "rent to a lower caliber

of tenants," even asking the police officers if records kept on "undesirable" residents

could be used to help residents evict them. In another instance, a BTNA board member

complained that "a business in our area is an utter eyesore" : the building was an

upholstery business with no curtains and ripped screens. She described it as a place

that is

> piled with furniture and looks dirty with pieces of the facade have come off and
> weeds are three feet high...It just looks horrible and I don't know what can be
> done about it.

She addressed her concerns to a Health and Hospital Department representative who

responded that the fire Marshall can act if there are high weeds, but also pointed out

approaches that begin with the community, suggesting the creation of a neighborhood

association task force that could coordinate all the "necessary agencies in solving a

problem." He added that, as a neighborhood group, they could send a letter and "teach

them how to live in harmony" and invite them to a meeting where such concerns were

being addressed.

Step Four: Really Bringing Down the Boom

There are times when residents are unable to correct "problem situations" through

group efforts. Throughout my research, I have observed residents continually

investigating what different city departments are available to them as resources to help them enforce their neighborhood standards and how those resources cooperate with each other. At one Neighborhood Connect meeting, the first item on the agenda was how to "tackle" what residents identify as "habitual offenders." These are people who own property and have been repeatedly taken to court for violating city property standards. One participant of the meeting pointed out that she had monitored the neighborhood five years ago, writing down the addresses of properties that were not being properly maintained. She found that one owner was responsible for 17 of the "offending properties," and that owner was taken to environmental court. She wanted to know if there was anything more residents could do to "curb habitual offenders." A zoning code inspector responded that his department was there to react on complaints and that they use the Health Department as a tool to get in a property when inspecting a complaint. If the violation goes to court, owners can expect to pay $50.00 fines per violation and fines as high as $2500.00 are possible. A judge in attendance added that he tries to work with owners "in a fair way": "my bottom line is compliance...I find, surprisingly, either a lot of owners of property who don't know they own property or want to own a property," as is the case occasionally when people inherit property. A representative from the Office of Corporations Council added that his office

> has to look at each case...Maybe the person is cooperative; maybe it's not an habitual offender but is rather someone who owns a lot of properties. These people are hated, but I try to look at it neutrally (not sympathetically) and ask myself if I could prove their violations in court.

These interactions show how strongly residents disapprove of residents who do not keep their property up, especially those who repeatedly choose not to conform to

neighborhood standards. Residents identify such people as a separate group and enlist the help of a variety of organizations to take whatever measures necessary to force such residents to meet neighborhood standards.

Working closely with city departments in these ways is important to residents because, as Evelyn Mason pointed out, neighborhoods that exhibit less interest in the development and protection of their neighborhood get less attention. It is much more difficult to maintain a neighborhood if there is no one to notice or act upon potential problems until they are overwhelming. It is important to residents as a group that they demand the attention of health and police authorities by keeping communication constant and complete with those who can help them enforce their expectations. Because residents of this neighborhood are able to organize themselves as a group, they are able to make their voices heard. For example, the judge at the meeting said, "I often allow neighborhood associations to act as friends of the court to push for fines." As a group, the residents of Butler-Tarkington exert power over other residents to maintain the kind of neighborhood in which they want to live.

CHAPTER SIX
Resolving Conflict

In this final chapter, I move beyond Geertz's (1973) approach and its focus on what people say about themselves, to focus instead on the anthropology of events (Salzman 1999:96). Drawing from the ideas of Philip Carl Salzman's *The Anthropology of Real life: Events in Human Experience* (1999), I set aside interview manuscripts to look closely at my participant observations of Butler-Tarkington residents "in action" at a neighborhood public meeting (Salzman 1999:97). Salzman points out:

> the greatest weakness of [Geertz's] exclusive emphasis on "meaning" and "voice" is that, while it gives us a good idea of what people will say to anthropologists, what pronouncements it pleases them to make, which self-image they wish to present to us, we have little way of knowing what people will actually do, how they will act, in their encounters in the real world...(1999:96).

Time and again in Butler-Tarkington, I found that what people say and what they do are often two very different things. For example, as discussed earlier, in interviews residents were reluctant to identify the south end of the neighborhood as separate, but this public meeting was called specifically to address the south end as a separate area in need of revitalization. Salzman's point of view has been imperative in helping me understand how residents' actions made sense as they "draw from and feed back into [their own] rules, norms and cultural meanings" (Salzman 1999:97). To resolve the conflict between what people say and what they do, he explains how the anthropology of events is useful:

> An emphasis on events, as they arise from and shape cultural meaning and relational position, focuses on people's actions and activities as they pursue their goals, deal with other people, and cope with circumstances and conditions as they arise and shift through time. Position in action becomes power and constraint, just as meaning in action becomes intention and orientation...By examining

particular events, we are able to focus on the specific ways in which people's real lives are expressed, advanced, enhanced, distorted, [and] disrupted...(1999:100).

This approach was the catalyst that helped me understand why residents interacted as they did at this meeting, and how the past event of integration still influences how residents construct a stable community. It was through observations of personal expression and group interaction that residents' views began to make sense to me as part of their cultural context.

CASTING LIGHT ON CULTURE

In January of 1999, nearly eighty people braved a thunderstorm to attend a Butler-Tarkington public meeting at North Meridian Methodist Church. Co-sponsored by the CCC and the BTNA, this meeting was planned to "combat deterioration and fight juvenile delinquency" in the south section of the neighborhood. "Deterioration" and "delinquency" are realities that conflict with the ideal residents as a group want to promote. Once assembled, a BTNA board member addressed the audience, stating that the BTNA and the CCC wanted residents to act as a "shared data base, sharing ideas and reaching consensus" about "what needs to happen in those corners of 40th and 42nd and Boulevard as far as revitalization is concerned." The format of the meeting was planned carefully. First, different kinds of residents were identified and some were invited to speak briefly about their own involvement in the neighborhood. Participants were asked to raise their hands if they owned property in the neighborhood. In response, one eager, elderly African-American resident stood and said: "We are missing Bernard! It's between 40th and 42nd and it's a mess!..." The crowd was attentive to him and there was a

lighthearted reception of his exclamation. In response, other participants spoke up to introduce themselves and their interests in the neighborhood. These people were identified as "long-time residents", "homeowners", "MLKMSC and BTNA board members", "business owners" (from the block in question), "entrepreneurs" or "innovators" and a "real estate developer." The moderator of the meeting asked another participant to record and post the details of the meeting on large pieces of paper as residents spoke, some property owners offering their phone numbers to prospective renters or collaborators in their own development plans. After a number of people had been introduced, the moderator tried to move the meeting along, commenting, "We have summed up what is happening right now" by speaking with some of the "entrepreneurs..." To the surprise of the audience, before she was able to continue the man who had previously spoken up on behalf of Bernard Street voiced his concerns again: "We have some real serious neighborhood problems!" To my surprise this time, the audience agreed with him very vocally and then listened carefully as he explained problems his area has with unpredictable garbage pick-up. His concerns were understood as symptoms, however, of the problem the group had assembled to address. The group was willing to hear him out, but were more interested in moving the meeting along to hear as many other people as possible.

The moderator turned the crowd's focus to the following purpose:

Now let's talk about our neighborhood- why we live here. If we have lived here a long time, what we remember from childhood that we would like to see preserved, values we want to see preserved.

For the next half of an hour, participants responded to her question one at a time. Significantly, most participants did not separate what they like about the neighborhood

from the problems they experience. Most of the responses were not about values or aspects of the neighborhood they would like to see preserved, but were complaints about specific problems they encounter. Some residents pointed out what they like about the neighborhood as a whole, while others pointed out problems that characterize the south section of the neighborhood. Fourteen different residents had made comments when the moderator suggested that the participants "move on to what we can do to preserve all of these good things." As I will discuss below, I noticed that not many "good things" had been mentioned.

The ensuing comments expanded on the complaints participants had already listed. Most suggestions involved creating public space to meet the everyday needs of residents, providing space in which different kinds of residents would interact. Twenty-six residents responded, including the man from Bernard Street, whose third comment "WHAT ABOUT BERNARD STREET?" met with good-natured laughter. The audience did not want to hear more about his particular concerns at this point, and the meeting continued. At the end of the meeting, the fifty or so residents who had not departed early were asked to fill out short evaluation forms, commenting on the meeting. Probably less than a dozen were filled out.

For me, observing this event was like watching a theater adaptation of this neighborhood's culture. After getting to know the motivations and characteristics of individual residents, it was as if they became actors on a stage. This is where the mental maps and conceptualizations of individuals takes form and affect the reality of the neighborhood as a physical entity. To watch residents interact cast a new light on my

understanding of how their individuality is gathered into community, constrained by common goals.

SIFTING THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The structure of the meeting overall shows how the dominant sense of order is relied on and reinforced in the neighborhood. By identifying residents who had personal financial investments in the area immediately, community leaders were commending those who have the most power in the neighborhood revitalization efforts. At the same time, they acknowledge the balance of power structure by pointing out that every resident plays an important role. Time and again, the moderator and other community leaders pointed out that it is in the best interests of everyone that residents support the efforts of "entrepreneurs" by patronizing their businesses. As the moderator commented, this was how they "summed up what is going on now." Since this meeting was about solving problems in the south end, they could have assessed the current situation by asking victims of crime to share their experiences. The fact that instead they chose to focus on what initial efforts have been made to revitalize the area shows that they identify the area not by its disorder, but by the potential to establish order. Therefore, it is not the actions of the residents, but those of the BTNA that define the area. A study of the numerous businesses that exist and those that are being planned would be helpful here in explaining why residents emphasize the economic revitalization specifically.

Next, by inviting residents to voice their concerns and suggestions in this context, they were solidifying the BTNA as the sieve through which disparate views are sifted into consensus (which equals community). The fact that so few people filled out

response forms suggests that participants felt they had done their part by attending, and that the rest was up to the BTNA. In general, residents rely on the BTNA to create a sense of community by taking care of problems when they arise. One participant made it clear that she does not assume the task of making the neighborhood a "home" to be her own:

> I don't do a lot of things here, I went to this just because I remembered it. I was curious to know who would show up. I would like to see this neighborhood as a home and I've thought before that 40th and Boulevard should be looked after.

Conflict only strengthens residents' reliance on the BTNA to promote order and a sense of community: another participant said the "solution to [their] problems would be for the BTNA to be more visible as a neighborhood organization."

The BTNA's role in maintaining order was further demonstrated by the fact that the group discussion did not waver from its focus when one participant repeatedly and energetically expressed concern for Bernard Street. He obviously wanted to discuss Bernard Street specifically, but that was not the express purpose for which the meeting had been called. The group entertained his frustrations to a point, but were more interested in giving many people a chance to speak than addressing his concerns until he was satisfied. Individuals' complaints are taken as symptoms of neighborhood problems, in keeping with the shared understanding of the neighborhood as a whole. It is not that participants did not want to hear this resident's complaints, but that they wanted to know how those complaints fit into the greater problem. This demonstrates that the neighborhood assumes responsibility for problems of specific areas as neighborhood problems.

At the same time, the BTNA is not a powerful automaton that can take care of problems without input. Afterall, it is dependent on the energy of individuals who like to think every resident has the same interests to protect. In the context of this event, the tension between individual residents and individuals who are active in the BTNA in terms of neighborhood responsibility was more apparent than it could be in an interview. For example, a participant commented that he had been absent from the neighborhood for two years, and when he returned, "School 86 [3] was gone...How did that get by the BTNA?"

The moderator defended the BTNA, referring to a BTNA board member's previous comment:

> We need more participation from the neighborhood, you can't just put it all on the neighborhood association. We need contact with you first, then we can take it to the city and show them what we want.

By attending this meeting, residents took part in the process through which community is built, allowing for as much contact as they felt necessary for the BTNA to begin its revitalization efforts. Nonetheless, the participation of a wide range of residents for the most part is brief and infrequent. The construction of community is then largely in the hands of community leaders when it comes to conflict resolution.

THE TRUTH COMES OUT

Significantly, in this context, individuals voiced concerns in such a way as to reveal their identification of the south end as an invisible neighborhood, normally de-emphasized. Of course, recognition of this area was fundamental to the very purpose of

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[3] Indianapolis Public School 86 closed in 1997. Unfortunately, I was studying abroad at the time and was

the meeting. However, just because the south end was openly recognized as an

identifiable area does not mean that the tensions that usually keep it invisible were

entirely relaxed. For example, one long-time resident, a property owner in the south end,

described the south end as a "forgotten area." The unspoken component of that

description is that the area was once a part of, and still belongs to, those who have

forgotten it: namely, the Butler-Tarkington community as a whole. She further

emphasized the belonging of this area to the whole when she pointed out that the five

properties she owns in the south end "would be worth a lot more money in a different

block *of the same neighborhood.*" Since she considers the south end to be an area that

belongs to Butler-Tarkington, she appeals to the BTNA for help, pointing out as another

resident did that "even down there is our neighborhood":

> Clean our streets! They put up the signs for road cleaning, nothing happens, and
> then the next day they come and take down the signs! The city doesn't do
> anything to help us!...We've called 911 when the shooting is like OK Corral over
> there! No one ever comes! Old people should be able to sit on their porches! I
> am not going anywhere!

Her closing comment, attached to a plea to the BTNA for help, not only asserts her

belonging to the south end, but also parallels the belonging of the south end to the

neighborhood. The invisible neighborhood is not going anywhere either, and her entreaty

is for the BTNA to act on behalf of the south end, securing its place in the visible

neighborhood.

This context also enabled me to observe sentiments that residents act upon, but do

not speak of in interviews. When the participant described the south end as a "forgotten

area," the audience vigorously agreed, applauding and shouting "Amen!" I was startled

---

unable to follow the events of the closing. Here again, further research would be useful.

to see so many people expressing that they shared this participant's perspective. I could

probably have interviewed a hundred residents and never known that so many perceive

the neighborhood in this way, or that they feel so passionately about it. Because they

were among neighbors, engaging in a dialogue meant to strengthen the belonging of the

south end to the entire neighborhood, it was not risky to discuss the south end as a

distinct area. In this setting, they were not stressing the south end as separate, but were

working together to re-situate it in the safeguards and embrace of the constructed

community. I also observed residents acting upon sentiments that they did not express to

me in interviews in terms of positive and negative qualities of Butler-Tarkington. When I

asked them, virtually every informant focused on what they perceive as positive qualities,

even though I carefully structured my questions so as not to lead their responses.

Informants described their neighborhood in terms such as "integrated, diverse, stable,

cooperation" and "strong sense of community". At the public meeting, even when asked

to describe the "good things" they like about their neighborhood, they mostly focused on

negative qualities of the neighborhood, such as violent crime, graffiti, neglect of the south

end, closing of public schools, absentee landlords and drug activity. This is still in

keeping with neighborhood conventions, however, because the negative qualities are

situated in the discussion of what residents want to preserve. The problems are outlined

in relationship to the "good things," which is the first step in the process of maintenance

that ultimately defines the neighborhood by its positive qualities.

INTEGRATION AS A PAST EVENT

Studying Butler-Tarkington through the anthroplogy of events opened the epistemology of the community to my view as an ethnographer. Using Geerz's (1973) approach of thick description, I learned by following the residents' leads that it is the construction of stability that is the foundation of Butler-Tarkington's cohesion. Still, this approach did not enable me to understand what role its reputation as integrated and diverse, so often emphasized by residents, plays in defining and enhancing the sense of community. Turning to Salzman's (1999) approach of the anthropology of events, I learned to explore the neighborhood not only by observing how they interact as a group at current events, but also by considering how the past event of integration has influenced their sense of community.

A 1987 newspaper article reflects the residents' perspective that integration is a past event in Butler-Tarkington, something that has been "survived" and is no longer happening. Specifically, the author describes the neighborhood as one that has "survived...white flight [and] integration and now faces a new generation of residents." (*Indianapolis Star* 1987:1) During the 1950s and 1960s, residents actively constructed a sense of community by working toward the common goal of integrating their neighborhood. The BTNA was designed as the vehicle for this process, which required residents to resolve conflicting points of view between those who were willing to share their neighborhood with different kinds of people and those who were not. The integration of Butler-Tarkington was a powerful event that established the BTNA's dominating role in the design of order and shaped the sense of community.

Even if the event is no longer taking place, it remains influential from the roots of

Butler-Tarkington's sense of community. Residents call upon their reputation as

integrated to help them resolve their conflicts today, listing it as an "asset." At the public

meeting, a city-county council member responded first when the group was asked what

values they would like to see preserved:

> We are an integrated neighborhood, diverse, multi-cultural, multi-
> everything...We are black/white, rich/poor...This is one of our major assets!

While the audience vocally agreed, I wondered exactly how these qualities are assets to

residents. From the interviews that followed, I learned to trace the residents' logic that,

since the neighborhood has "survived" integration, they know they can work together to

resolve other conflicts as well. When I asked the same informant to explain how he sees

the qualities he listed as assets, he responded, "It's an asset because we know we can live

next to each other, understand each other's struggles." Residents carry the past event of

integration around with them as a stored resource, activating it when needed to solve

problems (Salzman 1999:7).

Although integration is viewed as a completed process, the reputation acquired

through the process is not a static one. As the term "integrated" has lost some of its

significance over time, Butler-Tarkington residents have cultivated the neighborhood's

reputation as integrated by taking pride in the modern counterpart of integration:

diversity. The 1987 newspaper article continued:

> Residents are old and young, married and single, living together and
> roommates, black and white, Jewish, Catholic...It's a portrait of diversity, to be
> sure, but a group portrait nonetheless. It is, in a word, a neighborhood
> (*Indianapolis Star* 1987:1).

Demographics that outline the resident population of Butler-Tarkington according to categories of race, socio-economic position, gender, education levels, and household type (who lives together, whether they are owners or renters) show Butler-Tarkington to be made up of a diversity of residents (The Polis Center 1996:69-83). At the same time, the neighborhood is predominantly defined by a shared identity among this diversity of residents who say they like living in the neighborhood because there is a "strong sense of community". What makes the culture of the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood so unique and interesting is that the cohesion that makes this a "community" results from the tension to construct a shared identity, which in turn depends on the recognition of residents' differences. It is the tension between different kinds of residents from different areas striving to perceive their neighborhood as an integrated whole that enables them to transform the geographic space of Butler-Tarkington into a common ground upon which each individual stands first and foremost as a Butler-Tarkington resident.

CONCLUSION

The findings presented in this paper are the foundations upon which an extended understanding of the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood can be built. I have tried to explain how residents perceive and construct their community as the first step in a longer process of learning about American urban culture, which could then be expanded into a comparative study of urban cultures around the world. Like the (sub-) culture of the neighborhood itself, the understandings I have drawn from my field work are not static. Even as I write, residents are interacting in the schools, churches and streets of their neighborhood. At this moment, they are walking their dogs, taking out their garbage, keeping an eye on the maintenance of their neighbors' property, eating lunch in a neighborhood restaurant, and raising their hands in neighborhood classrooms. In a wider view, they are annoyed by the boisterous Butler University students who moved next door, they are dealing with the closing of a neighborhood school, and they are struggling to revitalize a "problem area" of their neighborhood. The experiences that build (or challenge) their sense of community continue and the neighborhood changes in response.

My next step in this research is to learn more about the schools and businesses as social landmarks; I know from the data collected thus far that these are very important to residents as public spaces where people can interact. I suggest that successful schools and businesses are important to Butler-Tarkington residents because they mean that people do not have to travel out of their neighborhood as much on a day to day basis and that they will know each other better by coming into contact more often. Businesses will also provide grounds for interaction, and will contribute to the economic stability of the neighborhood. I could also learn a lot about the neighborhood by focusing more on how

"revitalization efforts" are planned and carried out, and comparing how residents feel about the process before, during and after the project is completed. I could also focus on the school-aged residents of the neighborhood to find out how they perceive their neighborhood in particular, especially to see how the closing of Indianapolis Public School 86 has affected their understanding of their neighborhood. These are examples of some research strategies that I can only suppose at this point, but that I would like to address next.

I believe that even if I were able to spend more time observing and interviewing the people of Butler-Tarkington, my understanding of their neighborhood would be developed further, but would probably not change entirely. I have not experienced Butler-Tarkington exactly as residents have, nor has each resident experienced their community as have their neighbors. There is, however, a shape to their neighborhood that I have been able to discern from my experiences. This is ultimately my group portrait of the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood, derived from the total of my own experiences. I hope that residents will be able to recognize it as their community from their own experiences. If they do, I will have succeeded, at least in part, in understanding the neighborhood on its own terms, which is the first step to any good anthropological study.

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THE BUTLER-TARKINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD

N

⊢——⊣ .08 miles
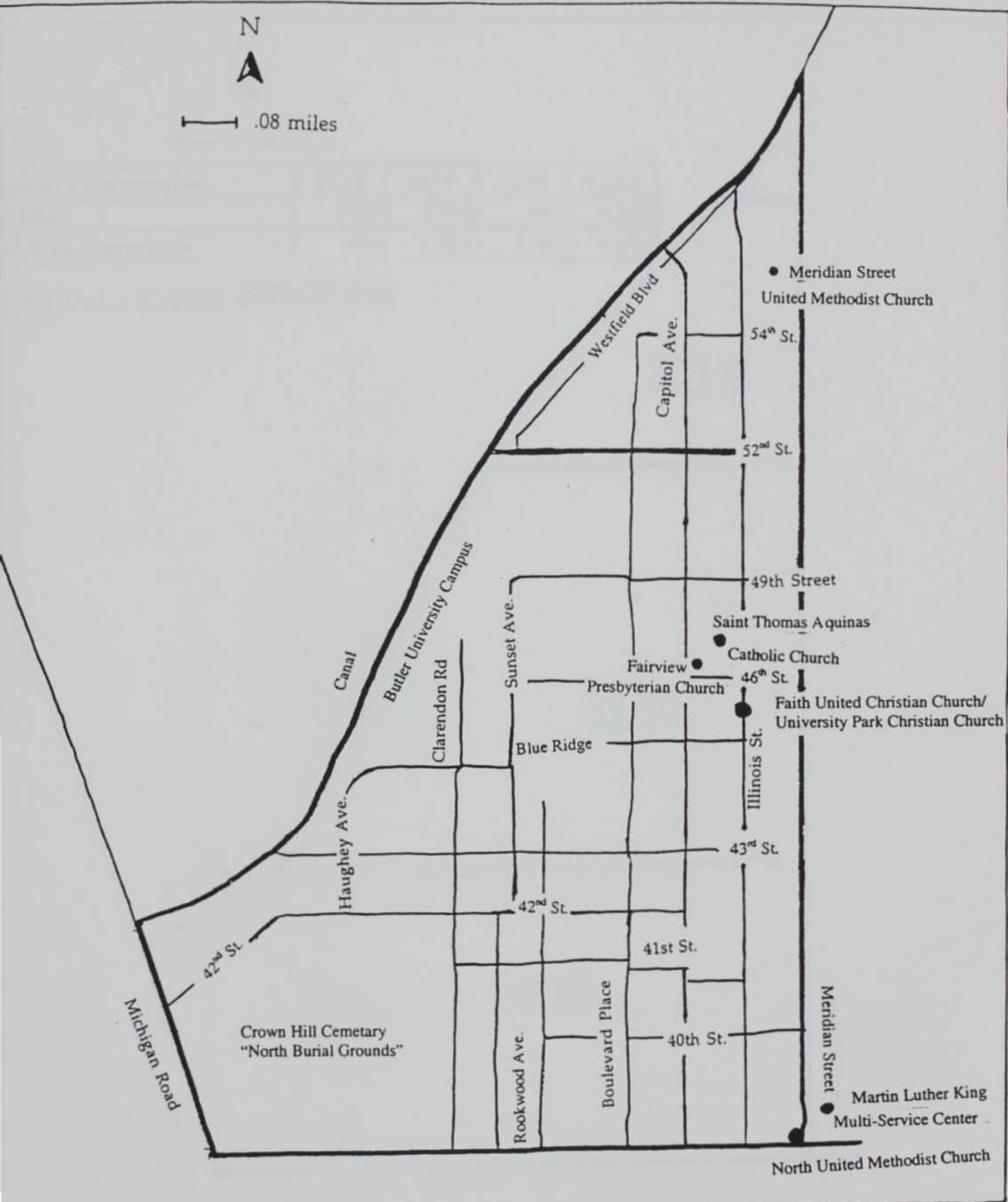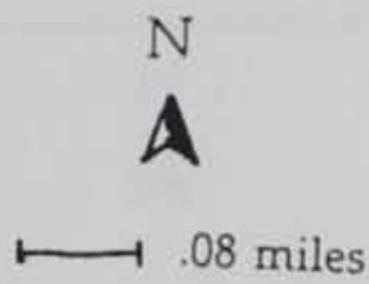
Westfield Blvd

54th St.

52nd St.

49th Street

46th St.

43rd St.

42nd St.

41st St.

40th St.

42nd St.

Canal

Clarendon Rd

Sunset Ave.

Blue Ridge

Haughey Ave.

Rookwood Ave.

Boulevard Place

Meridian Street

Michigan Road

Appendix A

THE BUTLER-TARKINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD

N

$\blacktriangle$

⊢——⊣ .08 miles

• Meridian Street
United Methodist Church

Westfield Blvd

Capitol Ave.

54th St.

52nd St.

Butler University Campus

Canal

Clarendon Rd

Sunset Ave.

49th Street

Saint Thomas Aquinas

• Catholic Church

Fairview •
Presbyterian Church

46th St.

Faith United Christian Church/
University Park Christian Church

Illinois St.

Blue Ridge

Haughey Ave.

43rd St.

42nd St.

41st St.

42nd St.

Rookwood Ave.

Boulevard Place

40th St.

Meridian Street

Michigan Road

Crown Hill Cemetary
"North Burial Grounds"

Martin Luther King
Multi-Service Center

North United Methodist Church

Appendix B

RACIAL COMPOSITION BY CENSUS TRACT OF

THE BUTLER-TARKINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD

N

A

⊢———⊣ .08 miles

Racial Composition	3218	3219	3220	Total
White	3620	3798	809	8,227
African-American	304	1425	3147	4,876

(The Polis Center 1996:99-100)

3218

52nd St.

Canal

3219

43rd St.

3220

Michigan Road

Meridian Street

Appendix C