

CULTURE, CAPITAL AND COMMUNITY:
GENTRIFICATION AND REDEVELOPMENT IN
A ST. LOUIS NEIGHBORHOOD

A Dissertation presented to the Faculty and Graduate School
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In Partial Fulfillment
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By

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* * *

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled:

CULTURE, CAPITAL AND COMMUNITY:
GENTRIFICATION AND REDEVELOPMENT IN A ST. LOUIS NEIGHBORHOOD

Presented by Colin E. Suchland

A Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology,

And hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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DEDICATION

I have an affection for a great city.
I feel safe in the neighborhood of man,
and enjoy the sweet security of the streets.
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

This project is dedicated to the residents and business community of the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood of St. Louis, Mo. Without the generosity of time and the wealth of knowledge provided by my neighbors this project would not have been possible.

Thank you for sharing your stories and opening your homes and businesses to me. As “The Grove” grows and the neighborhood continues to change I know there will be more stories to tell. Cheers to the future of our community and the times we will share in the coming days and years. Until we meet again, I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

Colin E. Suchland

December 4, 2013

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT SUMMARY

In 2006 my wife's parents purchased and then rehabbed a home in central St. Louis, Mo. As a Missourian by birth I had grown up visiting the metro area often, but their new home in the city proper was my first street-level encounter with a predominantly Black, predominantly poor urban neighborhood. Forest Park Southeast (as the community is known) is a prototypical St. Louis neighborhood, built at the zenith of the city in the early 1900s. The brick homes and wide avenues once were the gateway to the 1904 World's Fair and Exposition. Today the same green space is called Forest Park (sometimes called the jewel of St. Louis¹), and thus the neighborhood is named for it's proximity to the park. However, in this new century the neighborhood's best days appeared to be far behind it.

As I walked past the boarded up storefronts (see Illustration 1) and run-down homes along the main road through the community, Manchester Avenue, I snapped a few photos – as has long been my hobby – before heading back to my apartment 120 miles away in Columbia, Mo. By the time I reached home my mind

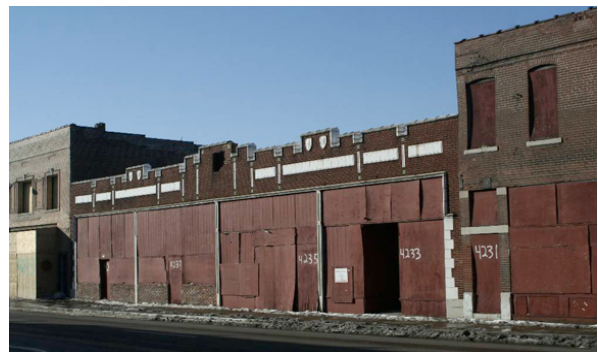


Illustration 1: Commercial properties on Manchester Avenue are boarded up, December 2006.

was filled with questions: How had this once prosperous and vibrant neighborhood fallen so far in the span of a generation or two? Where had the White population gone and why? Where had the businesses and jobs gone? Why were the majority of Black families living there now among the poorest in the entire nation? And finally, why were an increasing number White professionals, middle-class families and students starting to move into a neighborhood know best for street-corner drug deals just a few years earlier?

I decided to answer the last question first in the form of my master's thesis study (Suchland 2008). This decision was motivated in part by the access I had to members of

the local community of White professionals through my family, but the choice also entailed an overt exclusion of the majority of people living in the neighborhood, which itself is part of St. Louis' 17th Ward. The neighborhood by measures of race and class is one of the more diverse communities in St. Louis, which is a metropolis with a long-documented history of segregation (Rainwater 1970, Baybeck and Jones 2004, Gordon 2008). So, I knew from the outset of this project there was more to know.

Thus as I approached the dissertation research presented in this document one of my most explicit goals was to delve deeper into the neighborhood via a study that encompasses the diversity of interest groups (or stakeholders) who now live, work or play in Forest Park Southeast (FPSE), which itself is now (and with increasing regularity) known in St. Louis as “The Grove” in reference to an emerging nightlife and restaurant district along Manchester Avenue.



Illustration 2: A mural advertises bike races called Tour de Grove near the intersection of Boyle and Manchester avenues in The Grove district of Forest Park Southeast, April 2012.

The rebranding of the business community (and beyond) is a reflection of economic renewal and the neighborhood's newfound cultural significance in the wider city. However, divides of class and race are still evident, especially in the differences between the northern and southern halves of the neighborhood, with Manchester Avenue serving as a symbolic dividing lineⁱⁱ.

My specific goals for this research are as follows: 1) record and present the views of a diverse group of neighborhood stakeholders including residents and the business community, 2) ascertain local opinions about the redevelopment and rebranding of the neighborhood that has largely occurred in the years from 2000 to the present, 3) present

highlights from a longitudinal photographic essay of the neighborhood that tracks the changing spaces and places, 5) act as an advocate and facilitator of community dialogue about the trajectory of current and future redevelopment and community enhancement efforts. I am satisfied the project has met these goals, but I remain committed to pushing forward with more depth and length of study. Ultimately, this research is intended to be the first in a long line of reports from within the Forest Park Southeast community. The project offers a rare opportunity to conduct a truly longitudinal ethnography.

In fact, the fifth goal above stems from my own evolving relationship to “The Grove” as both a researcher and a resident of the community. Since 2007 my family and I call the neighborhood home, fostering a participant-observer role for myself and helping to establish rapport with my neighbors (many of whom are now my friends). Ultimately my family decided to purchase and rehab a home on Oakland Avenue, making us part of the long-term changes now occurring in FPSE/The Grove. Being a homeowner allows me certain symbolic privileges within the community, and it conveys greater commitment and provides an in-road with community leaders as well as local politicians. Stakeholders with the City of St. Louis as well as affiliated development offices are informants in the project finding presented below. Additionally, I am a customer and patron of the local business community, which has been the most visible portion of the economic rebound now taking place. My status as a “local” facilitates access to both business and general community stakeholders, who are important informants within the scope of my dissertation research and the continuing project to document the changes occurring in FPSE/The Grove community. Because of these relationships, I was able to conduct primary research and gather secondary information over the course of a five-year period, 2008-2013.

In the broadest terms the research presented herein is a study of gentrification in a typical “Eastern” American city. The neighborhood change now occurring in Forest Park

Southeast is driven largely by the growth of a (predominantly White) middle-class population and the displacement or shrinking of an existing population of (predominantly poor) Black families. In more narrow terms, Forest Park Southeast is a unique community in that it constitutes a microcosm of life in a post-industrial metropolis. The neighborhood change now happening is driven by cultural forces, including a growing nightlife district that is known for gay-friendly clubs and a nationally-known soul-food restaurant. The Grove is only the most visible change, however, because the community also receives millions of dollars in reinvestment annually through a public-private partnership that involves city leaders and several major corporate stakeholders.

In short, a great number of trends in contemporary urban America all intersect in this one small St. Louis neighborhood, making for an incredible “laboratory” for social analysis. Not only does this research connect to several bodies of existing research, it links a number of existing trends to a general process of neighborhood change (and more specifically, gentrification) propelled by the twin forces of culture and capital.

Finally, it is necessary in this introduction to explain the format of the project as presented below is somewhat non-standard. The Department of Sociology at the University of Missouri-Columbia allows its doctoral candidates to present their dissertation research in the form of three empirical research papers. These separate papers are now presented together as “chapters” of a cohesive project. A general literature review of gentrification holds all three pieces together, and this literature review appears in full as part of this dissertation. However each paper also entails a more specific literature that responds to a more narrow or focussed topic, and so the literature reviews relevant to sub-topical areas remain within each chapter. Likewise, the methods of study are consistent between each chapter and thus are presented only once in this document. I opted to keep the abstracts and keywords inside of each chapter to serve as something of a chapter overview for readers. The works cited entries and endnotes for each chapter

have been combined into comprehensive lists at the end of the dissertation. A full-page map of the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood is included as Appendix A to the dissertation.

In summary, efforts have been made to reduce any unnecessary redundancy from chapter to chapter, to locate each paper within a broader line of research into gentrification and to highlight the connectivity between the separate threads of the project. Yet, each chapter also stands alone as a fully developed and empirical inquiry into particular social phenomena. The first paper concerns the role of religion in motivating the return of middle-class groups to urban communities. The second paper examines the power of inclusion and exclusion that goes along with neighborhood branding and marketing. The final paper considers the role that both cultural entrepreneurs and capital investors play in the dynamics of neighborhood change, tying the neighborhood to a global dynamic of urban redevelopment. The role of corporations, community groups and civic leaders in determining the course of redevelopment is highlighted in the rejuvenation and stabilization of residential Forest Park Southeast and the branding of The Grove as a cultural hub of St. Louis.

METHODS OF STUDY

Within the overall body of urban studies there is a long and rich cannon of community studies that make use of the basic package of methods I use in the study of Forest Park Southeast and The Grove. There are a few major works that I look to as models for urban fieldwork, the oldest of which is W.E. DuBois' *The Philadelphia Negro* (1996 [1899])ⁱⁱⁱ. The intimacy with which DuBois presents urban life and the detail he is able to present (down to household composition) are central to understanding urban life and the diversity of city neighborhoods then and now. A second classic work in urban

sociology is Robert Park's and Ernest Burgess' *The City* (1950 [1925]). From the Chicago school I take the model of the city as a social laboratory and a place where social groups interact in localized but systematic social relations on a face-to-face basis. These are important studies in that they affirm the neighborhood and the metropolis as vital venues for sociological study. The study of the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood is situated with a broader understanding of the dynamics of the St. Louis metro area, but I believe the implications of the research stretch to many other core cities that have dwindled from their post-World War II heydays. Additionally, the connection of space and place to social dynamics is an important general guide for all urban studies, adding an interdisciplinary element to this project which is reflected in the full literature review where sociologists, geographers, architects, urban planners, social workers and various other specialties all bear upon our understanding of urban space and the creation of more specific notions of place, neighborhood and community.

Beyond these classic works in urban sociology, there are a number of recent ethnographic studies that provided methodological examples for urban fieldwork. Mary Pattillo's *Black on the Block* (2007), Japonica Brown-Sacrino's *A Neighborhood That Never Changes* (2009) and Elijah Anderson's *The Cosmopolitan Canopy* (2011) provide suitable guides to the study of race and class in contemporary urban neighborhoods. Similar to my own desires in studying the invention of "The Grove" these studies rely primarily on interviews with stakeholders in communities undergoing substantial changes in race and class composition. Specifically I coded my interview content to track three key areas of empirical interest 1) attitudes toward ongoing commercial/business

redevelopment in the neighborhood including branding of “The Grove,” 2) attitudes of established residents to newcomers and – vice versa – attitudes of newcomers toward established residents and 3) visioning of the “ideal” neighborhood and the future of the local community. Within broad themes I also draw generalizations in regard to the race and class dynamics that are superstructural to the street-level interactions of locals. A final historical component of the FPSE study comes from the stories of long-term residents and several St. Louis-specific studies that are included in my literature reviews.

First and foremost this is a project rooted in the practice of ethnographic fieldwork and narrative analysis (Gubrium and Holstein, 2008). Interviews with local stakeholders form the core data for the study, and I used existing contacts with local residents – mostly my neighbors and family – to build a snowball sample of 40 primary informants, with as many as 30 other individuals participating informally in neighborhood conversations and casual interactions. As a participant observer, I also was able to sit in on numerous public meetings within the neighborhood, taking notes and recording the statements of various stakeholders^{iv}. All of the informants in this project were asked the same general set of questions (and the questionnaire appears in this document as Appendix B), but they also were free to talk about their experiences in the community as they saw fit. The open-ended nature of the conversations meant that some interviews lasted longer than an hour, with the majority lasting 30-40 minutes. The transcriptions of these recordings form the core data for all three of the papers that compose this dissertation.

In addition to the scheduled interviews conducted with stakeholders, I also collected field notes from a number of formal and informal interactions within the community.

Many notes were taken at meetings of neighborhood groups. Other field notes are records of social interactions I observed first-hand during my time in the community. Each of the three chapters in the dissertation begins with a story taken from field notes. The stories illustrate not only the diversity of social interactions taking place, but they also provide examples of the stakeholder groups that occupy the neighborhood. Cooperation and competition are themes that emerge when examining the dynamics of neighborhood life, and the field notes provide direct illustrations as such.

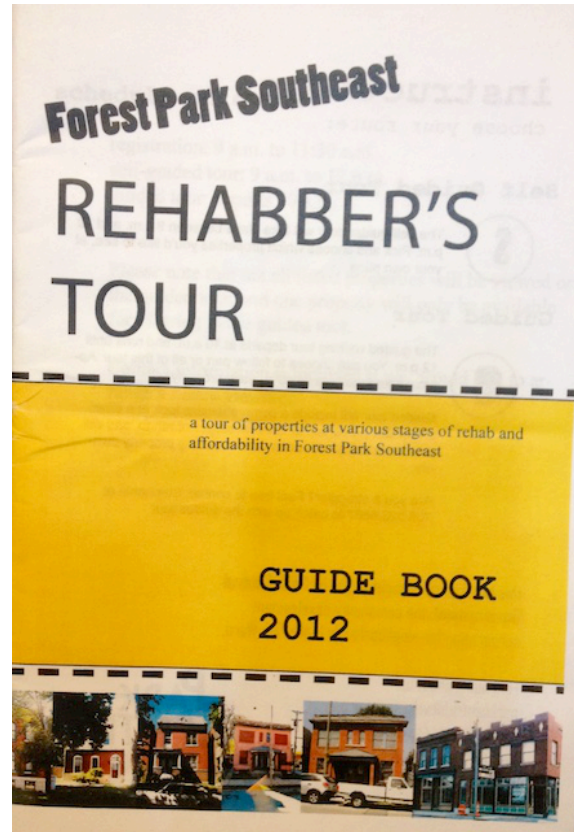


Illustration 4: A Rehabber's Tour Guide Book offers up a list of available properties in the Forest Park Southeast Neighborhood, September 2012.

Because physical changes to the neighborhood are a key feature of redevelopment, I supplement the core interviews with a longitudinal photographic essay of the neighborhood, which has been ongoing since before I moved to area five years ago. The photographs include examples of real estate in the various parts of the neighborhood, and they also include a sampling of everyday comings and goings on the streets of FPSE and in and around the clubs of the Grove (as seen in Illustration 3). This addition of visual sociology (Pauwels, 2010) is an important empirical component of the study because

changes to the built environment so often reflect the desires of people with access to various forms of capital or engaging in particular cultural modes of production. Thus the redevelopment of the neighborhood itself carries class and racial implications, highlighting those groups within the neighborhood who exercise influence in the course of redevelopment and the use of public spaces. It also is a useful rhetorical strategy to have visual documentation of the places about which informants are speaking and in which social interactions occur. Therefore these photographs represent a visual history of the gentrification of Forest Park Southeast and the deployment of The Grove as a highly visible “brand” for the neighborhood as seen in signs and other forms visual art (notably a number of murals). To this point my photo documentation has been focused on the real estate and other physical structures in the community, although photography of human subjects interacting with the built environment is part of the data as well. Photo documentation of the public spaces in the neighborhood also leads to potential interactions and interviews with neighbors and visitors to the neighborhood.

Finally, documents (see Illustration 4) that I have gathered as a participant-observer in the neighborhood will round out the data sources to be used in this project. These materials include, but are not limited to: documents passed out at neighborhood committee meetings, flyers and advertisements distributed to residents homes, and articles appearing in local newspapers (notably the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*) and videos distributed by local broadcasters and/or online content. These documents are useful in understanding The Grove and Forest Park Southeast in relation to the City of St. Louis as a whole, and as such they often reflect an “outside” perspective of the neighborhood that

may differ at times from views from within the neighborhood. Together with the U.S. Census data, these assorted publications also help frame and locate the neighborhood within a macro-level context of American urbanity in general. Because of this, I am able to link a localized study with the larger trends and histories reflected in the literature of urban sociology. The documents also offer another means of examining the use of the neighborhood names Forest Park Southeast and The Grove which increasing likely to be conflated. However, as noted in the chapter on neighborhood branding The Grove appears to be gaining in popularity, just not to the point where it has replaced Forest Park Southeast in all venues.

LITERATURE REVIEW OF GENTRIFICATION

Part of the divergence that has surrounded attempts to theorize the process of gentrification in the past few decades (Slater 2002) has been the divide of gentrification theorists into two broad camps/traditions. The first and most prominent position offers a structural argument for gentrification, connecting the process to the operation of global capitalism, where systematic divestment paves the way for later reinvestment (cycles of capital based on the exchange value of properties within a given area). These changes are seen as the prerogative of middle-class or elite interests and often occur at the expense of the urban underclass. The second perspective offers a cultural explanation for gentrification that depicts a “new urbanity” where freedom of expression, tolerance, diversity and plurality find new expression across historic lines of division: class, race, gender, and also sexuality. While the latter explanations are less numerous, recent studies indicate a need to revive the study of neighborhood “personality” and authenticity of

place. Cultural explanations of urban change appear to be growing in utility as the growing population of many core urban centers is a group of young professionals that constitute a new “creative class” now reshaping city dwelling (Florida 2002 and 2008).

The structural argument has numerous articulations, but three neo-Marxist arguments stand out: geographer Neil Smith’s “revanchist” argument (Smith 1996), the “growth machine” dynamics of Logan and Molotch (1987), and the class-meets-race policy of “uneven development” put forth by Squires (1994). In the camp of cultural theories, there are several paradigms: the “emancipatory” thesis of Caulfield (1994) and Ley (1996), the class-meets-race dynamics of in the “invasion-succession” model of gentrification found in the works of Elijah Anderson (1990, 2011), the examination of “gentrification” in the work of Pattillo (2007) and the search for authentic living spaces seen in Brown-Saracino (2009).

Structuralist arguments on gentrification may be criticized for over-determining a highly localized process, while the cultural arguments are challenged for their failure to accord global capital and elite coalitions their due role in redevelopment efforts. Where market conditions (property values and availability of capital) determine subjectivities in the structuralist model, a more contested, conflicted and malleable set of subjectivities guide the cultural model. The following discussion compares the structural and cultural approaches, revealing the need for a localized (grounded) approach to study that does not present a monolithic view of gentrifiers nor a general process of gentrification that ignores culture in favor of capital or vice versa. Likewise the “local” approach to gentrification adopted in this study must consider the role local elites (politicians and

developers) that either start the process of change or to capitalize on neighborhood change once underway, often led by cultural entrepreneurs. Finally, gentrification studies may also examine divergent rationals for middle-class return that include moral visions.

I. Structural Models of Gentrification

Geographer Neil Smith's *The New Urban Frontier* (1996) was published at the end of a decade of theorizing about gentrification that sought to unify evidence of urban neighborhood change in Great Britain, Canada and America. In simplest terms, gentrification marked the return of middle-class individuals and families to core industrial cities. An inflow of middle-class families is remarkable in that it represents a reversal of several decades of steady middle-class flight from the city proper to the ever-expanding suburban and now exurban zones of the metropolis. However, Smith connects both the outflow of the middle-class and their return to the larger processes of global capitalism. The inflow of gentrification is made possible only by an early outflow of capital and the middle- and upper-class households that controlled it. What resulted was decline of the industrial sector, deterioration of housing stock and infrastructure, and finally class and racial segregation resulting in the creation of an urban underclass. By the 1980s the images of the inner city had taken on the trope of the "frontier" (Smith 1996, pgs. xiv and 13) a place of lawlessness in need of civilization. By this metaphor, gentrifiers occupy a valorized position as pioneers, homesteaders or reclaimers, and the "moral failures" of the urban poor become a justification for their displacement or removal as a consequence of redevelopment. This is the "perverse" profitability of gentrification, where the underclass loses either way.

As a new frontier, the gentrifying city since the 1980s has been oozing with optimism. Hostile landscapes are regenerated, cleansed, reinfused with middle-class sensibility; real estate values soar; yuppies consume; elite gentility is democratized in mass-produced styles of distinction. So, what's not to like? (Smith 1996, pg. 13)

Thus the group distinctions of gentrifying spaces are between a “civil class” and an “uncivil class,” and in the American example this distinction frequently involves a White gentry and a Black underclass (Smith 1996, pg. 17). In fact, it is the class divisions that transform the gentrifying city in to the milieu of the “revanchist city.” In the motif of “revenge,” the neighborhoods of the urban underclass are a space ruined by crime, drugs, government dependency, teen pregnancy, violence and litany of other vices. The images of the “ghetto” are those of TV shows like *COPS* or the moralizing images of “welfare queens” put forth by conservative political figures (Smith 1996, pg. 211). Thus the gentrifying process is a purification of space from middle-class fears of the “teaming masses.” Rather than address the structural forces producing concentrated urban poverty, the middle-class saves the urban neighborhood by remaking the space in its own image. Gentrification at best embodies an ambivalence to the plight of poor people hidden behind the veneer of optimism associated with improvements to the built environment, leaving unchanged the social relations that built the ghetto in the first instance.

Logan and Molotch – albeit not as the primary focus of *Urban Fortunes* – cast gentrification as a sub-process of the exchange-value-driven city of “growth machines.” Gentrifiers move into neighborhoods when capital conditions are suitable, i.e. when property values have plummeted due to neglect and abandonment. Gentrification is the recycling of poor people's houses into a more lucrative form of real estate. (This is

particularly the case when entire neighborhoods are first declared “blighted” properties, then demolished and replaced with new development.) *Urban Fortunes* also reveals a specific racial dynamic “integration,” which in the case of gentrification – in the sense that Whites have returned – means reviving “abandoned” areas of the city. Because “Whites become the prize” for the growth machine (Logan and Molotch 1987, pg. 143) gentrifying neighborhoods become targets for reinvestments like new sidewalks. In fact, the growth machine counts on the pioneering efforts of gentrifiers (their “sweat equity”) to raise the general exchange values and open the door to further development. So it is possible for efforts aimed at improving the use value of a home (fulfillment of a need) to elevate the exchange values of the property (increase in a commodity value) simultaneously. This fact is not unknown to gentrifiers themselves, who are often marginal or overt entrepreneurs of place. Together gentrifiers may form community improvement associations that also further growth-machine goals, and in these groups they may be recognized as the “real” residents of the neighborhood, marking a symbolic if not physical marginalization of poor and Black neighbors.

In defending their own financial and psychological investments, these volunteers strive to make the entire neighborhood more closely resemble their own way of life. They use community organization to, in lieu of sufficient funds to buy into an affluent area, to create a critical mass of pleasant amenity. (Logan and Molotch 1987, pg. 141)

The end result of a growth-oriented real estate sector is a constant casting out of the “bad element” in favor of the better (more affluent) newcomers. So it is that gentrification is not the ultimate salvation of the city even if it does revive some areas as it goes. Instead, the finite supply of capital flows into the redeveloping area and members of the

underclass flow outward, likely moving on to yet another area of “abandon” or “neglect.” This is the cycle of restless capital that Logan and Molotch say underpins social relations in the modern city, and it is the urban poor who lose the most in the balance.

A final structural argument of note is the “uneven development” thesis, which considers the role of racial divides in creating two America’s since World War II, life world’s divided by W.E.B. DuBois’ “color line.” Gregory Squires’ *Capital and Communities in Black and White* demonstrates the persistence of wealth and income gaps within American society, and it links local disparities and the production of ghettos to the legacy of racial divides, which include choices of where and how to invest the nations’ capital and also in which communities to make strategic investments.

The proportion of s and Whites working full time remains as far apart today as it was twenty-five years ago. For most individuals, family income determines their objective life conditions, and the gap between Blacks and Whites in this area has increased. If there have been important legal, political and attitudinal advances, critical economic disparities remain. (Squires 1994, pg. 19)

The uneven development model helps connect gentrification to the general and systematic lack of access to capital in African American communities, whether that is as a result of marginalization of s in the labor force, limited access to loans, racial restriction on real estate and other forms of exclusion. Gentrification, especially as it operates among middle-class groups and not the urban poor is not a “cure” to what ails the contemporary American city. “Gentrification moves many poor people around but does little to reduce poverty” (Squires 1994, pg. 98).

In summary, structural arguments view gentrification as part of the broader patterning

of society by the market and/or the persistence of a divide between Black and White citizens. There is little reason in any of these theories to suspect that gentrification will change the social relations of the city, because those relations are to a large degree predetermined by material and race relations. The local character of gentrification in one area or another ultimately is subsumed by the general inequalities between the bourgeoisie/proletariat and Whites/Blacks. While admittedly dour in their view of gentrifiers and the outcomes of gentrification, the above perspectives are empirically grounded in material relations of haves and have-nots, which is the axis about which textbook gentrification turns as first described by Ruth Glass (1964) in the working-class neighborhood's of London.

II. Cultural Models of Gentrification

In contrast to the essentially predetermined interactions found in structural theories, several cultural presentations of gentrification embody a more integrative view of urban diversity. That is, cultural theorists see room for newcomers from the middle-class and the urban poor to bridge the gaps between them. Likewise the changes that gentrifiers bring to communities can enhance the quality of life for everyone. In order to present this view of gentrification, however, it is necessary to move beyond viewing gentrification as a monolithic paradigm and notions of the “gentry” as a monolithic group. Instead, gentrification can be seen to embody very different character depending on exactly who is doing the gentrifying.

A second possibility advanced in the cultural thesis is that gentrification happens not as a result of mobile capital, per se. While capital facilitates the process, to be sure, the

focus of redevelopment efforts on specific places is the result of a search for “authentic” communities on the part of the newcomers. Thus the drive to gentrify comes from an affinity toward a particular vision of “ideal” community that often is expressed in terms of class/racial/lifestyle diversity, set apart from the homogeneity of other communities.

As a first example from the cultural perspective Jon Caulfield’s *City Form and Everyday Life* presents a picture of gentrification as a type of new urbanism that give members of a marginal middle-class an opportunity to break from previous patterns of class animosity. (Because the study looks at Toronto, racial divisions are not as stark as they are in a U.S. city like St. Louis, although international immigrants are part of Caulfield’s neighborhood “diversity.”) For Caulfield, gentrification is a social movement in the sense that it is an attempt at creating a new practice. Even if not meeting the strict definition of a “movement,” gentrification is “critical social practice” when gentrifiers seek to reject both a suburbanization of space or a return to some perceived “golden era” of the city.

City-dwellers may also express their feelings within the realm of their everyday lives, where they are able, individually or collectively, to pursue practices through which they seek to elude domination or hegemonic cultural structures and to constitute alternative conditions for experience. For the marginal middle class, resettlement of older inner-city neighbourhoods has been among these activities. (Caulfield 1994, pg. 139)

City Form and Everyday Life takes a distinctly post-structural look at gentrification, meaning that the process is likely highly local in character. That said, it is possible to borrow the Marxian concepts of use-value and exchange value to describe a form of gentrification that is oriented to the former more explicitly than the later. The

“use-value” gentrifier – Caulfield admits – is more likely to be an early arriver in the “poor” neighborhood (Caulfield 1994, pgs. 125-126, 135). Likewise, gentrifiers who are parents (Caulfield 1994, pgs 196-198) are more likely to integrate with working-class parents in their neighborhoods through schools and local park spaces. Further, the city may represent a space where bohemian artists, non-traditional communities of homosexuals, collectivists, religious groups, political provocateurs, artists and other practitioners of divergent identities find shelter from the perceived rigid homogeneity of suburbia. Rather than seeing these groups as tangential to the bigger picture of gentrification: the product of material relations, Caulfield suggests that it is exactly these permutation that typify gentrification in the first instance. Living in the city can be expressive, and thus fills a need (use values as discussed on Caulfield 1994, pg. 133) even if a mediation of exchange values is an unavoidable part of the package.

Within the study of gentrification in the Forest Park Southeast/The Grove, Caulfield’s study provides an avenue to differentiate a group of early gentrifiers (who lived communally in the late 1970s before moving into separate homes) that defy a lot of the class-is-conflict modalities of the structural model presented above. Whether gentrification can ever be a true “social movement” is doubtful, but Caulfield’s notion of critical social practice can be shown to accurately describe pockets of gentry that explicitly organize around and act out new visions of community. That said, “expressive gentrifiers” almost certainly represent a minority within an already limited population. This seems an obvious call to further study.

In *Streetwise (1990)*, Elijah Anderson’s exploration of the Village-Northton

neighborhoods of Philadelphia, gentrification is presented as just the next phase of the “invasion-succession” model of neighborhood change but forth by Chicago School sociologist Ernest Burgess at the turn of the 20th Century. Seen this way, gentrification is part of a longer narrative of place that can be discovered through ethnography. Also, the invasion-succession breaks from seeing gentrification as less an outcome of shifting global capital or class animosity and more a new “phase” that certain neighborhoods are experiencing. Gentrifiers operate as part of the “normal” function of the local real estate market. Race is implicated in the process in so much as Whites, as a group, have ready access to the capital needed to enhance or change properties.

Property values increase when the area itself is defined as desirable by those who more readily participate in the general market, including at times upper-middle-income s. This trend is consolidated through individual transactions that bring in middle- to upper-income Whites. (Anderson 1990, pg. 27)

What differentiates gentrifiers from the underclass is the generally poor reputation of their community in the local real estate market. A person in the Northton “ghetto” may upgrade a home in much the same way as a gentrifier, but the general neighborhood conditions suppress the exchange value. From Anderson’s perspective, the difference lies in the destabilization of African American neighborhoods brought on by street crime, drug sales and use, prostitution and other vices. In contrast, the newcomers’ cultural resources allow for old homes to become “historic” properties, highlighting a connection between use values and exchange values. Most importantly, what gentrifiers represent is a stabilizing force in the neighborhood, symbolizing investment and a desire to make a “better” community. But lingering racial tensions are evident in Anderson’s description of

the “gentry” and their orientation toward the neighborhood.

Today Whites are moving back despite the presence of lower-income Blacks. They are acknowledging the advantages of living close to the center of the city and the university campuses, the quality of houses, and the quaintness of the community; but most significantly, they anticipate an imminent rise in the status of the general area. (Anderson 1990, pg. 29)

Although I do not employ an invasion-succession model in my own theorizing of gentrification, *Streetwise* is nonetheless a powerful ethnographic study in the cultural divide between the urban poor and the middle-class. Where gentrifying communities may actually open the door to new opportunities for some Blacks, Anderson paints a relatively bleak picture of the ghetto. So, from the *Streetwise* perspective gentrification may actually be a desirable change for enclaves of the urban underclass, a question that is more directly studied in a final work from within the cultural camp of study. Anderson again touches on gentrification’s racial dimension in *The Cosmopolitan Canopy: Race and Civility in Everyday Life* (2011), where he studies interactions of city dwellers across dicing lines of race/ethnicity and class.

In *Black on the Block* (2007) researcher Mary Pattillo seeks to understand the meeting of the “bourgeoisie” and the “truly disadvantaged” (referencing the works of E. Franklin Frazier and William Julius Wilson, respectively). While the two groups share a common status in wider American society, interactions in the North Kenwood-Oakland neighborhood of Chicago often reveal the cultural gap that divided one class from the other. Cultural differences manifest themselves as an emerging group of publicly and civically active middle-class “newcomers” attempts to reshape the neighborhood to better

reflect their expectations and practices (Pattillo 2007, pg. 91). The relationship of the Black middle-class and underclass is shaped by presumptions of racial solidarity that historically have held middle-income Blacks as “their brother’s keeper.” As living conditions and job opportunities within industrial centers declined in the postwar period, members of the Black middle-class also left core cities for the periphery, but Pattillo does not describe this change as the exodus that Frazier describes in his book. Instead Pattillo’s research indicates that the “flight” of the Black middle class may be exaggerated.

If abandonment of the symbolic or political Black community by middle-class Blacks is rare, escape from the physical Black community or Black neighborhood is only slightly more common. . . . As I have argued elsewhere, the Black middle class did leave segregated Black neighborhoods where they lived in the 1940s and 1950s, but they did not go very far, moving into areas on the periphery of these initial settlements both within and outside the city. (Pattillo 2007, pg. 103)

While Pattillo offers a host of practical insight into gentrification, what is most intriguing is her version of post-modern theory in the project. Using the markers of lifestyle that Pierre Bourdieu set forth in *Distinction*, Pattillo explains that in their very acts of “living” middle-income Blacks and low-income Blacks recreate divides that impede a fuller sense of racial solidarity (Pattillo 2007, pgs. 298-299). The tensions between residents centering on class difference, however, are not necessarily a force driving middle-class Blacks away from their poor neighbors, rather many middle-class Blacks feel connected to and (at least in part) responsible for the well-being of the urban underclass, some of whom may well be relatives.

The Black middle class has not abandoned the Black poor, either ideologically or geographically. To the contrary, it

maintains a deep sense of racial responsibility that is sometimes translated into return migrations to poor Black neighborhoods. This is the most important distinguishing feature of Black gentrification relative to White gentrification. Moving back to the ghetto is part of a racial uplift project. (Pattillo 2007, pg. 301)

Here again there is a suggestion that gentrification is not simply a manifestation of capitalism at the local level. Instead, gentrifiers may see themselves as attached to a project of change or the deployment of new and radical ways of being (subjectivities). While remaining mindful that race and class divides do not simply disappear when adopting a post-structural viewpoint, Pattillo nonetheless is able to restore a great deal of agency to the Black bourgeoisie as compared to the structural formulations of gentrification presented above. *Black on the Block* demonstrates how, through acts of self-definition, middle-class s feel connected to a movement that affirms their status and role in the African American community.

Residentially “The Grove” does not have a large or visible Black middle class, however there are a few notable Black-owned businesses in “The Grove” food and entertainment district (along Manchester Avenue) including two popular soul food restaurants. These entities might provide some entrée into to understanding any significant divisions within the local Black community. However, it is a specific intention of my research design to use local churches as a window into the neighborhood, and in this capacity I follow the lead of Omar Robert’s *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood* (2005). Indeed a focus on “moral” perspectives in shaping gentrification practice and discourse is a (if not *the*) distinguishing character of my course of study, as compared to many of the works cited in this literature review. As

my summary of the first paper proposed below will reveal, an emerging literature of gentrification and religion points towards a nuanced understanding of how cultural beliefs and value intersect with the world of capital and property values.

A final recent work that deserves mention is Japonica Brown-Saracino's study of the role of "authenticity" in establishing new communities and preserving existing communities: *A Neighborhood that Never Changes* (2009). The book's focus is on the gentrification of rural areas on the periphery of the metropolis, but the overall themes of cultural valuations of properties as "historic" is an important trend in gentrification overall. Indeed the designation of being a "historic" property or neighborhood can open avenues for grant funding and protect neighborhoods from outright demolition. The historic character of homes may also draw the attention of would-be newcomers as they make their decisions to invest in a given neighborhood. In this sense, the history of "The Grove" and its residences (particularly in the Gibson Heights area) becomes as selling point to restoring a property: i.e. "They don't make them like that anymore."

III. Uniting the Global and the Local?

Given the numerous general theses presented above, theorizing gentrification in a way that unites the class and race based inequalities that created the "stage" upon which the "play" of gentrification transpires with the rich, divergent and often contradictory way social relations play out in any given neighborhood is a chore at best. Previous scholars have noted the "chaos" that prevails in gentrification theory without offering much in the way of solutions. Whereas this research does seek to unify divergent explanations.

While in no means do I believe to have found "the solution" in my own plan of study,

I think there are several lessons to be learned from the above texts. The first is that any attempt to claim class or race alone produce the subjectivities of community change is not going to withstand the critique that religion/morality/creative/expressive orientations also are a part of gentrification. To the extent that residents see and interact with neighborhood *place* in primarily “use-value” terms there is reason to suspect that coalitions can be and are routinely formed across the perceptively acrimonious lines of color and class – as also suggested by Anderson (2011). While it seems wild to call gentrification itself a social movement, it may still be that social movement dynamics produce certain forms of gentrification in much the same way that feeling of reverence for nature may produce a desire for parks and green spaces in the urban milieu. Gentrification occurring primarily in the context of “expression” and “diversity” can be empirically shown as distinct from gentrification in the context of investment and “investment” and “profit” and yet both are so often tied together. To this end, of the studies represented here, Mary Pattillo’s *Black on the Block* seems to offer a model closest to my own thinking, although within the context of White gentrifiers I would borrow the notional of “critical social practice” to describe at least some of the informants in my pilot study (Suchland 2008).

In addition to these larger divisions between structural and cultural gentrification, there have been some discussions of gentrification have a regional or even national character. This continentalism of gentrification theory has some merit in the idea that nations as close as Canada and the United States – in terms of both geography and culture – still may be divergent in the types of racial and ethnic tensions that exist in a national and regional context. Also, it should be noted the gentrification is now an international

phenomena, and as it occurs in Asian cities – particularly those in the expanding economies of India and China it is reasonable to expect that even greater diversity of patterns will occur. However, these divergences only strengthen the call for studies to take into account the role that structural and cultural forces play in redevelopment. The benefit of the model employed in this study is in portability and utility of the capital-meets-culture lens in a wide range of contexts, predicting some reliable outcomes of gentrification while not overdetermining the process. It holds onto structural causation without becoming deterministic, and also explores inequalities in a way that cultural approaches can obscure in a haze of diversity.

In the following chapters the role of both capital and culture are explored from a boots-on-the-ground study of one small neighborhood. Although each chapter stands as a unique perspective on gentrification and gentrifiers, each reinforces the central argument of this dissertation, that gentrification does not happen one way and may result from a competition among a wide variety of “visions” of the city, with capital and cultural forms reinforcing each other or clashing depending on the dominant stakeholders in the community at large. The idea of a what a neighborhood could be emerges as a powerful guide for the course of redevelopment, even as change almost always occurs only after the favor of big-money interests is curried and plied.

Finally, for people living in a gentrifying neighborhood, the change in the physical space and in personal understandings of place results in feelings of inclusion or exclusion to the redevelopment process. As is structurally predictable, these feelings of being in or out on the benefits of redevelopment fall along cultural lines of division – between the

Black and White communities or the residents and business community – and also along class lines, where some groups become winners and losers in the game of “revitalizing” a urban community.

The chapters that follow contain the voices of many stakeholders from Forest Park Southeast and The Grove. Included in the group of 40 core interviewees are a wide mix of individuals from 20-somethings to octogenarians. A quarter of the sample are African Americans, another quarter are long-term White residents, and the rest of the sample includes newcomers from the past decade as well as business, government and non-profit organization representatives. In total, members of every neighborhood sub-group are part of the study, although new informants undoubtedly will become part of the study as I continue the research into it's second decade.

Moral Visions in Changing Space: Religion, Race and Urban Renewal

ABSTRACT

Gentrification and urban renewal are processes of both capital and culture which reshape physical and social space. A growing body of research demonstrates that religion, religious convictions and religious communities play a unique role in the negotiation of old and new communities in the contemporary American city. Through a detailed case study – an ethnography of St. Louis' Forest Park Southeast neighborhood – this research examines the role “moral visions” of city and community play in motivating the return of a White, urban middle-class. Interviews and field observations reveal several ways that religious beliefs and moral-motivations lead groups of (primarily White) middle-class newcomers back to urban living in the 21st Century.

KEYWORDS

Gentrification, Urban Redevelopment, Urban Studies, Race, Class, Religion, St. Louis

I. On a Monday Morning

There isn't a huge crowd outside the door today, typical for the middle of the month. While a few folks have cued up to await their turn inside, others are just arriving: the small huddle of Muslim women with their shopping bags, the middle-age Black man on his bike, and me with my three-year-old. The door pops open, and a name is called from the clipboard. A man hauls himself up from the sidewalk, shuffling toward the door. We slide in quickly behind him, which would invite accusations of line jumping if it weren't my father-in-law manning the door. He knows I'm not here for the food but for the conversation.

As I start to fish out my notepad and recorder, saying my hellos, my son gets a grandma hug and a roll to nibble. A slow but steady parade of locals is making their way around the tables and counter of this former bar, taking their share of the free groceries set out before them. This week there's some decent produce, a few dented, torn and expired cans boxes and bottles, a little milk and a few dozen eggs, and bread. Boy, do we ever have bread. There are rolls and loaves to fill garbage bags, all courtesy of the local supermarket who lets us – my neighbors and I – take their “spoilage” late each Sunday night. Rather than go to waste the food comes back here, to Forest Park Southeast, where



Illustration 5: Locals await their turn at "food sharing" Monday morning in the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood, May 2013.

a groups of volunteers helps share the bounty with all who come knocking.

As I sit down for an interview with a long-time resident of the neighborhood, I wonder that it should be so mundane to see a White man with his PhD tossing half-squashed fruit into a bag while the Black grandmother invites someone to have a cup of homemade soup and a young mother asks about eggs or milk in broken English. This is not a “typical” American neighborhood; this is a new and changing place.

FIELD NOTES, 22 April, 2013

* * *

II. Introduction

The decades following World War II brought radical changes to the structure and patterns of city living in the United States. With the mobility afforded by automobiles and newly expanded highways, middle class families flocked to the suburban zones outside of core cities, zones that now encompass the bulk of population in America's metropolitan centers (Baldassare 1992). However, the suburbs were (often intentionally, see Sugrue 2005) White spaces that overtly and covertly denied access to minorities, especially Blacks. Thus as millions of s migrated north after the war, they predominately found residence in core cities, often finding that White families were moving out as they moved in, a process called “White Flight” (Crowder 2000) that ultimately spelled the end of any substantial middle-class population in many urban communities. This Black-White divide in neighborhoods and communities persists to this day (Quillian 2002).

St. Louis, Mo., located on the banks of the Mississippi River, stands as a model metropolis for documenting the suburbanization and racial segregation of post-war America (Gordon 2008), and the city may now prove to be a model city for the opposite processes of middle-class return, sometimes referred to as gentrification or urban renewal. As it stands in 2013, the City of St. Louis is strongly divided between a

primarily Black north city and a more diverse south city. As a substantial body of literature regarding gentrification now exists, dating back to the coining of the term “gentrification” in London five decades ago (Glass 1964), St. Louis offers a test bed for gentrification theory, in particular the divisions between structural and cultural explanations for the return of the White middle-class.

The body of research presented herewith is an ethnography of the St. Louis neighborhood Forest Park Southeast, a racially and economically mixed neighborhood located adjacent to Forest Park along what sometimes is called the “Central Corridor,” along the east-west path of Interstate 64. The neighborhood is a mix of residential streets and a burgeoning entertainment district, The Grove. Forest Park Southeast also is said to be gentrifying as development largely follows a rise in White, middle-class residents and a decline in the number of low-income residents who are predominantly Black.

The specific aim of this study is to connect the return of middle-class Whites not simply to favorable economic conditions, but to a desire for a new type of community rooted in a “moral vision” of the city informed by Christian religion, a desire for community integration along lines of race and class, and the cause of “social justice.” This morally-motivated process of middle class return has been documented elsewhere, but the Forest Park Southeast case study shows in detail the impact that moral vision of urban living can have in stabilizing and improving social conditions within a neighborhood. Living in urban centers shunned by other members of the White middle class is just the first of many steps that differentiate morally motivated gentry from other middle-class newcomers (even and perhaps especially those in later waves of in-fill). It is

through the narratives of morally-motivated individuals and social groups that the nuances of cultural change and capital redevelopment in urban space may be better understood as intensely local negotiations of space, place and and community.

III. A Moral Compass for Gentrification?

In the past decade a growing sub-set of gentrification research has emerged showing the ways in which religious communities engage in the processes of urban renewal and redevelopment on both the capital and cultural fronts. Religious communities serve as sites of resistance to change, participate in the real estate market, facilitate dialogues about neighborhood transition and also provide a sense of community amid population shifts. The study of Forest Park Southeast (FPSE) is reflective of several recent studies, but also differs notably in the role that a “moral vision” of city and community plays in drawing a number of middle-class households to permanently locate within the neighborhood through at least two waves of newcomers, dating back to the mid-1970s.

Liveszy (2000) and Huang (2008) examine the role that religious congregations play in providing neighborhood continuity to areas awash with successive immigrant populations, resulting in rapidly shifting patterns of neighborhood demographics based on the relative mobility of immigrant groups and influence of economically successful immigrant leaders. Some of these immigrant success stories included developers who were able to tap into a foreign-born or first-generation gentry that resulted in the creation of an Asiantown in Flushing, Queens, New York. Churches in NYC also found themselves players in the property market during periods of gentrification, with congregations selling property and making real-estate partnerships aimed at creating

affordable housing developments (Robledo 2005, Mian 2008). In all such examples, the power of economic elites within and without religious communities was central to understanding the dynamics of redevelopment.

In another study of New York neighborhoods (Cimino 2011), religious groups were found to be highly adaptive to changing neighborhood fortunes. Niche churches and religious communities in some 30 Brooklyn congregations were shown to play a variety of roles in gentrification and redevelopment, also reflecting large amounts of ethnic and class diversity among the communities and congregations. This diversity of reactions to gentrification showed some signs of connection to denominational differences. However, neighborhoods in New York make for a difficult direct comparison for St. Louis, where Black-White racial divisions and “Rust Belt” economics predominate.

Trends within the FPSE/Grove study more closely resemble a study of Evangelical Christians returning to core urban areas in “Rust Belt” cities such as Cincinnati (Bielo 2011). In this ethnographic field study of new urban Evangelical communities, Bielo finds that the newcomers are motivated by a culture logic that rejects the modes of suburban mega-churches but also challenges earlier equations of vice and degradation with urban life. So while older Evangelical cohorts fled the city for the suburbs, these new Evangelicals embraced a certain optimism about the future of urban spaces. This optimism is predictably tempered by the challenges of life in post-industrial cities where race and class inequalities remain significant barriers to integrated neighborhoods.

The cultural critique motivating White Evangelicals like Kevin also includes a positive assessment of cities. Many of my consultants explained that part of the problem with suburbia, and with focusing evangelizing energy on suburbanites, is that “culture” is not created there. “Culture” is

created in the city, merely adopted on the crabgrass frontier. If Evangelicals want “culture change” to happen, they need to concentrate on cities. (Bielo 2005, pg. 11)

Reinforcing the argument that religious and moral visions of neighborhood change track closely with notions of “social justice,” a study of urban collectives in Atlanta, Ga. (Hankins and Walter 2011) revealed how middle-class newcomers saw themselves as “strategic neighbors” whose economic and cultural capital could affect poverty conditions in their neighborhoods. This process of place-making reveals the power of religion in changing the vocabulary of gentrification from a capital-focused, exchange-value motivated process to one that is morally-focused and justice motivated at least in a rhetorical sense, if not in practice and outcomes. The “gentrification with justice” strategies examined in Atlanta also frame some of the displacement caused by gentrification as beneficial to both new and existing social groups:

... Displacement is not necessarily unjust or harmful for the neighbourhood, specifically when it occurs to the ‘undeserving’ poor. The argument here is that, if the goal is to alleviate neighbourhood impoverishment, displacement is precisely what needs to happen in order to disrupt the socio-spatial dialectic of poverty. ... Gentrification clears the way for neighbourhood improvement by dislocating social activities, such as gang activities, drug dealing and prostitution, that stand in the way of community improvement. (Hankins and Walter 2011, pg. 1521)

All of these studies represent an emerging reality of post-industrial redevelopment, which is the way that the desires and attitudes of middle-class newcomers – their cultural orientations, so to speak – can have an impact on the tenor and process of urban renewal. Middle-class population are remaking space and place as they come back to core cities, but whether that place-making is inclusive or exclusive of existing populations varies with the interactions that newcomers have with existing, impoverished populations.

IV. The Forest Park Southeast Neighborhood

St. Louis, Mo., is rightly called city of neighborhoods. Sitting on a relatively small footprint of just 66 square miles on the western banks of the Mississippi River, the municipality is sub-divided into 79 recognized neighborhoods^v. While city government is divided into larger Wards that have changed in size and scope through the decades, neighborhoods in St. Louis have diverse histories tied to the successive waves of immigration the city has seen: German and Irish Catholics, Greeks and Italians, Southern



Illustration 6: A sign on a lamp post announces the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood, March 2013.

Blacks and now Bosnians among a host of other groups spanning the globe. Like many of its peers in “Rust Belt” (Plotnicov 1991, Benson 2005) the St. Louis also has experienced the economic booms and busts of the post World War II era, arriving in the second decade of the New Millennium with a population of approximately 319,000 people, down from a 1950 peak of more than 850,000 people^{vi}. The surrounding metropolitan region – Greater St. Louis – now boasts a population of 2.9 million people spread across 11 counties of Missouri and Illinois. In fact, the St. Louis region has continued to grow even as the core City of St. Louis has dwindled. This phenomena is sometimes called the “doughnut hole” effect and is common to other Rust Belt cities like

Detroit and Cincinnati. In this respect, St. Louis is a western “Eastern” city.

Forest Park Southeast lies along the city's central corridor carved through St. Louis by what is now called Interstate 64 (U.S. Highway 40), while Interstate 44 (U.S. Route 66) lies just to the south. Neighborhood boundaries are as follows: I-64 on the north, Vandeventer Ave. diagonally along the east and south and Kingshighway Boulevard on the west. Manchester Avenue (Highway 100) runs the axis of the neighborhood from east to west and is the historic commercial district within the community. To the north of the neighborhood is the combined campus of BJC Health (Barnes-Jewish Hospital, St. Louis Children's Hospital, etc.) and academic campuses for the Washington University School of Medicine, the Goldfarb School of Nursing and the St. Louis College of Pharmacy, among other entities. A full-page map of the neighborhood appears in this document as Appendix A.

Forest Park Southeast (or FPSE) draws its name from its historic role as a gateway to Forest Park, home of the 1904 World's Fair and present site of a zoo, a museum of art and a museum of history, a science center and planetarium and numerous recreational areas from golf courses to a skating rink. Finally, a private high school and a community college are located a few blocks west. In short, there are a remarkable number of geographic, economic



Illustration 7: An abandoned house sits boarded shut at the intersection of Vista and Taylor avenues in the FPSE neighborhood, March 2013.

and recreational assets enjoyed by residents of the neighborhood.

The proximity of such resources, however was not enough to stop the slide of the neighborhood into poverty through the end of the 20th Century. Estimates for average per capita income in the neighborhood were just \$12,800 in 1999, a figure lower than the dismal St. Louis per capita average of \$16,800 that year. Unemployment in the community stood at 27 percent, a full third of the population was living in poverty by federal standards, and nearly one in four houses was vacant. In the years since 2000 several trends of population change have emerged. Per the City of St. Louis, the total neighborhood population has declined 21 percent (from approximately 3,700 to 2,900), and the number of vacant properties has continued to increase to a 30-year high in excess of 150 parcels, concentrated in the portion of the neighborhood to the south of Manchester Avenue. In terms of racial composition, FPSE was approximately 77 Black and 18 percent White in 2000. Now the neighborhood is 64 percent Black and 30 percent White. This “whitening” of the community is concentrated in the blocks north of Manchester Avenue, where many homes continue to be rehabbed even through the national and regional economic downturn since 2008. Recently, a large new apartment development was built along Chouteau Avenue on the northern edge of FPSE. These apartments – based on the fact that rent is advertised at \$1,600 per month for two bedrooms – are above the means of most of the existing population, indicating that real estate developers are banking on more middle-class people migrating to the neighborhood in the near future. Indeed, local media reports (Hare 2011) confirm the central role that a “middle-class foundation” is expected to play in the next decade of

redevelopment and neighborhood growth.

This sudden start in new housing is not all that unpredictable, however, as FPSE is itself being marketed under a new name: The Grove. Named for an emergent entertainment district along Manchester Avenue, The Grove is an invention of the past decade. The moniker comes from an earlier name for the area – Adams Grove – and the crossroads of Manchester and Tower Grove Avenue, a north-south connector linking FPSE with the affluent Central West End neighborhood to the north and the Missouri Botanical Gardens and Tower Grove Park areas immediately to the south.

The Grove is known regionally and nationally for two neighborhood institutions. The first is an overtly gay-friendly nightlife scene, featuring weekly shows by local Drag Queens. The LGBT Center of St. Louis now has its home on Manchester, and several clubs are owned and/or operated by openly homosexual business people. The second landmark is a soul food restaurant called Sweetie Pie's, the creation of Robbie Montgomery, a one-time member of Ike and Tina Turner's Ikettes, touring with the group and other stars through the 1970s. Sweetie Pie's at the Mangrove opened on Manchester Road in 2004, and currently is the subject of a reality TV show on the Oprah Winfrey



Illustration 8: A chalkboard outside of a club in The Grove advertises weekend performers, November 2013.

Network (OWN) in its second season.

Boasting a collection of about two dozen bars, restaurants and concert venues, The Grove attracts hundreds of outsiders to the neighborhood every week. Business interests and local redevelopment corporations^{vii} sponsor two major events each year, a bike race called Tour de Grove and a street festival called Grovesfest. In 2013 The Grove also played host to the second annual Shakespeare in the Streets production^{viii}. The development and business community contributes funds that support additional security patrols of the neighborhood (including residential areas), primarily in evening hours.

V. Radical Catholics

The “Open Door” community arrived in the St. Louis neighborhood now known as Forest Park Southeast as a group of young professionals seeking a different kind of community. The group was small and had met primarily as students at St. Louis University, a Jesuit institution. Some members already had been involved in the local Catholic Worker^{ix} movement, while others were simply not interested in moving out to the suburbs to participate in what one member called the White, middle-class “ghetto.” Their ideas of community reflected a moral-vision rooted in a general social movement among progressive Catholics of the era:

We were, as we would term ourselves, radical Catholics, interested in pursuing our lives: going to school, doing social work, and so on, and living together, sharing our resources. ... This was a big movement in the Catholic Church among leftist Catholics in those days, post-Vatican II days, to form these kind of communities. They are kind of mirrors of religious community, but we are lay people, of course. Interested in simplicity, really kind of an anti-capitalist position. (Abraham, resident since 1970)

And the group considered several neighborhoods, selecting FPSE because it matched

their unique criteria for an intentional community:

We wanted to move into different housing together. So we were looking around for a neighborhood in which the following conditions were met: it would be economically diverse (OK that excludes 95 percent of the neighborhood in the nation); it would be racially diverse. . . . I guess more accurate than economically diverse, I would say we wanted to make sure there were people living in poverty in the neighborhood we moved to. (Sarah, resident since 1970)

As a result, the group located and rented two houses in the Gibson Heights sub-neighborhood, the northwest corner of FPSE, and began their lives as young adults. Some took jobs and others began graduate studies, but they also began the work of revitalizing the neighborhood's Catholic Parish, St. Cronan's. The church and an adjacent elementary school

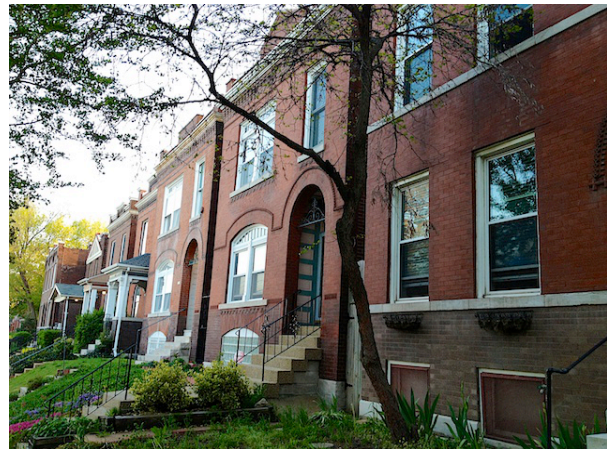


Illustration 9: Houses on the west side of Taylor Avenue in the Gibson Heights sub-neighborhood of Forest Park Southeast, April 2013.

building are located in FPSE south of Manchester Avenue. The school closed in the 1960s, and the parishioners themselves were dwindling as the neighborhood (especially south of Manchester) was growing in Black population while losing White residents to old age and a generational out-migration of Whites who had grown up in the neighborhood. Members of the Open Door led a campaign to rejuvenate the parish, bringing in a new priest and finding new uses for the shuttered school. Today the old elementary building houses Midtown Catholic Charities, which provides social services to FPSE and many other local neighborhoods, as well as City Greens Market, which

brings fresh and healthy foods options the area's low-income households.

We were committed to a diverse community economically and racially and socially, and we were also committed at that time to locating ourselves in a Catholic parish that was committed to community. (Tobias, resident since 1984)

Beyond working within the church community, the middle-class newcomers also worked to improve or expand services for neighborhood residents. Perhaps the two most successful efforts are a Montessori school and a community clinic. City Garden Montessori started in 1995 as a preschool program housed in a local church, but grew by 2006 to become a charter elementary school with its own building just south of FPSE and a goal to enroll as many as 175 students in grades K-6. The same Open Door member who helped start City Garden now operates another Montessori preschool just a few blocks west of FPSE. In similar fashion a community clinic – the Ranken Neighborhood Health Center – that first operated from the basement of a church south of Manchester Avenue outgrew its humble beginnings (with staffing primarily from nurses affiliated with the St. Louis University) to merge into the Family Care Health Centers, moving into a large new facility on Manchester Avenue in 2006.

In addition to their actions within the parish and in community services, members of the Open Door also began to invest in neighborhood properties. In some cases properties were purchased for personal residence, as when Abraham and Sarah purchased their house rather than see a neighbor lose it in default of property taxes. Noah and a friend became involved in rehabbing properties, starting with a four-family unit that had been abandoned. At the time many properties in the neighborhood were falling into disrepair, and properties were available at shockingly low prices, as cheap as \$500 and most for

less than \$10,000. This downturn allowed many of the Open Door community and those that followed them to become homeowners, extending the groups commitment to neighborhood into its physical upkeep. Low-cost housing thus facilitated the expansion of a morally-motivated gentry from the Open Door's first wave newcomers through several decades of steady in-movement, through the turn of the new millennium.

Dozen of households that came in, found a house, redid it for their own purposes, many of whom have stayed and have been part of the neighborhood for more than 20 years. ... Without those kinds of investments, the neighborhood probably would have been flushed down the toilet a long time ago. ... The impact that [Open Door] had on the neighborhood was to bring in like households, probably in the order of almost 100 people. ... north of Manchester and west of Newstead our presence was a critical nucleus to creating the community that was built here. (Noah, resident since 1970s)

As influential as the Open Door community proved to be, it is worth noting that other White professionals were living in the neighborhood and active in some similar ways at the same time as the Catholic lay community. On Wichita Avenue in Gibson Heights a small group formed a housing company, rehabbed homes and generally did what they could to stabilize the block as engaged homeowners. Like members of the Open Door community, members of this other group went on to raise children in the neighborhood. They became home owners and landlords. They engaged in local politics. They started new neighborhood institutions and revived existing groups in their parish and in the general neighborhood. The fact that this other group was active over the same time period and in similar ways makes for a useful comparison. Where as the personal narratives of morally-motivated individuals centered on their desires for diverse community composition and for differentiation from suburban lifestyles (among other themes),

practical conditions in the neighborhood came first to what might be called use-exchange balancers^x, as evidenced in this interview excerpts from a long-time resident who moved to FPSE in the 1970s:

This neighborhood has been - from the time I first discovered it, I think even in some ways up 'tip now - a very reasonably priced neighborhood. St. Louis has not had terrific public transportation, but this neighborhood has truly had the benefit of some of the best public transportation. It's right next to Forest Park, so you have all of those advantages. (Harold, resident since 1970)

We renovated one building at a time over a period of about five years. ... We had a very strong belief that the great majority of buildings in this neighborhood were sound buildings that could serve longer lives, for people to live in them. (Harold)

Compare that to what one of the Open Door has to say about her home and the neighborhood in general:

What my vision and goal is - although it is not that attainable and I don't spend that much time trying to achieve it - is economic integration. That is, neighborhoods perceived small enough - like a block - where there is institutional capacity for wealthy people and people living in poverty to live together. ... I'm not too concerned about our property values, because at the time that we moved here the properties were not worth all that much. ... I'm not looking to make a killing on this house and move to the suburbs. (Sarah)

VI. Moral Visions of Community

Yet even if not directly inspired by religious affiliation as the members Open Door community were, interviews demonstrate that many newcomers arriving in FPSE in the years between 1990 and 2010 did share a likeminded notion about the need for racially and economically integrated communities. In this sense, they also constitute members of a morally-motivated gentry that differs from the "urban pioneers" described in more capital-driven explanations of gentrification (see Smith 1996). Moreover, the existence of

a group like the Open Door in FPSE provided later newcomers some reassurance:

When we moved back to St. Louis we were looking at communities that we wanted to be a part of, and our formative years in college had been involved in what I guess you would call the Catholic Left. ... We wanted to be in a place where there were other people very nearby who were really interested in community, and who were really interested in justice issues and that sort of thing. ... Within this block ... you had 10-12 families of people who had moved here to move to the city, to be in a diverse neighborhood and to kind of hold the ground of a community that could live together and stay together. (Stanley, resident since 1991)

And the success that Open Door had achieved in their community and personal lives did inspire the next wave of newcomers:

It's definitely an urban neighborhood, not suburban, which appealed to me. It has the potential to have a lot of services within walking distance. That development hasn't completely come to full fruition yet, but it's in process. ... Its appeal for me was, these people who had moved here, the group 20 years before, had in fact raised their kids. Other people had purchased homes and were raising their children. ... So it clearly was a neighborhood that was being established as family friendly. (Tilda, resident since 1997)

In addition to joining in the growing nucleus of middle-class families, this second wave of morally-motivated newcomers was able to push forward the transformation and stabilization of FPSE in a number of ways. Second-wave newcomers have partnered with other locals (including low-income Black families) to operate a semi-formal “food-



Illustration 10: The community garden on Chouteau Avenue boasts an impressive metal sculpture and irrigated plots, September 2013.

sharing” program where a few neighborhood residents (including this author) collect

expiring food from two area grocery stores and redistribute the food to locals at no cost. Another group formed a community garden on Chouteau Avenue, with individual plots available through the garden association.

Through a local housing corporation – including some members from Open Door – federal monies were invested in the neighborhood in the form of redevelopment grants that allowed the buyout of a absentee landlord who's properties were physically run-down and playing host to drug dealers. Some residents went so far as to picket the problem landlord's home in the suburbs. Many of the properties – once acquired by the housing corporation – were rehabbed with a specific goal of maintain affordable quality housing and offered fixed rent to low-income households. Meanwhile, second-wave newcomers received funds to rehab homes and transition out of renting into ownership.

There was a property owner that owned a hundred units in the neighborhood at the time, an absentee land lord, and he did a horrible job of managing them. Basically he was letting people live there without leases. He didn't screen them. So, those were bought out in the early 2000s, but before that happened there was a lot of chaos in the neighborhood, lots of drug deals. ... It was a game changer in the neighborhood, because it go rid of the tenancy that was causing 90% of the crime. (Stewart, resident since 1991)

Indeed, checking crime in the neighborhood became an increasingly important issue in the 1990s, as criminal activity including drug dealing, robberies and even murders were commonplace in FPSE. Many residents noted an infamous shooting that resulted in the death of a Black teenage boy, and others spoke about gunshots being commonplace. This increasing dangerousness had two effects: 1) it tested the resolve of the morally-motivated community and 2) it led to perceptions of FPSE being a dangerous neighborhood that to some extent persist to the present day. Public safety remains a

frequent topic of discussion in both formal and informal settings.

VII. Put Your Body on the Line

Despite the fact that the arrival of an engaged middle class cohort did achieve some degree of neighborhood stabilization, particularly within the Gibson Heights sub-neighborhood, the members of the Open Door and subsequent newcomers also arrived at a time when the

socioeconomics of the larger neighborhood and the City of St. Louis writ large were

bottoming out (see Illustration 11). By the

end of the 1980s, when many of the White middle-class neighbors were settling into separate households and raising children, unemployment, poverty, drug dealing and violent crime rendered St. Louis one of the most dangerous places to live in America.

Only one couple among the dozens of people I interviewed experienced a direct violent confrontation – a terrifying armed home invasion in the early 2000s – but nearly every White middle-class resident shared personal stories about crime and danger in the neighborhood. For those morally-motivated individuals, the exposure to danger was seen as a test of their commitment to the creation of new community. In addition to addressing the housing issues that facilitated the drug trade – vacant properties and absentee



Illustration 11: A boarded door seals a home on Chouteau Avenue, September 2013.

landlords – neighbors banded together to directly confront criminal activities. Interviews related to crime and safety reveal that the newcomer community adapted to and confronted social conditions that might otherwise justify leaving an “urban community.”

Although the topic of race in relation to crime came up tangentially, informants stressed that it was poverty and not “ness” that precipitated a criminal element, and Black neighbors also pushed for the end of the drug trade in FPSE. It also is of note that the drug buyers frequenting the neighborhood often were Whites commuting to obtain their fix, making use of the nearby highways to create a “drive-through” market. One net result of this criminal activity was a spike in violent crime within the community. An Open Door member discovered a corpse while taking out the trash one morning; a teenage Black boy was gunned down in the streets; drug deals carried on in plain sight through the alleys. The reputation of the neighborhood was in jeopardy, and crime prevention became the main focus of neighborhood improvement.

People weren't interested in being violent with us as much as there was violence against one another. ... I think we were really sensitive about that reputation, that “How can you live there?” Well, we felt safe, but the fact of the matter was that we'd be in the news the next week. I still remember tales of a body found in a stairwell two streets over. (Matti, resident since 1990)

And there were many streets on which there was open drug dealing. So, when you'd drive down the street you'd go very slow, but not so slow that you would be approached to buy drugs. So that was very tricky. ... We would – as we look out into the backyard – see drug deals that were occurring. We would see people with large shopping bags that had shotguns in them. (Olive, resident since 1991)

Perceptions of crime in the neighborhood reached a low point where the big institutions to the north – Barnes Jewish Hospital (et al.) and the Washington University

Medical Center – were warning employees to avoid even driving through the neighborhood, a far cry from the present corporate-community relationship where employees may receive a cash incentive (\$7,500) to buy a house in FPSE. Instead, neighbors turned to each other in order to combat the street crime. A neighborhood watch program included citizen patrols and a novel approach to repelling the drug commuters: writing down license plate numbers and then (with the help of police) send out “post cards” to the owners addresses in forming them that their car was seen at a drug purchase by date and time. Confrontations occasionally were more heated:

There wasn't a week that went by without automatic gunfire in the neighborhood. ... One time we were walking past a group of guys standing standing on the steps of a vacant house and [my wife] told them to leave in a way they didn't expect. And later we had brick thrown through our window. (Tobias)

or even bleakly comical:

One time I intercepted a drug deal on our baby monitor. ... You know our daughter was sleeping and I heard a man's voice, so I went flying in there thinking, “Who's in our house?” ... I picked up what was on a cordless phone with a baby monitor. (Dalia, resident since 1991)

The “eyes on the neighborhood” approach and the real estate changes mentioned above slowly pushed down the crime rate to the present, where burglaries and other theft of property are last major crime problem in FPSE as a whole. Today the business district and corporate partners also pay for additional neighborhood patrols by off-duty police officers, and there is a police substation located on Manchester Avenue in the neighborhood. Asked why their families stuck it out through such troubled and potentially dangerous times, the morally-motivated newcomers responded with appeals to community and perseverance through personal convictions.

There were times when we were very scared at night. ... You could watch drug deals here and on the corners, but ... if you believe in it, you've got to do it. ... We want a world that isn't racist. We want a world that's integrated. So, you've got to put your body on the line. You can't just talk about it from the Ivory Tower. ... There were a few times when we felt vulnerable and powerless – I think about the worst of the times in these past 30 years with the crime and the drugs and so on. But most of the time we felt - both by our presence, the neighborhood groups and our parish and its work - that we were influencing the community for the better. (Abraham)

Some of us saw what we were doing here both with sort of populating St. Cronan's and populating this neighborhood, and figured out things that we could share, down to physical tools and support groups for how to raise children in a neighborhood that was unruly (Tobias)

Members of the morally-motivated gentry are thus distinguished by their internal moral-compasses for community and city living. In a very real way, they navigated their way to FPSE to carry out a life-act related to their belief in diversity and social justice. They also act upon their convictions in a number of ways that are beneficial to the broader community and generally inclusive along lines of race and class, despite the fact that their own ranks are drawn from a pool of college educated White professionals.

VII. Religious Charities and Social Assistance

One immediate take-away from the above examination of middle-class newcomers in FPSE is the way in which they invest time, economic capital and cultural capital to transform a neighborhood. However, the group did not together engage in the kind of direct aid to low-income households that one might associate with more formal religious charities and other service-oriented organizations. By means of comparison, one group of north St. Louis Catholic Workers offers shelter and food to the needy out of a central building, while the New Life Evangelistic Center (though based in central Missouri)

operates a men's shelter in downtown St. Louis. There are at present organizations within FPSE that offer middle-class Whites the ability to engage in neighborhood improvement, albeit not necessarily as residents. A brief examination of these organizations in FPSE is yet another way to distinguish the practices of morally-motivated gentry from other morally-motivated interventions of the middle class in urban neighborhoods. In this way “charity” activities might be differentiated from the practices of “gentrification with justice” detailed in this and other studies (Hankins and Walter 2011).

The first and perhaps most obvious organized religious community offering aid to FPSE residents is the St. Cronan's Parish, and as noted above, the church has historically been one means by which lay Catholics could engage in service. Through meal services and the St. Vincent DePaul Society, the church community has been an active partner to low-income families in need. Since members of the Open Door community helped revive the St. Cronan's congregation, it is fair to argue that the parish was an overt means by which the morally-motivated newcomers engaged in the work of neighborhood change, according to at least one Open Door member:

The parish ultimately was a big part of us staying here. The parish had really become an arm of the political. ... Our community and other people really brought the parish back and made it very, very viable and very important in the area. (Abraham)

Adjacent to the church and housed in the neighborhood's old Catholic Elementary School is the second notable religiously-affiliated organization, Midtown Catholic Charities^{xi}. Affiliated with the Archdiocese of St. Louis, and started in 1982, Midtown operates a number of programs that support low-income families throughout the broader St. Louis community, although FPSE is the physical home of their services. Some of the

community-supportive programs offered via Midtown are: tutoring, nutritional education and community gardening, job readiness, micro-lending, outreach to pregnant women and their children, children's programs and social/activist club for women. The agency focuses on ways that staff can assist others and help low-income individuals make connections with each other. A staff member at Midtown summed up some of the challenges facing local low-income families this way:

Most of the folks we serve, 90 percent, have incomes under \$12,000, so often times they are in a financial crisis with rent or utilities and are struggling to keep up. If you are juggling the balls, and you're doing pretty good and then something else enters the picture, you don't have any extra money. So if you put some of your regular money into that, then you dig a hole you can't get out of unless you get some help. So some people can get out of an emergency with a little bit of help.

Since locating within FPSE in 2006, Mission St. Louis has worked to provide support for local residents in several forms. The organization is affiliated with The Journey – a multi-site interdenominational church – which has one congregation south of FPSE on Kingshighway Boulevard. Mission St. Louis got its start when church members became involved with Adams Elementary School, which is located on the south side of FPSE. The school itself had been shuttered until the year 2000, when a major renovation project was successful in restoring the historic school. Beginning with providing school supplies and later tutoring via the school, Mission St. Louis has branched out into providing youth activities and connecting volunteer labor with home improvement and neighborhood clean-up efforts. The organization now also works to provide job skills and connect low-income youth to employment opportunities. A staff member explained the evolution of Mission St. Louis as going from a “shotgun” approach to urban problems to a

relationship-based approach connected to the FPSE community, as with this interview excerpt:

Because Adams really at that time hung its hat on being a community school, the vast majority of kids were really from this neighborhood and walking. So we got to know families, and just said: Ok. Instead of doing all this stuff, what if we drew boundaries around this neighborhood? ... And we said we are going to pour all of our money, resources, everything we have into this one location. And we are going to lead out through relationships, and just see where that takes us. It's been a really crazy ride; it's really been fantastic.

At least two couples affiliated with The Journey now reside within FPSE, although

it remains to be seen if another wave of morally-motivated gentry will arrive in the neighborhood because of this local congregation and organization. Regardless, the inception of Mission St. Louis does suggest that the same dynamics of faith, community and the city that produced the Open Door can produce similar outcomes in the same place yet separated by nearly four decades.

Another “mission” rounds out the list of religiously-affiliated organizations now operating in Forest Park Southeast, Acts 1:8 Mission Society. The group purchased and renovated a shuttered church on Kingshighway Boulevard to use as a home base for their urban outreach, calling the building their servant center (see Illustration 12).



Illustration 12: A once vacant church along Kingshighway Boulevard now operates as the Acts 1:8 Mission Society Servant Center, November 2013.

The following passage is taken directly from the group's Web page^{xii}:

The needs here in St Louis, and also in the Metro East area, are great. Hundreds of young people are shuffled through the inadequate school systems, and suffer with broken and dysfunctional families. They are emerging simply as statistics on the news, and on the streets with no hope. We believe deeply that Jesus Christ has placed us in the midst of the raging poverty and brokenness, giving us the task of walking with these young people, and showing them a different path, and giving them the hope that Christ has given to all of us. As the Lord brings them to us, we bring them into this family of Christ, where they find for the first time in their lives, something greater than themselves to believe in, and they find the loving arms of Jesus welcoming them into His family (He works through our arms to give them comfort and stability).

VIII. Discussion: Do Moral Visions Matter?

From all of the above it is clear that religious and moral visions of community do shape the way that middle-class individuals and groups engage urban America. In past decades the association of core cities with crime, drug use, moral bankruptcy and the underclass (Wilson 1987) may have represented a barrier to reintegrating the middle-class with racial minorities and the poor, but a small and influential subset of the middle class – the morally-motivated gentry – focus instead on desires for economically stable, diverse and integrated communities that are made possible in an urban milieu. Moral visions of city life, including the creation of and service to one's community reflect an idyllic notions of village life or the near-mythical heyday of core American cities immediately after World War II. Yet these moral visions can yield practical outcomes: improved public safety, better schools, affordable housing, preservation of historic neighborhoods, etc. Morally-motivated gentry see themselves as part of an urban mosaic, not the exclusive inhabitant of some bourgeoisie enclave. They create systems of mutual support that encourage the arrival of like-minded households. They are willing to risk personal safety,

and they are willing to invest even where there is little promise of economic reward. In all of these behaviors they are differentiated from the pioneering or exclusive gentry who see to pacify or suburbanize the city (as in Smith 1996).

Looking long-term, it seems doubtful that morally-motivated gentry constitute anything more than a unique minority in the broader processes of gentrification and urban redevelopment. However, the presence of a morally-motivated gentry can alter the course of events radically within a given local context. Further study may reveal what happens if and when more traditional gentrification occurs in a context where morally-motivated communities are present. Indeed, even members of the Open Door community believe that gentrification is likely in Forest Park Southeast now that larger developers, businesses and corporations have become the primary drivers of new developments. Additional analysis of the (still growing) Forest Park Southeast data set will certainly be sensitive to these and other emerging trends.

Given the prevalent role that religion continues to play in American life it is not surprising that religion would feature prominently in the “visioning” of middle-class people choosing to return to the city. In many ways the idea of living in community with the needy reaffirms to the faithful that they are carrying out God's plan. It also is true that large congregations of all denominations have missions of charity that are carried out by the members either locally or in the nation or world at large. In the case of Evangelical churches the “mission trip” has become a rite of passage for teenagers and their youth leaders. Connected to the Catholic Church organizations like the Society of St. Vincent DePaul Society carry out missions of charity to the needy within a given parish or

community. As congregations are located in urban areas, they will undoubtedly continue to exercise these moral visions of service. As their members reside in urban neighborhoods so too will hospitality and community be functions of moral visions put into action.

Who's In a Name?

Neighborhood Branding and the Dynamics of Race and Class

ABSTRACT

Urban redevelopment occurs in forms of both culture and capital; with new investment and newcomer populations also comes new naming of places. Processes of neighborhood “branding” are an intentional form of renaming and “reimagining” designed to draw in an emerging group of young urban-dwelling professionals drawn from the ranks of Generations X/Y and Millennials. An ethnographic study of The Grove, an emerging entertainment district in St. Louis, Mo., reveals the way a neighborhood brand may overtake and overwrite existing neighborhood identities. By asking “who” is in a name, the research reveals how the race and class divisions of a gentrifying neighborhood are reflected in feelings of inclusion/exclusion by various members of the community.

KEYWORDS

Gentrification, Redevelopment, Urban Community, Neighborhood Branding, Race, Class, St. Louis

I. Any Given Sunday

The four of us are making the weekend food run, picking up the “spoiled” food from a local supermarket to share with our neighbors. While we wait for the bread to arrive, the last of two cars-full of food, we chat through a recap of the week's events, discuss the pressing video games and movies of the day, sip at our Polar Ice sodas and gas-station coffees, and generally shoot the bull. The fellow next to me atop the loading dock, call him Zeke, started the food sharing a few years back, tying our neighborhood into a web of food redistribution affiliated through a local university. Zeke has been in the neighborhood for two decades, raising two sons now grown and gone. The two “catchers” in the lot below us are 20-something Tommy, who grew up in the neighborhood and the only Black member of our crew, and new neighbor Raymond, a 30-something IT professional and fellow photographer.

As Zeke and I pack a few items that have just rolled up in a cart, we overhear Raymond ask Tommy about his Saturday.



Illustration 13: A juggler performs at Grovesfest, an annual street fair in The Grove entertainment district in St. Louis, Mo., October 2013.

“So, did you make it out to Grovesfest yesterday?”

“What? It was yesterday? I didn't know that.”

“How could you not know about it? It was all over Facebook. There were great big signs on Manchester? It was everywhere.”

“Naw, man, I didn't see any of that. You gotta tell me these things! ... So did you go?”

I snapped some photos at Grovesfest, so I chime in to talk about the bands and the food and this truck that blew a million soap bubbles for the kiddos. But then the bread arrives, and we all get busy loading the last of the food to haul home. In his car on the way back, I laugh and say to Zeke, “Can you believe that Tommy hadn't heard about Grovesfest?” And the words are barely out of my mouth before Zeke replies, “Well of course he didn't know about it. It's not for him.”

Immediately I think: He may be right. ... What does it mean if he's right? Who *is* it for?

FIELD NOTES, 6 October 2013

* * *

II. Introduction

The re-urbanization of middle-class and White populations – a process often called gentrification – is one of a series of trends redefining city living in North American communities and across the globe. Buzz words like sustainable, car-optional, green, hip, creative and bohemian also are now attached to city dwelling in the United States, no longer confined to a few arty enclaves in New York or the café and boutique districts of Seattle or San Francisco. A new, young “creative class” (Florida 2008) has arrived, and redevelopment efforts within cities are responding with new apartment and condominium projects, bike-friendly corridors and bike sharing programs, light-rail and other mass transit expansion, and by economic development in the areas of life science, technology and design. There also is growth in authentically local cultural production, often in the form of neo-bohemian art and music scenes of burlesque troupes and buskers (Regehr 2011) or in “foodie” haunts like gastro-pubs and microbreweries (Johnston and Baumann 2009). St. Louis, Mo., may not enjoy national recognition as a “creative” city, but the

largest population segment growth from 2000 to 2010 was among young professionals age 25-34^{xiii}. Within the city there is a growing collection of niche neighborhoods where young urbanite professionals work, play and live. These “brand name” neighborhoods are the subject of capital-intensive redevelopment in both housing and commercial real estate. The brand also carries with it a notion of the social activities and social actors who will make use of the space.

One such area feeling the effects of a youthful urban resurgence is The Grove, a St. Louis entertainment district along Manchester Avenue. Located within a larger St. Louis neighborhood called Forest Park Southeast, The Grove has become a brand-name neighborhood known for its bars, clubs, music venues and restaurants, but also is home to a “recycled” bicycle shop, a skateboard shop, a coffee shop, a bakery, a yoga studio, a tattoo parlor and an architecture firm. And a microbrewery is slated to open in 2014. Meanwhile, the national notoriety of The Grove has been on the rise in the past five years because of a local soul food restaurant and a notable concentration of gay-friendly bars^{xiv}.



Illustration 14: Cars pass underneath a large neon sign announcing The Grove. Two such signs were installed along Manchester Avenue to advertise the entertainment and nightlife district, March 2013.

Forest Park Southeast (abbreviated FPSE) is a moderately sized neighborhood in both geography and population. There are approximately 2,900 residents as of the 2010 Census, 64 percent Black and 30 percent White. This represents a substantial change from the year 2000, when the White population was only 18 percent. The change does not so much represent a large influx of Whites as it does population loss concentrated among Blacks, as the overall neighborhood declined by 20 percent (from approximately 3,700 residents to 2,900) since the year 2000. Even as The Grove has brought in-fill to the once boarded-over store fronts of Manchester Avenue, the overall number of vacant properties in FPSE has risen to a 30 year high of more than 150, largely abandoned small homes or multi-family units.

These indications of divides between The Grove and the surrounding Forest Park Southeast neighborhood are made all the more intriguing as the stickiness of The Grove as a brand appears has made the two names all but equivalent in local usage, especially when it comes to local real estate^{xv} advertising and sales. “The Grove” logo now appears on a number of buildings not just on Manchester Avenue, but just north along Chouteau Avenue as well. The Grove likewise has a Web presence through a traditional Web site and via social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Bearing these basic facts in mind, an ethnographic study of Forest Park Southeast and The Grove (spanning 2008-2013) reveals the connections and disconnections between residents and redevelopers, neighbors and nightlife, and along lines of race and class within a dynamic and sometimes contested social space. The project suggests that place naming and branding are a window into not just a rhetorical understanding of a

neighborhood, but also into how people socially construct and engage with a neighborhood. Branding is a process of visioning and imagination that includes an imagined consumer of the place in question, whether resident or visitor. This question of for whom a neighborhood exists reveals class and racial divides that otherwise might be obscured by the success stories of redevelopment and revitalization. Branding of a neighborhood as a “hip” place to live likewise may be connected to processes like rent spikes and land banking that push low-income residents out in favor of a consumer class. Through the voices of dozens of residents and community stakeholders, this research attempts to answer the question: Who's in a name?

III. Neighborhood Branding, Culture and Capital

St. Louis, Mo., located on the banks of the Mississippi River, stands as a model metropolis for the history of suburbanization and racial segregation in post-war America (Gordon 2008), and now the city may prove to be a model for the opposite processes of middle-class return, sometimes referred to as gentrification or urban renewal.

Furthermore, St. Louis also is experiencing trends related to a generational shift in how young professionals orient themselves to residence, work and leisure. Particularly for White workers of the Gen Y and Millennial cohorts (those born between 1980-2000) there is an emerging pattern of rejecting suburban living in favor of city dwelling. The following sections review two dominant theoretical traditions in the theorizing of gentrification, making important connections between gentrification theory and the study of other trends in urban American communities. All of these trends may be tied to changes driven by 1) capital in the form of individual and institutional investments and

2) culture in the form of new patterns of city living, new communities and renewed neighborhoods. Finally, this paper examines the specific process of neighborhood branding and marketing as it relates to feelings of inclusion and exclusion on the part of existing and new neighborhood residents, and the way branding connects members of the broader metro community with a neighborhood

Bars, cafés restaurants, nightclubs, art galleries and concert venues increasingly play a role in economic redevelopment of America's urban centers, representing a shift away from the industrial and corporate-led economic development of past decades (Lloyd 2010, Currid 2007). As nightlife and entertainment districts primarily cater to younger adults, and particularly the young and affluent, cultural amenities are seen as a means of enticing members of the “new creative class” (Florida 2008) to play and ultimately live in urban neighborhoods. It follows that both commercial business and real estate developers looking to profit from the proliferation of these cultural economies seek to create neighborhood brands (Johansson 2012) that reflect the process of creating new places in old spaces.

A place brand does not only seek to present a place favourably to the target consumer—visitor or inhabitant—but also seeks to say something about how to perform social relations to best represent the brand proposition. Thus, the brand can be seen as a governing device, resembling a consumption-based version of social engineering. What therefore needs to be paid attention to is the politics of social relations implied in the seemingly neutral economic discourse of branding and how re-imagination can in effect be the reproduction of inequitable social positioning. Since branding rests on the very notion of differentiation, some form of stratification is implied: to be unique, one has to be different from others. (Johansson 2012, pg. 3624)

The role of an imagined city or more accurately a reimagined city is not new, as the post-World War II boom and middle-class exodus rendered urban spaces a canvas of sorts for repurposing the structures of the Industrial Era in a dawning post-Industrial society.

Already by the 1980s, new patterns of development in older industrial neighborhoods were becoming apparent, with derelict spaces of the industrial past reimagined around the residential and consumption requirements of a new class of urban residents, white-collar (or “no-collar”) workers in the growth sector of the postindustrial city. Moreover, many were beginning to note the role that young artists played in this process. Increased movement of artists into the Wicker Park area helped to set the stage for the building’s reanimation as a site of legal enterprise. ... This process draws upon the cumulative cultural identifications that can attach to specific local places and to categories of place. The space of the city is simultaneously real and imagined, organizing and organized by both practical activity and cultural representations. (Lloyd 2010, pg. 29)

Likewise, cities themselves become part of the rebranding-for-redevelopment trend^{xvi}, seeking to establish urban areas as hip, young and vibrant (Gibson 2005). Beneath the surface of these seemingly reinvigorating trends in the economic sphere, however, lie many of the classic problems associated with gentrification of urban neighborhoods. Poor and minority residents are not included or incorporated in these new cultural playgrounds (Grazian 2009, Shaw 2011), and the arrival of affluent residents pushes



Illustration 15: The Grove is full of such murals on public structures like this traffic control box, April 2013.

up both home prices and base levels of rent. This is particularly true of new apartment buildings and renovation projects. New construction may even reflect historic fears about crime and the urban underclass (Kirk and Laub 2010), where gated and securitized developments become routine means of attracting young professionals, particularly young women (Kern 2010).

Within the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood neighborhood branding is so visible as to be unavoidable. The creation of The Grove entertainment district in the past decade has cemented a new identity not only for the cultural amenities along Manchester Avenue but one that increasingly defines the entire surrounding neighborhood. The power of The Grove brand (see Illustration 16) comes from the popularity of its culture and commerce, but also from the strategic promotion of the brand through signs and



Illustration 16: T-shirts at a local drug store proclaim: What happens in The Grove stays in The Grove, September 2013.

media, street art, and public events like the annual Tour de Grove bike races and GroveFest street fair. The business district is supported from within by donations from without by major corporate sponsors. The local soul-food restaurant is now the subject of a cable television reality show^{xvii}. The neighborhood is national recognized as the hub of gay-friendly nightlife and culture in the St. Louis region, with gay-owned bars being

some of the longest-lived establishments in The Grove. In 2008 the LGBT Center of St. Louis relocated to a storefront on Manchester Avenue^{xviii}, and the weekend Drag Shows at several clubs have become something of a local tradition.

The creation of a new neighborhood brand and the rapid development of Grove-centric activities has exposed some divides within the surrounding Forest Park Southeast neighborhood. Young Black residents who have grown up in the neighborhood reported that the increased police presence in The Grove, especially at night, leave them feeling profiled, unwanted or excluded in their own neighborhood. Some long-term middle-class residents reported that the business and real estate community enjoy special consideration from city leadership, influencing the direction and outcomes of redevelopment. Still other middle-class informants were vocally in support of expansions to amenities in The Grove. The decision of a local micro-brewery to open a restaurant and bottle works in the neighborhood (slated to open in 2014) was cited in numerous interviews as evidence that economic progress was now a point of pride for residents, particularly as the development takes the place of a defunct paper company.

In summation, The Grove is increasingly a self-sustaining commercial district and a growing brand, the success of which threatens to eclipse the previous residential identity of Forest Park Southeast. Residents are divided in their support of The Grove, with some embracing the flurry of new activities and other left feeling that redevelopment is “not for us,” particularly as race and class lines in the neighborhood are reflected in where and how redevelopment and reinvestment occurs. Interviews and interactions with residents of Forest Park Southeast reveal a great diversity in opinions and understandings of how

and why neighborhood change is happening and who benefits from these changes. Voices from the business and development community complete the picture of a neighborhood with many stakeholder groups and the cooperation/competition between them.

IV. The Forest Park Southeast Neighborhood

While the City of St. Louis is politically divided into Wards from which are elected a Board of Aldermen, the more popular understanding of the city is as a group of distinct neighborhoods. The city itself recognizes 79 such divisions^{xix}, a number that seems particularly large given that the municipality only encompasses 66 square



Illustration 17: Homes along Oakland Avenue are representative of housing north of Manchester Avenue, August 2007.

miles. Forest Park Southeast is a newer name for a place that historically was composed of several even smaller neighborhoods with names like Ranken, Adams Grove and Gibson Heights. Neighborhood boundaries are as follows: North, Interstate 64 (old Highway 40); East and South Vandeventer Avenue (which bends around the neighborhood before heading north); and West, Kingshighway Boulevard. The contemporary neighborhood name ties the neighborhood to its past, when Chouteau Avenue was one of two grand entrances to Forest Park (the site of the 1904 World's Fair and Exposition). Highway construction cut the neighborhood off from the park before World War II, but a bike and pedestrian bridge has restored easy access to the famous green space.

FPSE originally had a mix of Greek, German and Irish families who were joined by a small but growing Black community, drawing jobs from a meat-packing district north of the neighborhood and a rail yard and warehouse district on the south. There also were light manufacturing jobs.

Through 1960, Manchester Avenue was a bustling commercial district with a popular

department store and a theater. The neighborhood was diverse and working-class, but also predominantly White as residents began to transition to suburban communities (particularly along generational lines) the number of Black households increased to the point where the neighborhood was majority-minority by 1970. According to some long-term residents, racial animosity played some role in the “White Flight” of the era. As the White population left, homes fell into the hands of absentee landlords and the businesses along Manchester slowly closed and the buildings shuttered.

This horrible to say, but it was that “White Flight.” I remember the first Black family that bought a house over on Wichita. The for sale signs - it’s terrible - the for sale signs went up everywhere. (Elena, FPSE resident since 1955)

You could have bought any of those houses over there for nothing. ... There was an old man that lived up the street a little bit. You could have bought that house for \$3,000, for Christ’s sake. (Troy, FPSE resident since 1955)



Illustration 18: Houses south of Manchester Avenue are generally smaller than those to the north, and there are more vacant and abandoned properties to the south, May 2013.

The older White people were afraid of the people, and the Black people didn't want anything to do with the older White people. (Noah, FPSE resident since 1970s)

The neighborhood was dying. ... A lot of the housing was starting to deteriorate, hadn't been taken care of in a long time. The old ladies who were left were doing the best they could, but - you know - obviously they were on fixed incomes and so on. (Abraham, FPSE resident since 1970)

Housing stock varies considerably between the northern and southern sides of the neighborhood (see Illustrations 17 and 18), with Manchester Avenue serving as a symbolic dividing line. South of Manchester the homes are generally smaller, including so-called shotgun houses (three-room homes). While there are some newer houses in the south, vacant lots and vacant homes a fixture of nearly every block. Two-family flats, four family flats and larger multi-unit apartments predominate the north neighborhood, and many of the two-family units have been converted to single-family homes as middle-class households began to move back into the neighborhood, and more specifically to the northwest quadrant (Gibson Heights) starting in the 1970s. There are a few sizable properties still vacant, but in-fill has been more or less consistent since 2000. Rehabs continues to this day, with several real estate developers operating primarily in the restoration and renovation market.

The Grove got on my radar because it was a new historic district at that time. The main historic district didn't hit the register until 2000 here. ... I kind of picked this area because of it being a newer historic district and because of the location [near] to Highway 40. I grew up in St. Louis, and I think a lot of people want to be centered on that Highway 40 corridor. And so it was my determination that it was on this Highway 40 corridor and that it was a pretty underdeveloped neighborhood. (Samuel, real estate developer)

Since the 1960s the area immediately north of FPSE has seen tremendous economic development related to two major institutions, Washington University Medical School

and Barnes-Jewish hospital. These institutions anchor a huge medical community with a nursing school, college of pharmacy, children's hospital, cancer treatment center and various smaller practices. Corporate anchored redevelopment is a longstanding practice in St. Louis (Monti 1990), although the FPSE neighborhood did not immediately benefit from the proximity of its neighbors across the highway. Instead problems with drugs and violence in the 1980s and 1990s caused the neighborhood's corporate neighbors to warn their employees to steer clear of for years.

Forest Park Southeast has been on the bubble for 30 years. ... They [the hospital/medical school] were slow in giving a nod to our neighborhood. In fact we were redlined in many of their notices to their employees; don't drive through our neighborhood. ... It's taken along time; there was a lot of bias against us. (Matti, resident since 1990)

In fact, if there is any one sign of changing fortunes within the neighborhood it has been the increasingly heavy role that corporate patrons now play in the community, primarily through the Washington University Medical Center Redevelopment Corporation. Federal loans and grant monies (totaling millions of dollars) are disbursed through the development corporation, allowing for property renovation and facilitating a number of major projects, highlighted by two projects completed after the year 2000. As a direct partnership between BJC Healthcare and Washington University, two of the largest institutions in all St. Louis in both



Illustration 19: McCormack House was built on top of two blocks of existing homes at the corner of Manchester Avenue and Kingshighway Boulevard as one of several corporate-funded developments that have come to Forest Park Southeast since the year 2000, April 2013.

employment and assets, the development corporation started a community master plan process that included contact with more than 500 stakeholders in the neighborhood.

First, in partnership with McCormack Baron Salazar several dozen homes on Cadet and Wichita avenues were demolished to make way for McCormack House at Forest Park Southeast, an apartment development for seniors. Then with a coalition of neighbors and corporate partners (including members of the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team) the public school district was able to reopen Adams School (closed in 1988), located on Tower Grove Avenue south of Manchester. The school was built in the 1800s, but was totally renovated with modern amenities, including a large playing field. The school also is home to the local chapter of the Boys and Girls Club, which offers a number of enrichment programs targeting low-income youth. WUMC Redevelopment Corporation sponsors programs at the Adams School Community Center to help locals who complete job readiness programming find employment within the BJC Health and WUMC systems.

Today a major new apartment complex (more than 200 new units) is nearing completion near Interstate 64. A new park has opened on Chouteau Avenue near the apartments, and the state of Missouri is engaged in replacing and updating all of the highway overpasses and interchanges along I-64



Illustration 20: The Aventura development represents 202 new apartments in FPSE, April 2013.

through the neighborhood. Coupled with expansion business, research and medical facilities to the north, the total investment in and around FPSE now tallies tens of millions of dollars.



Illustration 21: A mural depicts an evolution of (apparently White) bicycling on the wall of a commercial building in The Grove, September 2012.

Residents also tout the benefits of living so close to so many amenities that are unique to city living. Forest Park offers various outdoor recreations in addition to being host to a zoo, two museums, and an art museum. The main Washington University campus also is just a trip west across the park. Saint Louis University is about a mile away down Vandeventer Avenue, and St. Louis University High School (an all-male Catholic school) is even closer on Oakland Avenue. A St. Louis Community College campus is just a block or two further west. Just south along Tower Grove Avenue is the Missouri Botanical Gardens and another larger park called Tower Grove. The local light rail line – Metrolink – runs through the Barnes-Jewish/Medical School campus, and city bus lines

criss-cross the neighborhood.

The initial factor that was the strongest draw to me was geographic. This was a neighborhood that just is very well located. This neighborhood has been - from the time I first discovered it, I think even in some ways up 'til now - a very reasonably priced neighborhood. St. Louis has not had terrific public transportation, but this neighborhood has truly had the benefit of some of the best public transportation. It's right next to Forest Park, so you have all of those advantages. (Harold, FPSE resident since 1970)

The neighborhood also is located in close proximity to several other well-known neighborhoods in the city proper. South on Kingshighway is the Italian neighborhood known as The Hill, and to the west is the Irish "Dogtown" neighborhood. The former is known for restaurants and the later is known for a huge St. Patrick's Day street party and parade. The area is a cultural crossroads.

Given all of these factors, perhaps the wonder should be why development is only taking off now, and the only answer residents seem to have is that a stigma of violence, crime and drug dealing – coupled with a labeling of the neighborhood as "" or a "ghetto" – propelled Whites and the middle-class to leave and stay away for decades. (With the only real exceptions to White Flight being the residents of Gibson Heights, who are discussed in a separate paper within the larger FPSE study.) Recent development also has had the benefit of very engaged corporate benefactors, and as will be shown below, the emergence of a vibrant cultural district along Manchester Avenue has contributed to a new wave of young, middle-class residents. The draw to the neighborhood remains two-fold, as properties for sale and rent are still relatively affordable, but the central location in the city emerges as the primary factor influencing the in-movement of newcomers. This is notable because residents both new and old cite the central location of FPSE as a

benefit of living in the community.

I think with the development of The Grove and that identified business district ... it's attracted is a whole set of people, who, number one they are younger. And I guess I'd say that they may not be as interested in being involved in the neighborhood, but they live here because it's fun to live here. And there are things to do. And it's near things. And they feel safe. And they like that type of urban spirit. I think it's different than people who have lived here for a long time. ... But I see that drawing people in now, because they want to live that sort of culture. (Stewart, FPSE resident since 1991)



Illustration 22: Local students complete a mural they co-created on the side of a building along Manchester Avenue in the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood, May 2013.

V. The Grove: A Neighborhood Brand

A decade ago there was no “Grove” in Forest Park Southeast. In fact, the once vibrant business corridor along Manchester Road had dwindled to a handful of bars and the local post office. Gone were the retail shops, lunch counters, department store and theater. Empty and boarded-up buildings were evidence that commerce had followed the highways out of central St. Louis, making its way with the White middle class to the emerging suburban communities that to this day constitute the major population centers with the St. Louis Metro Region. For at least two decades little changed, but by the 1990s some momentum was found in the form of the local bar scene, which was not just gay-friendly but gay-owned. Other bars and clubs filtered into the east end of the neighborhood, where Chouteau, Manchester and Vandeventer avenues confluence. As the

nightlife scene gained traction, developers started to look for daytime offerings, and the old department store at Manchester and Tower Grove was reborn as a restaurant space, which now houses a nationally known soul food kitchen. These minority-owned success stories are discussed in detail below.

Investment from the corporate community also became important part of redevelopment, as two local redevelopment corporations now act as heralds of The Grove in a number of ways. First, they act as liaisons between local property owners and entrepreneurs who are looking to open new businesses. Second, they sponsor a number of events that raise the profile of the neighborhood in the St. Louis regions and beyond. The Tour de Grove is a sanctioned competitive bike race through the neighborhood that is part of the larger MoPro Series of races. Grovesfest is an annual street fair featuring art, vendors and live music. The local cultural renaissance is reinforced through a campaign of neighborhood artwork that includes a number of murals (see Illustrations 2, 15, 22 and 30) , produced with a local artists and often being completed with the help of community labor. As a staffer at one of the redevelopment corporations explained:

We've been ecstatic with what's happened in the las three years. When I came here in 2002 it was scary driving down Manchester. There were maybe four, five open store fronts. ... We are getting calls, I would say every other week at least, from businesses wanting to move to the area. So there's a lot of good things in the works. ... In five years time, The Grove is going to be twice as good.

The Grove as a name and as a neighborhood brand is the brainchild of a small number of local business people, who were looking for neighborhood name that captured some of the area's history (old Adams Grove) but also differentiated the Manchester business community from the neighborhood at large, which as earlier discussed was locally known

for drugs, crime and poverty with a predominantly Black face. Thus the name “The Grove” provided something of a fresh start for the arts and entertainment offerings on Manchester, as explained by one of the entrepreneurs responsible for the new naming, which came about after 2004:

A lot of people had gone to great lengths to brand this neighborhood as Forest Park Southeast, and it was abbreviated FPSE, which to me was alphabet soup. Nobody was going to say, “We're going to FPSE for dinner on Saturday night. It didn't mean anything. And the gay bars were calling this area the Manchester Strip. Well, Manchester is the longest street in this town. It goes from downtown out to [exurban] Wildwood. So, to me the Manchester Strip could have been anywhere. It had no sense of place. And FPSE wasn't a brand; it was alphabet soup. So I knew that the neighborhood needed something, a way to identify it that established it as a destination. I began to search within the neighborhood history for a name. ... We found out this neighborhood was on the U.S. Census Tract as Adams Grove, next to Tower Grove. ... So this Grove thing, from Adams Grove, had some history.

VI. Gay Friendly St. Louis

The Grove is known regionally and nationally for its overtly gay-friendly nightlife scene, featuring weekly shows by local Drag Queens. The niche gay and lesbian bar scene sates back to the 1980s, when Forest Park Southeast was largely devoid of a business community after years of divestment. Now the neighborhood has helped put St. Louis on



Illustration 23: A Drag Queen performs at a club in The Grove, which is known regionally and nationally as a hub of gay-friendly nightlife, October 2013.

the map as one of America's most gay-friendly cities^{xx}. Subsequently the LGBT Center of

St. Louis now has its home on Manchester Avenue, and the neighborhood has played host to several local gay-pride events in recent years. Although a larger variety of bars and clubs now exists, “drag shows” have been something of a local institution.



Illustration 24: A mural "St. Louis Wall of Fame" depicts famous Black St. Louisans as seen nearby Sweetie Pie's at the Mangrove on Manchester Avenue in The Grove, September 2012.

As the nightlife scene grew, the neighborhood began to attract a younger crowd of residents as well. In interviews and bar-side chats, many contemporary young professionals only considered moving to the neighborhood after experiencing the entertainment district. Although still a small subset of the total neighborhood population, gay and lesbian couples are now a recognized cohort within FPSE. Older residents were aware that the neighborhood again is changing.

The one thing that I would say, and I didn't expect, is that we have become a pretty gay-friendly neighborhood, and that's definitely changed the texture of the neighborhood. When we moved in I don't know that I really, clearly identified gay couples in the neighborhood. There may have been some and I just wasn't aware of it, but that's become much more overt and much more common in the past 10 years. (Olive, FPSE resident since 1991)

And the perceived gay-friendliness of The Grove spills over into the residential neighborhood, as evidenced by the narrative of one new resident who not only was drawn to the neighborhood because he had come out as gay, but also because he had done

volunteer work south of Manchester years before. He also benefited from an incentive program via WUMC that provides \$8,000 to employees buying a home in the neighborhood.

Because I'm gay, when I finally came out and started going out I was hanging out in the commercial district a lot. That was another piece that I think was important between what I knew back when I was in college and then becoming more comfortable because I was hanging out here. ... I think I had a little bit of a romantic idea of a neighborhood because it had been somewhat on my mind for a long time. (Steve, FPSE resident since 2011)

Gays and lesbians have played a role in urban land markets, even to the point where “gay gentrification” was listed among several kinds of marginal gentrification happening in North American cities (Knopp 1990). However, the majority of patrons of The Grove are commuters and not true locals.

VII. Famous Food: As Seen on TV

Sweetie Pie's at the Mangrove is the creation of Robbie Montgomery, a one-time member of Ike and Tina Turner's back-up singers, The Ikettes. Montgomery toured with the group and other stars through the 1970s, then retired and later entered the restaurant business. Sweetie Pie's opened at the intersection of Manchester and Tower Grove avenues in 2004, and currently is the subject of a reality TV show on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN). The restaurant location was the site of the neighborhood department store, back in the era when trolley lines still ran on Manchester. Today the restaurant helps anchor a small group of -owned businesses in The Grove, although the list of restaurants that have come and gone in The Grove is lengthy to say the least, especially as you move west from the older bar district.

I knew that my concept would work with the space. It was just a matter of, could I bring people to The Grove. So, that's what kept me up at night, especially when we started construction. ... With the success of Sweetie Pie's – and you know, I remember Sweetie Pie's years ago – and now Saturday's you'd see a line full of White people. Five years ago, six years ago that might not have been the case. ... The way I looked at it was, let me get into this new and upcoming area while the rent was still low. (Jason, a young restaurateur in The Grove)

The area near Sweetie Pie's still has a large number of vacant store fronts (including two immediately across Manchester Avenue), although the opening of another nearby restaurant, a music club and a skateboard shop has provided some needed infill. Additionally, some locals are not pleased with the proliferation of bars and restaurants that primarily cater to a commuter middle-class (White and Black) and not to most of the local population. In practical terms, what this means is that The

Grove does not operate for locals, although certainly a sizable population of locals does enjoy the services in The Grove, particularly younger residents who have moved in since the millennium. The number of cultural offerings also is steadily increasing, with recent announcements of a new 800-seat concert venue and the reopening of two bars within weeks of completion at the end of 2013.



Illustration 25: A sign advertises Sweetie Pie's at The Mangrove a popular soul-food restaurant in The Grove that is the subject of a television show, November 2013.



Illustration 26: A street sign announces Forest Park Southeast, while a mural on an apartment building nearby advertises "Fine Livin' in The Grove," as evidence of the split personality of the surrounding neighborhood, November 2013.

VIII. Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion

Given that Forest Park Southeast and The Grove share the same space, it would be tempting to argue that they are the same place. This may or may not be true. Residents within the community are still predominantly moderate to low-income, and the majority of those households are . Returning to the question posed in the introductory anecdote, does the growth of The Grove as a second neighborhood identity operate inclusively or exclusively in regard to the existing residential neighborhood. Based on interviews with a number of FPSE residents, there is no consensus about how to approach The Grove. However, individual narratives did reveal that The Grove was more integrated into the everyday lives of the (predominantly, although not exclusively White) middle class, and

less integral or even problematic for people of low-income status (and tellingly some White's who worked closely with people of low-income). The following interview excerpts are representative of the spread of opinions found within FPSE and The Grove. For instance, some residents were excited to finally have cultural amenities within walking distance:

It's only in recent years that we are even recognized as a neighborhood, like we had to prove ourselves in some way. Yeah, we're coming. Yeah, we're coming. Yeah, we're here. ... As much as we eat out, we try and make every other time a place on Manchester. (Matti)

Then something else changed five years ago when The Grove took off. ... That has definitely been another tip over the edge. Now not only have we gotten rid of violence, gotten rid of the gang activity, we're kind of cool and hip now. ... We love to eat out, and we've joked that we now find that we don't need to leave the neighborhood. ... We rarely go farther than Manchester now. (Dalia, FPSE resident since 1991)

Other residents were less pleased with their encounters with The Grove:

We've seen sex inside of the cars outside of the bars, driving back at night. ... There's trash on our parking lot all the time. A little more crime, though mostly people fighting with each other. ... And then loud music all night, all the time. And people parking wherever they want, like sometimes right in front of my house. Then when they have special events it becomes even worse. Like the bicycle race is a big deal, but they don't ask the community. ... It's just the idea of talking about it ... as opposed to when people come home they find out they can't get to their house because the street is blocked off. That's just not neighborly. (Blake, a neighborhood resident since the 1980s)

They have no respect and disregard for people who live on this street. ... It has been a mess. You tell the people that you can't park there, and they tell you to go to hell. And they put their beer bottles and their beer cans on the sidewalk, so you've got to clean that up. (Mia, resident since the 1980s)



Illustration 27: The Forest Park Southeast Neighborhood Association meets monthly to discuss local issues and events, August 2013.

The least favorable impressions of The Grove were unsurprisingly from those people who live in close proximity to the bars, and some residents have lobbied against expansion of the nightlife offerings, calling for growth of businesses that would cater to the needs of local residents. Suggestions at neighborhood meetings (see Illustration 27) for a laundromat and a larger grocery store are common.

Some informants overtly acknowledged the more obvious disconnects within the neighborhood, particularly as they effect the poorest residents:

There isn't really much employment in the immediate neighborhood. ... So as things develop along Manchester, for example restaurants and bars, it might give a new kind of vitality to the neighborhood but it doesn't necessarily employ nor does it necessarily provide a place for neighborhood people to go. Most of those places are outside of their reach in a variety of ways. (Zeke, FPSE resident since 1997)

Increased neighborhood security also has had an effect on long-term residents:

It's not because of the strip; the strip is all right. But the fact is the police are around here a lot more, a lot thicker. And anybody who looks like they don't belong in a certain place, they are getting flagged down. They are getting their information run. It happens occasionally with me. It happens

to my brothers a lot. It's terrible ... When I was a kid, you didn't see much of the police. You know, they would come to the schools, and everything like that. But when you are getting older, and you see that they are trying to stop a lot of the crime over here. You say, oh, that's not bad. You know, let people come over here and have a good time. But then when you are the one in the middle of it, like not doing anything, and they say that you are supposedly the one who did something: this fits your description. (Tommy, FPSE resident for 24 years)

While others said they felt like strangers on their home streets:

I'll tell you what really bothers me about it is the majority of times I trying to be friendly to the people coming in to the neighborhood by simply speaking to them, saying hello. And they look at me and just keep walking, you know. That's so cold. This is my neighborhood, you know. I'm trying to be inviting, invite you as a neighbor, be kind and courteous to you. It's hospitality. And they'll ride their bicycles by and just look at you. (Edgar, FPSE resident since 1975)

And some residents held to hope that the community would continue to be diverse:

Part of what I like about the neighborhood, and part of what I hope stays the same, is that it will continue to be a diverse mix of all kinds of people. And I wouldn't want it to have one identity, if that makes sense. I don't want one of those communities to become dominant over the others. I hope it can be diverse and kind of integrated, but not all the same. (Steve)

IX. Discussion: Where to From Here?

Social inequalities are written into the fabric of cities, particularly as racial and class-based divisions manifest themselves in the geography of neighborhoods. Given that St. Louis is somewhat notorious for its north-south divide among Blacks and Whites, perhaps the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood is somewhat exceptional in that it has for decades enjoyed a kind of social mix among races and classes that is rare. With the amount of capital now invested in FPSE the neighborhood is likely to attract more residents, and those residents are more and more likely to be from the middle class. Said more directly, the neighborhood is gentrifying and there is little reason to believe that

process will halt or reverse. In similar fashion, the commercial district known as The Grove also has experienced tremendous growth in the few short years since it was christened. In addition to those existing developments mentioned in the research presented here, 2013 also brought news that a large microbrewery is expanding its operations into a shuttered paper company on Manchester Avenue, that a new music venue would open and that a hotel developer was interested in property north of Manchester.

Yet none of these developments directly addresses what appears to be a growing divide between the north and south sides of the neighborhood – a growing Manchester Divide – particularly as development has coincided with a decline in overall population that is largely attributed to fewer Black families calling the neighborhood home. The Grove has become a nationally recognized entertainment district, an urban playground for outsiders and some locals. Meanwhile a few blocks away other longtime residents say they spend less time on the street and more time feeling hassled or simply left out.

Seeing the changes happening first hand as “scholar in residence” within FPSE there is a feeling of inevitability about redevelopment that is both exciting and dreadful. Not a single informant interviewed for this project doubted that change was coming to the neighborhood, change driven in many cases by powerful and wealthy interests from the outside. The introduction of The Grove as a neighborhood brand has given the outside world a new vision what The Grove is and who belongs there, and because of the heavy visual presence of the brand it is increasingly easy even for residents to claim The Grove as their home. The shift in nomenclature is particularly strong among those who

arrived in the neighborhood in the past five years or so.

Place – that specific sense of uniqueness and connectedness in a given space – can be a unifying experience, as the neighborhood comes to reflect something of who we are. Neighborhood branding, it follows, is then a process of place-making specifically rooted in patterns of consumption. Like all consumption in a capitalist system, neighborhood brands include and exclude participation primarily along lines of capital (both material and cultural). Perhaps there is no simple answer to the question: who is in a name? But being “in” or “out” does have really consequences for those people who find themselves neighbors in the changing and dynamic communities of modern urban life.

Cooperatives, Corporations and Communities: Gentrification as a Process of Culture and Capital

ABSTRACT

Gentrification – described loosely as the return of the middle-class to core urban neighborhoods and the resulting social/cultural changes – now is a recognized trend within major cities around the globe. The process of gentrification is tied to both capital (redevelopment) and culture (renewal), with localized process related to the way that residents, business owners and civic leaders negotiate the change. A study tracking a decade of change in one central St. Louis neighborhood – Forest Park Southeast – reveals that even in one small space gentrification may take multiple forms. The study critiques the divergent theses of “emancipatory” and “revanchist” gentrification, suggesting that the a “both/and” approach to evaluating the costs and benefits of redevelopment.

KEYWORDS

Gentrification, Redevelopment, Urban Renewal, Culture, Capital, Community, St. Louis

I. Down on the Corner

I walk down the alley toward the corner market on Saturday afternoon, making a “wine run” for a baby shower my wife is hosting. It's been raining on and off today, and the asphalt is slick or puddled with water, but there are still a few people standing near a low wall at the end of the alley. Some hold white plastic grocery bags; others hold small brown paper bags, their contents a known-unknown to anyone familiar with stereotypical urban America.

Although the north side of Manchester Avenue is the “Whiter” side of the neighborhood, I am predictably the only White person in the store as I walk in and locate a new wine cooler next to the small case of fresh fruits and vegetables. The store owner participates in a pilot project to increase healthy food options and awareness of healthy eating habits. I sat in on a few of the planning meetings, and the kickoff event (a parking lot barbecue) was reportedly well-attended a week prior. I walk over to the counter to say hello and ask about business and the pilot project.

In past interactions, the owner and I have



Illustration 28: A young man enters a local market on Manchester Avenue in FPSE, November 2013.

talked about how his store is perceived as a “liquor store” by many of the White and middle-class residents in the neighborhood, a population that largely lives within walking distance of the market. Off the record, neighbors have confessed to me that they have been too nervous to even set foot in this corner store, or they simply state that they prefer to shop at larger supermarkets because of selection and prices. Still the subtext of race and class in this gentrifying neighborhood is thinly veiled at best, and we have little warning that the veil is going to burst before us today.

“I don't mind making some changes,” the owner says of his participation in the healthy foods project, “but I have to run a business here. I know who my customers are.”

The words are barely across the counter to me when a young (12, maybe?) Black girl walks into the store, headphones on her ears, and starts to pick through the nickel candy bins next to the register. Just a beat behind her entrance comes an agitated man, brown skinned, lanky and very tall. I recognize him as a manager from a restaurant just half a block away.

Looking first at the girl and then at the owner, he shouts, “Do you know who this girl's family is? She's in here all the time.”

As he talks he moves toward the shrinking girl, taking out his smart phone to activate its camera.

“What's your name?” he demands, taking a photo and then turning to explain himself to the owner. “She comes by my restaurant, bangs on the glass and flips off my customers.

“And you aren't going to do it again,” he continues, now standing uncomfortably close to the girl, who is trying to inch toward the door. He continues to take her photo, now blocking her escape.

“Get away from me!”

“You're not going to do it again, do you hear me! I will call the police.” the manager says, his voice rising to a sharp exclamation. “If I see you do it again, I'll put you in handcuffs myself, if I have to. DO YOU HEAR?”

FIELD NOTES, 5 October 2013

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II. Introduction

Gentrification – the influx of middle-class households to poor and working-class urban neighborhoods – now is a documented trend in cities the world over. As a process within a broader effort to revitalize and redevelop core urban communities, gentrification is global in scope, but often intensely linked to issues of individual and group identity – as neighborhoods that gentrify may become fashionable or hip (Redfern 2003). However,

the return of middle class individuals to urban communities also may have a moral dimension tied to notions of social justice (Bielo 2011, Hankins and Walter 2011). What is clear in existing studies is that access to capital (on a household or community basis) and a desire to participate in particular cultural experiences (both religious and secular) are the percussing and motivating conditions for middle-class return.

In an ethnographic study of the St. Louis, Mo. neighborhood Forest Park Southeast (abbreviated FPSE), the processes of change are connected to the private investments of residents (both new and tenured), the patronage of corporate stakeholders and real estate developers, and the formation of new or renewed communities. In this manner, gentrification is revealed to be a nuanced process of both capital and culture. Using the data gathered in five years of study in FPSE, this project critiques longstanding



Illustration 29: New apartments in Forest Park Southeast are advertised “Starting at \$1,600” per month, September 2013.

understandings of gentrification as either “revanchist” (Smith 1996) or “emancipatory” (Caulfield 1994) to demonstrate that redevelopment and the return of middle class populations can both include and exclude existing populations of minority and/or low-income residents. In short, there is no set outcome to gentrification – beneficial or

harmful – that does not reflect the way stakeholder groups within a community are included or excluded from decision making and the processes of redevelopment. High levels of community engagement may produce outcomes that are generally beneficial to all neighborhood groups, and low levels of engagement may lead to frustration or ultimately displacement of economically vulnerable groups.

III. Culture and Capital United

The ethnography of Forest Park Southeast presented in the sections below explores the specific course of neighborhood redevelopment in the years between 1970-2013, based on interviews with long-term residents and on the author's first-hand observation from the year 2007 forward. What is revealed is that middle-class groups have engaged in “expressive” acts of community. In fact,



Illustration 30: A sign at Vandeventer and Tower Grove avenues welcomes drivers and bicyclists at the southern gateway to the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood, November 2013.

the study of FPSE confirms the existence of a morally-motivated gentry who came to the city in search of diversity and social justice more than investment properties and exclusive enclaves. However, the neighborhood also bears out the power of capital in redevelopment, and in fact investment in FPSE in just the past two decades tallies into the tens of millions of dollars. Perhaps the most visible collision of culture and capital in FPSE is The Grove, an emerging entertainment district of bars, music venues and

nightclubs. There a few retail businesses as well, including a popular bicycle shop.

What the research reveals is that many of the structurally predicted outcomes of gentrification – including some loss of affordable housing and some displacement of low-income families – have occurred. However, the neighborhood is by no means a middle-class neighborhood as of yet. If anything a north-south divide is occurring between more affluent sub-neighborhoods and the rest of the community, even as the overall mix of race and class still tilts toward working-class and . Finally, partnerships between local corporations and



Illustration 31: Many of the utility structures - like this traffic control box - have been painted to reflect the Forest Park Southeast and The Grove identities of the neighborhood, November 2013.

community stakeholders have resulted in changes to the neighborhood that have benefit all residents, including the introduction of new educational and health care services, and the removal of “slum lords” and overt drug dealing within the neighborhood. In sum, the FPSE case study demonstrates that gentrification (and neighborhood revitalization processes more generally) is no one-way processes with fixed outcomes, and instead reflects the way local communities come together (or not) during the course of redevelopment. This nuanced approach to conceptualizing redevelopment gives credence to seeing both capital and culture as coexisting avenues of neighborhood change.

IV. Forest Park Southeast – A Neighborhood

The decades following World War II brought radical changes to the structure and patterns of city living in the United States. With the mobility afforded by automobiles and newly expanded highways, middle class families flocked to the suburban zones outside of core cities, zones that now encompass the bulk of population in America's metropolitan centers (Baldassare 1992). However, the suburbs were (often



Illustration 32: Homes along Chouteau Avenue once were located at a main entrance to Forest Park, but highway construction cut off the corner of the park nearest the homes. Today a footbridge connects FPSE residents with the popular park and its many activities and attractions, August 2013.

intentionally, see Sugrue 2005) White spaces that overtly and covertly denied access to minorities, especially s. Thus as millions of s migrated north after the war, they predominately found residence in core cities, often finding that White families were moving out as they moved in, a process called “White Flight” (Crowder 2000) that ultimately spelled the end of any substantial middle-class population in many urban communities. This Black-White divide in neighborhoods and communities persists to this day (Quillian 2002). St. Louis, Mo., is indicative of these trends of urban divestment and segregation along class and racial lines to such an extent that the historian Colin Gordon – author of *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (2008) – once told a local audience that the city inhabits the “worst of both worlds” in it's Southern racial divides and its Eastern manufacturing decline. Like many of it's peers in “Rust

Belt” (Plotnicov 1991, Benson 2005) the St. Louis has experienced the economic booms and busts of the post World War II era, arriving in the second decade of the New Millennium with a population of approximately 319,000 people, down from a 1950 peak of more than 850,000 people^{xxi}. Yet the surrounding metropolitan region – Greater St. Louis – now boasts a population of 2.9 million people spread across 11 counties of Missouri and Illinois, making it the 21st largest metro-area in the United States.

Rightly called city of neighborhoods, St. Louis sits on a relatively small footprint of just 66 square miles and is ringed in by the suburbs of St. Louis County that resist annexation or expansion of the city proper (which itself is recognized as a “county” by Missouri due to political divides that trace back to the Civil War). Within, St. Louis is sub-divided into 79 recognized neighborhoods^{xxii}. While city government is divided into larger Wards that change in size and scope with the (seemingly ever-declining) municipal population, neighborhoods in St. Louis have diverse histories tied to the successive waves of immigration the city has seen; German and Irish Catholics, Greeks and Italians, Southern s and now Bosnians among a host of other groups spanning the globe have come (and gone) over the decades.

The Forest Park Southeast neighborhood lies along the “central corridor” carved through St. Louis by what is now called Interstate 64 (old U.S. Highway 40), while Interstate 44 (on the path of historic Route 66) lies just to the south. FPSE neighborhood boundaries are as follows: I-64 on the north, Vandeventer Ave. diagonally along the east and south and Kingshighway Boulevard on the west. Manchester Avenue (Highway 100) runs the axis of the neighborhood from east to west and is the historic commercial district

within the community. To the north of the neighborhood is the combined campus of BJC Health (Barnes-Jewish Hospital, St. Louis Children's Hospital, etc.) and academic campuses for the Washington University School of Medicine, the Goldfarb School of Nursing and the St. Louis College of Pharmacy, among other entities. Forest Park Southeast (abbreviated throughout this document as FPSE) draws its name from its historic role as a gateway to Forest Park, home of the 1904 World's Fair and present site of a zoo, a museum of art and a museum of history, a science center and planetarium and numerous recreational areas from golf courses to a skating rink. Finally, a private high school and a community college are located a few blocks west. In short, there are a remarkable number of geographic, economic and recreational assets enjoyed by residents of the neighborhood.

The proximity of such resources, however was not enough to stop the slide of the neighborhood into generalized poverty through the end of the 20th Century. Estimates for average per capita income in the neighborhood were just \$12,800 in 1999, a figure lower than the dismal St. Louis per capita average of \$16,800 that same year. Unemployment in the community stood at 27 percent, a full third of the population was living in poverty by federal standards, and nearly one in four houses was vacant. In the years since 2000 several trends of population change have emerged. Per the City of St. Louis, the total neighborhood population has declined 21 percent (from approximately 3,700 to 2,900), and the number of vacant properties has continued to increase to a 30-year high in excess of 150 parcels, concentrated in the portion of the neighborhood to the south of Manchester Avenue. In terms of racial composition, FPSE was approximately 77 Black

and 18 percent White in 2000. Now the neighborhood is 64 percent Black and 30 percent White. This “whitening” of the community is centered in the blocks north of Manchester Avenue, where many homes continue to be rehabbed despite the national and regional economic downturn since 2008. Recently, a large new apartment development went in



Illustration 33: The Tour De Grove bicycle race passes through the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood, May 2012.

along Chouteau Avenue on the northern edge of FPSE. These apartments – based on the fact that rent is advertised at \$1,600 per month for two bedrooms – are above the means of most of the existing population (the author paid \$600/mo for three bedrooms and one bathroom just three years ago), indicating that real estate developers are banking on more middle class people migrating to the neighborhood in the near future. Indeed, local media reports (Hare 2011) confirm the central role that a “middle-class foundation” is expected to play in the next decade of redevelopment.



Illustration 34: One of many murals in the Forest Park Southeast uses a newer neighborhood nomenclature to proclaim "Groovin' in the Grove," March 2013.

This sudden start in new housing is not all that unpredictable, however, as FPSE is

itself being marketed under a new banner: The Grove. Named for an emergent entertainment district along Manchester Avenue, The Grove is an invention of the past decade. The moniker comes from an earlier name for the area – Adams Grove – and the crossroads of east-west running Manchester Avenue and Tower Grove Avenue, a north-south connector linking FPSE with the affluent Central West End neighborhood to the north and the Missouri Botanical Gardens and Tower Grove Park areas immediately to the south. There also is a growing business district just north of the neighborhood, and at the end of 2013 the retailer Ikea announced plans to build a store in this commercial zone, a development that practically raised a cheer from the author's neighbors in Gibson Heights.

As it stands, The Grove is known regionally and nationally for at least two neighborhood institutions. The first is an overtly gay-friendly nightlife scene, featuring weekly shows by local Drag Queens. The LGBT Center of St. Louis now has its home in Manchester storefront, and several clubs are owned and/or operated by openly homosexual business people. The second landmark is a soul food restaurant called Sweetie Pie's, the creation of Robbie Montgomery, a one-time member of Ike and Tina Turner's Ikettes, who toured with the group and other musical acts through the 1970s. Sweetie Pie's at the Mangrove opened at Manchester and Tower Grove in 2004, and currently is the subject of a reality TV show on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN)^{xxiii}.

Boasting a collection of about two dozen bars, restaurants and concert venues, The Grove attracts hundreds of outsiders to the neighborhood every week. Business interests and local redevelopment corporations^{xxiv} sponsor two major events each year, a bike race

called Tour de Grove and a street festival called Grovefest. In 2013 The Grove also played host to the second annual Shakespeare in the Streets theater production^{xxv}, which combined the stories of local residents, neighborhood history and The Bard into a unique new play called “Old Hearts Fresh.” The development and business community of The Grove also contributes funds that support additional security patrols of the neighborhood (including residential areas), primarily in evening hours.

V. Newcomers Yesterday and Today

Forest Park Southeast was platted and constructed starting in the early 1900s. Many houses were built just a few years after the St. Louis World's Fair and Exposition of 1904, the grounds of which are called Forest Park today. As a working-class neighborhood the housing stock is roughly divided between blocks of larger two-family and four-family flats north of Manchester Avenue and the generally smaller and often single-family homes on the south side. Since the 1970s most of the middle-class newcomers to the neighborhood have been concentrated in an area called Gibson Heights, which is the northwest quadrant of the neighborhood, nearest the park. Because the neighborhood's White population is concentrated in this quadrant it might fairly be viewed as the most gentrified part of the whole. While the blocks of Gibson Heights are not absent of low-income or Black families, those middle-class White professionals arriving in the sub-neighborhood over the years have played pivotal roles in neighborhood change going back to an intentional community of Leftist Catholics that moved in four decades ago and remains vital today. In more recent years a new and more diverse cohort of professionals has come to the neighborhood, attracted in part by offerings in The Grove and by the

promise of improved property values and neighborhood services. Certainly not every newcomer over the years fits into one camp or the other, and there overlaps between “generations” of newcomers as well as disconnects. But neighborhood conditions have changed with the arrival of new “waves” of middle-class, often reflecting specific visions of neighborhood needs and desires for new amenities. Finally, the presence of an emerging entertainment district brings a different kind of middle-class to the neighborhood: the commuter cultural consumer. Increasingly, development in the neighborhood caters to these non-resident members of The Grove community more than the truly local population.

VI. Morally-Motivated Gentry and Other Neighbors

Fresh out of studies at the local Jesuit institution (Saint Louis University) and inspired by the progressive reforms of the post-Vatican II Catholic Church, a small group of self-described “radical Catholics” moved into the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood in search of a new type of community. While the overall White population of St. Louis (and frankly most every “Rust Belt” American city) was on its way out, the “Open Door” community moved in. The dozen or so individuals in the intentional community shared housing and expenses, and ultimately they formed families and purchased houses (Suchland 2013). The group also was able to form a nucleus of committed households that attracted like-minded households to also commit to FPSE.

We were looking for an unstable neighborhood, if you will, where we could find two houses nearby. ... We found a neighborhood where people were struggling that we could be neighbors to. (Sarah, an Open Door member and resident since the 1970s)

What the members of the Open Door found was a neighborhood of aging long-term

residents, many of whose families had been new immigrants just a few years before. They were a mix of groups: Irish, German, Italian, Greek and by the 1950s a small and growing population of Black migrants. The neighborhood's main road, Manchester Avenue, had all the amenities of idyllic postwar America: the department store, the theater, the lunch counters and the trolley lines. The Greek community alone boasted 65 families at its peak.

We were on West Papin [Avenue], and then when Highway 40 was built we had to leave that address. And when we moved here. We were on the first floor, and then my father purchased this home. And we were on the second floor, and one of my brothers, Andy, the Marine, moved in and raised his family here. It's been in the family this whole time. ... We've always loved being here. ... The area was known as little Athens. (Iontha, a FPSE resident of 81 years)

But it was not to last. Most of those of Iontha's generation did not stay in the neighborhood, and as their parents aged and died their houses fell into disrepair. Or as an increasing number of Black families moved into the neighborhood through the 1970s and 1980s, some White families simply sold out and moved out, in so-called "White Flight" (Crowder 2000). This accelerated neighborhood turnover led to a relatively quick change in the "face" of the neighborhood from working-class and White to predominantly low-income and Black by the 1980s. This exodus of White families did



Illustration 35: Vacant and abandoned properties continue to be an issue in the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood. Pictured here is a 2.5 acre plot of multi-family properties that has been empty for years, located along Kingshighway Boulevard, November 2013.

provide for unique opportunities not just for young professionals like the Open Door, but also for those incoming Black residents. Moving to the neighborhood as a teen, one long-term Black resident explained that he first worked at a local confectionary and was able to purchase a home of his own for just \$1,000.

Crime and violence were a large issue for neighborhood residents in the 1990s, particularly in the Gibson Heights area because its close proximity to the highways made for a drive-through drug market that operated both day and night. This drug business was connected broader economic woes – unemployment and poverty – but also a result of absentee landlords who owned scores of properties and rented with little money charged and few questions asked. Residents responded in a novel way, by partnering with local police to send post cards to the owners of the cars that would zip in and out of the neighborhood at all hours, letting drug buyers know they were being watched.

I think ultimately it was the community and diligence that go drugs out of the neighborhood and some of the violence out of the neighborhood. yet we are still a diverse neighborhood. You know, we weren't looking to gentrify the neighborhood. We wanted it to be a place for everybody.
(Dalia, FPSE resident since 1991)

Eventually partnerships with nearby corporations made possible buyouts of the “slum lords” and many problem properties were rehabbed, demolished for new construction or sold to other developers. Other neighborhood newcomers became directly involved in real estate renovation, helped start preschools and clinics, and became involved in local politics. The net effect of these efforts was to create a stable base for future developments, which began to happen in and around the year 2000 with two major corporate/public projects that are discussed in detail below. Two local development

corporations also are active in screening a soliciting new business in the neighborhood.

VII. New People and New Ideas

Since the year 2000 another wave of middle-class households has moved into Forest Park Southeast, many continuing the trend of rehabbing homes that were once multi-family into single-family residences. Many of these new residents arrived because they worked at nearby employers such as BJC Health Care and the Washington University Medical Center, who partner to offer cash incentives for employees who buy homes in the neighborhood. Others were attracted by the affordability of properties and the “up-and-coming” profile of the neighborhood due in large part to the emergence of The Grove as a popular nightlife destination. Nearness to Forest Park also continues to be a draw.

We lived in an apartment in the Central West End and wanted to buy a house. But everything in the West End was either ginormous or a tiny condo. So we started looking around, and we didn't know anything about Forest Park Southeast, this is 10 years ago. We were just riding bikes around. We wanted to stay close to [Forest] Park. We wanted to stay close to the Central West End; we just couldn't afford anything in the Central West End. And somehow we happened upon Forest Park Southeast, and 10 years ago it looked kind of sketchy. You know there were nice streets, and not so nice streets. ... So we talked to this developer and he told us that there were these great rehabs. So before they were even finished and went on the market we met the developer and looked at the house and got in – early. ... And we didn't mind that it was a little urban, a little transitional. (Cynthia, FPSE resident since 2003)

This is the seventh property that we've either renovated or restored in our 32 marriage. ... This was a project we thought we could afford and in a neighborhood that we thought had some potential. ... It was a step in a direction. We've called it our urban adventure. ... It wasn't too noisy. The crime statistics on it were pretty good. This house was colorful. It was the busiest crack house on the block prior to being our home, and it was vacant I think five months before we bought it. So it was that kind of transition, but again it looked like the neighborhood had some upside potential. (William, FPSE resident since 2007)

Like the older cohort, today's newcomers are concerned with crime and perceptions of the neighborhood as being unsafe. Nearly every informant from the middle class reported experiencing break-in to their homes and cars. Many talked about gun shots and shouting or fighting in the streets. The newcomers also have become engaged in the neighborhood association, for instance leading an ongoing effort to create a dog park in the neighborhood. Others have lobbied for new green spaces and dedicated bike lanes throughout the neighborhood.

This is the first place I really got to know my neighbors. ... There's definitely a lot more organizing going on in this neighborhood, for sure. The way that I got involved in this neighborhood was that I heard there was an effort to start a dog park. And I'm a joiner, so I was like: Sign me up! What can I do? ... I just go more and more involved. It was important for me to be in neighborhood where there was a sense of community.
(Betsy, FPSE resident since 2011)

The neighborhood's reputation as a gay-friendly community (again connected to Grove businesses) has spurred a few homosexual households to move in as well:

In St. Louis, I couldn't tell you off the top of my head how many gay bars we have, but it's probably somewhere between a half dozen and a dozen. And a good percent, the majority of them are here. ... And for the size of St. Louis that's actually a significant number of gay bars. We have a pretty big gay community, too. ... And now the LGBT Center [of St. Louis] is here, right on Manchester. ... So there's a lot of LGBT related stuff going on. (Steve, FPSE resident since 2011)

VIII. Inhabitants of The Grove

The Grove really only came into common use since 2004 when it was adopted by the local businesses to establish a neighborhood “brand” that would reflect local history – the south of Manchester neighborhood was called Adams Grove – and the new cultural scene that was anchored by a number of longstanding gay-owned and gay-friendly bars. The

“gay scene” dates back to the 1980s, but today The Grove features a mix of restaurants, bars, music venues and a few assorted shops (offering bikes, skateboards and tattoos). The Grove's first coffee shop opened in fall 2013, and a local micro-brewery is expanding its operation into a



Illustration 36: A neon bar sign reflects the gay-friendly atmosphere of nightlife in The Grove, November 2013.

defunct paper company. The last development is important because it is expected to anchor the west end of The Grove. But the general course of development is aimed squarely at cultural consumption for college students and young professionals living in the city or at least commuting to urban neighborhoods to spend their free time and money.

These young professionals an emerging cultural force in many North American cities (Florida 2008), and young adults represented one population that actually grew amid another decade of population decline in St. Louis as a whole. The Grove is poised to draw in this “creative class” in part because of the fact the neighborhood continues to have a mix social groups and because of the substantial expansion of apartments in the past three years. There also are outlets for artistic or expressive action including one modern art gallery and several music venues. Narratives of people invested in The Grove reflect optimistic ideas about the neighborhood vitality created by an urban mix, a belief which has been recorded in other social research (Anderson 2011) and is summed up by this informant:

When we talk about diversity it means so many things, but one of the key things to me that it means is different income levels, different educational backgrounds. Because with all that comes different perspectives and different ideas about resourcefulness, and I have learned a ton from all the walks of life I have met down here. It's terrific. It's why I stay here, because I really like all the varied groups of people. ... And it's not just Black and White or Asian, or gay and straight, it's some people have prison backgrounds and some people don't. Some people have high educational backgrounds and some people have none. And that's what I really find interesting, in this teeny tiny space. (Mitchell, Grove developer since 2000)

IX. The Local Growth Machine

A “growth-machine” is the collective enterprise of a municipal government and large, for-profit corporations (Logan and Molotch 1987) that works in the “common interest” of creating economic development. Within St. Louis there is a long history of corporate-partnered and corporate sponsored redevelopment (Monti 1990) that includes the creation of Barnes-Jewish Hospital and the rest of the medical district on the eastern edge of



Illustration 37: Cyclists round the corner of Manchester Avenue and Newstead Avenue during the Tour de Grove, May 2012.

Forest Park. During the initial planning for the business zone that includes the hospital and Washington University School of Medicine a portion of the present-day FPSE

community was included as a first step south of Highway 40 for redevelopment efforts. It was four decades from the creation of the medical center before any substantial efforts were made toward the south, while to the north of the hospitals the Central West End Neighborhood became arguably the most vibrant (and most gentrified) part of St. Louis proper. Some residents and developers are explicit in their desire to see FPSE take a similar course of redevelopment as the CWE (as it is often abbreviated.)

But at the end of the 1990s, the Washington University Medical Center Redevelopment Corporation secured federal redevelopment loans and grants that allowed for several major development efforts in Forest Park Southeast. As mentioned above, those funds made possible buyouts of dozens of properties held by absentee landlords, and also brought in McCormack Baron



Illustration 38: Volunteers dig garden plots for a local youth program as part of a volunteer service day in Forest Park Southeast. The children were later able to grow a vegetable garden, April 2013.

Salazar to create a community master plan. As a direct result of this planning and at the cost of millions of dollars Adams Elementary School, which was shuttered in 1988, was reopened on Tower Grove Avenue south of Manchester. The cite includes a new community center, now operated by Boys and Girls Clubs. The school groups also include a ball field paid for in part with charitable donations from the St. Louis Cardinals baseball franchise. A second major project was completed at the junction of Manchester

and Kingshighway, McCormack House at Forest Park Southeast. The apartment complex for seniors replaced dozens of homes on Cadet and Wichita avenues. WUMC redevelopment sponsors job programs for local residents and runs a GED program out of the community center. An homeowners assistance program provides \$8,500 to those who



Illustration 39: City workers paint over graffiti on a building on the south side of the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood, March 2013.

buy properties in the neighborhood. Annual local events like the Tour de Grove bike races and the Grovesfest street fair are likewise corporate sponsored. And all of these efforts are geared toward what might generally be called neighborhood stabilization and growth. A particular focus on the residential side of things is filling in the empty lots and abandoned homes that a still a concern in FPSE. According to the city, more than 100 residential lots now are vacant in the neighborhood.

We are getting a lot of buy in now on these vacant parcels around the neighborhood. You're going to see in the next couple of years ... where we can fill in and get that density once again for the neighborhood. It's trying to get that population back up where it was at one time or another. It's never going to be 10,000 or 15,000 like it was, but ... just making sure every parcel is occupied is a big goal on the residential piece. (Staff member at WUMC Redevelopment Corporation)

X. Gentrification and the Manchester Divide

Longtime residents have taken note of the changes of the last few years in both neighborhood composition and in the pace and direction of redevelopment efforts. Many

residents believe that a tipping point has been crossed, at least in the part of the neighborhood that lies north of Manchester Avenue. And at least a few informants were not afraid to say that gentrification is now in progress.

The first word I would use would be gentrifying. From the time we first moved here in 1973 there was an up and down from the neighborhood being fairly stable to the neighborhood really being a war zone with visible drug transactions and many nights and many months of gunshots fired that would wake you up. Lots of our house being broken in to. It would be that, and then it would abate. ... Now it feels to me that there's no more room for people living poverty. There's just only room for rehabs and doctors. ... I think we need redevelopment, and practically speaking that means developers, but there is no way to put the breaks on what they do. And what has happened in this neighborhood is too many viable properties have been rehabbed in a way that puts them out of reach of low-income homeowners and low-income home renters. ... I feel like it's tipped. And I don't think it's retrievable. In the 30 or so years I have been here I have never seen this. (Sarah, FPSE resident in the Gibson Heights sub-neighborhood)

South of Manchester Avenue there is a high concentration empty and derelict properties, as well as large number of empty warehouse and industrial buildings. Vandeventer Avenue, the neighborhood's eastern and southern border, also has a large number of empty store fronts and larger commercial spaces. The only recent movement on Vandeventer is a large gas station that will take the place of what was an Italian restaurant at the Manchester intersection.

The next step is to really try to restabilize south of Manchester. We can't maintain what we have going on here if we have an unstable area immediately south of us. So something has to happen south of Manchester. The problem is it takes resources, and those resources are hard to identify. (Noah, FPSE resident and Open Door member)

XI. Discussion: Multiple Modes and Mixed Outcomes

In a country where the majority of the population now resides in one of several dozen

large metropolitan areas, it is ironic that so many core cities – thriving just a century ago – are literally a shadow of their former selves. St. Louis, Mo. is one such city, and now that middle-class populations are showing some interest in returning to city dwelling, it is instructive to look at those social forces that prompt return. The study the redevelopment and naissant gentrification in Forest Park Southeast reveals that urban revitalization takes forms of capital and culture. That is, there is a material component to redevelopment that is capital intensive, which is not surprising after so many preceding years of divestment. There also a cultural component of change in the formation of new communities in both space (local geography) and place (the affective sense of a spatially defined community). Sometimes a desire for community comes before any major capital infusions, as with the Open Door community in the 1970s. Sometimes capital-intensive interventions are called upon to stabilize and revitalize a community, as with the efforts of local redevelopment agencies. Sometimes capital-focused social actors seek to create a community of cultural consumption, as with The Grove since 2004.

There is no one way gentrification or redevelopment happens, and the past 40 years in the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood demonstrate that an incredible diversity of social actions and understandings lies beneath the surface of seemingly straightforward processes in real estate and cultural participation. Ultimately both culture and capital creates spaces of inclusion and exclusion that define social space as for or not for a given group, thus driving neighborhood change.

Finally, I argue here that both cultural and capital processes are necessary for transformation of a neighborhood, and in many cases it is cultural entrepreneurs of one

form or another – from artists to religious communities – that make the first moves into urban spaces, opening the door to development. This re-problematizes the relationship of middle-class newcomers to their poorer neighbors, because the presence of middle-class consumers is ultimately what draws large capital investments in real estate. Even well-intentioned individuals and groups may not be able to stop or even effectively steer the course of gentrification once it is happening.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The three chapters presented here each draw their own conclusions about the processes of neighborhood change that are gentrification and redevelopment. However, moving back out to the general discussion where this research began, I hold that there are two take-aways for future research into changing urban communities. First, change is intensely local in its operation and involves the actions of highly variable interest groups. Second, the lenses of culture and capital are mutually exclusive ways of understanding gentrification and redevelopment efforts. Instead, by theorizing in a way that does not give one precedence above the other social analysis may reveal how both culture (such as neighborhood branding) and capital (major reinvestment) are deployed to change neighborhoods. As for vulnerable populations the process of gentrification remains problematic because not only may poorer residents find themselves priced-out of certain neighborhoods as they gentrify they also may find themselves branded-out of the cultural experiences that define the space. In either case it is incumbent upon gentry, especially those that profess a moral vision of diversity to engage in the planning and implementation of “growth” in a way that seeks to enhance or retain diversity. This may

entail conflicts of interest between newcomers as well as between existing populations and newcomers. More public dialogue about the purpose and course of redevelopment, more active engagement and more community-led redevelopment appear to be the most fruitful avenues for mutually beneficial change. Further research within Forest Park Southeast and The Grove will consider exactly these proactive steps that may lead to new community with the burden of exclusion of low-income or minority groups.

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APPENDIX A: MAP OF FOREST PARK SOUTHEAST



Map of Forest Park Southeast neighborhood, City of St. Louis 2013.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

(These questions are representative of the types questions that will be asked during this study but may not include all the content of any one interview, as each will vary with the informant.)

- How long have you lived in this neighborhood?
- Do you work near here? Or if you work here and live elsewhere, how far away is your home?
- If you didn't grow up here, why did you move to this neighborhood?
- If someone asked where you are from, what would you tell them?
- How would you describe this neighborhood to a stranger?
- Do you rent or own your home?
- Do you think you pay a fair price for your home or rent?
- If you don't own your home, would you be interested in buying a home within this neighborhood?
- What do you like about your home?
- What do you like about your neighborhood?
- If you could change one thing about your home, what would it be? What else would you change?
- If you could change one thing about your neighborhood, what would it be? What else would you change?
- What makes a good/bad neighbor? What makes a good/bad neighborhood?
- Is this a good neighborhood? Is it a safe neighborhood?
- How well do you know your neighbors? Do you belong to any clubs, churches or other groups in this community?
- Has this neighborhood gotten better or worse in the time that you have lived here? How is that?

- What has changed for the better or the worse? Is it a little of both?
- Would you prefer to move? If so, what is keeping you from moving? If not, what makes you want to stay?
- Are there other neighborhoods you see in St. Louis or elsewhere that you wish this neighborhood would be more like?
- Do you have any control over how the neighborhood looks? If not, who do you think decides what happens in this community?
- Would new residents or businesses make this community a better place to live? Would more parks or public spaces make this community a better place to live?

- ⁱ Forest Park is the historic home of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, of which only the “Grand Basin” pool remains. However, today the park encompasses several popular attractions including the St. Louis Zoo, the St. Louis Science Center, The Missouri History Museum, the St. Louis Art Museum a skating rink, golf courses and a visitor's center and café. The St. Louis-Post Dispatch has published a retrospective on the park and its place in city history (2008)
- ⁱⁱ In the summer of 2013 the Shakespeare in the Streets project brought an adaptation of *A Winter's Tale* to The Grove for three night's of performances on Manchester Ave. The neighborhood's north-south divide was reflected in the plot of the adapted play, which itself was based on interviews with neighborhood residents and other stakeholders.
- ⁱⁱⁱ DuBois work demonstrates just how much diversity exists within even small urban spaces. In his study he documented the composition of households, which often included servants' quarters if the family was wealthy. In any given city neighborhood a mix of homeowners, renters, boarders and other guests could be found. The homogenous neighborhoods of the post-World War II era a major shift away from the polyglot city of the early 1900s.
- ^{iv} Prior to graduate school I worked as a newspaper reporter and photographer, so many of the methods I employed in this study are analogous to the journalistic data gathering I have done in the past. Additionally, my undergraduate degree is in communication with a minor in journalism.
- ^v All of the general information on the City of St. Louis referenced in this paper is publicly available online via the Web site <https://stlouis-mo.gov/>
- ^{vi} Population data is sourced from the United States Census Bureau, accessed online via <http://www.census.gov/>
- ^{vii} There are two active non-profit redevelopment corporations in the neighborhood: 1) Park Central Development, <http://www.parkcentraldevelopment.org/> and 2) Washington University Medical Center Redevelopment Corporation, <http://www.wumcrc.com/>
- ^{viii} Shakespeare Festival St. Louis presents Shakespeare in the Streets: <https://www.sfstl.com/in-the-streets/>
- ^{ix} Karen House is a North St. Louis Catholic Worker community that has been in operation since 1977, and is a product of similar leftist Catholic direct action that produced the Open Door community in FPSE. Karen House has a detailed history, newsletter and other resources available at: <http://www.karenhousecw.org/>
- ^x Karl Marx (1976) refers to “use value” as the utility or purpose of an object (good), where as “exchange value” is the market price that may be fetched for the same good. In this sense a home has use value and exchange value, so it follows that a homeowner who chooses a neighborhood based on the benefits of living in a given place, is use-value motivated. A homeowner primarily concerned with return on investment in a property would be exchange-value motivated. Many (if not most) people, however, are attempting to balance the costs and benefits of use and exchange values related to their overall interest in a home or property.
- ^{xi} St. Cronan Church may be found online at: <http://www.stcronan.org/index.html>, and Midtown Catholic Charities has a Web presence at: <http://midtowncc.org/>
- ^{xii} Acts 1:8 Mission Society of St. Louis: <http://www.acts18stl.org/home>
- ^{xiii} The overall population of St. Louis City shrunk by more than 20 percent from 2000 to 2010, but in the same time period the population of young adults increased by 87 percent. Sources: 1) <http://stlouis.cbslocal.com/2011/04/01/young-professionals-flock-to-st-louis-city/>, 2) http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/census-shows-city-is-hollowing-out/article_4af01497-bca8-5b63-8cc6-1c724c11dd08.html
- ^{xiv} The Grove Business Association operates a Web site – <http://www.thegrovestl.com/> – that touts the neighborhood's gay-friendly culture as follows: “The Grove is also known for its diverse community. It is comprised of several LGBT friendly businesses, several of which began the increasing investment in the area starting with Attitudes Night Club, which opened in the 1980s, followed by Rehab, Just John, and Novak’s Bar & Grill. The commercial district continues to expand westward today.”
- ^{xv} One local renovation company has taken the name Grove Properties and uses the Twitter topic #LiveInTheGrove in posts, <http://grovepropertiesllc.com/>.
- ^{xvi} Within St. Louis there are active campaigns to attract young professionals to city neighborhoods: <http://stlenergized.blogspot.com/2011/03/tapping-diaspora-how-does-st-louis.html>
- ^{xvii} Welcome to Sweetie Pie's airs on OWN, the Oprah Winfrey Network. <http://www.oprah.com/own-sweetie-pies/sweetie-pies.html>
- ^{xviii} The LGBT Center of St. Louis provides a number of services in terms of support and advocacy. Their history, mission and activities are well documented in the groups Web site: <http://www.lgbtcenterstl.org/>
- ^{xix} The City of St. Louis maintains this list of neighborhoods on its Web site: <https://stlouis-mo.gov/neighborhoods/>
- ^{xx} In 2012 the Human Rights Campaign awarded a perfect score to St. Louis alongside such cities as the aforementioned New York, Seattle and San Francisco. Subsequent rankings place St. Louis in the top 15 gay-friendly cities, as collected by *The Riverfront Times* here: http://blogs.riverfronttimes.com/dailyrft/2013/05/st_louis_gay_friendly_ranking_nerdwallet.php
- ^{xxi} Population data is sourced from the United States Census Bureau, accessed online via <http://www.census.gov/>
- ^{xxii} All of the general information on the City of St. Louis referenced in this paper is publicly available online via the Web site <https://stlouis-mo.gov/>

- ^{xxiii} The show, titled Welcome to Sweetie Pie's, is in its second season. Details about the production and the restaurant may be found here: <http://www.oprah.com/own-sweetie-pies/Welcome-to-Sweetie-Pies>
- ^{xxiv} There are two active non-profit redevelopment corporations in the neighborhood: 1) Park Central Development, <http://www.parkcentraldevelopment.org/> and 2) Washington University Medical Center Redevelopment Corporation, <http://www.wumcrc.com/>
- ^{xxv} Shakespeare Festival St. Louis presents Shakespeare in the Streets: <https://www.sfstl.com/in-the-streets/>

VITA

Colin E. Suchland is an urban sociologist who lives in St. Louis, Mo. He has conducted extensive ethnographic field work in the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood, where he also resides with his wife and two boys. He continues his research on the neighborhood and plans to expand the studies to write a more comprehensive study of several St. Louis communities. Suchland received both his master's and doctoral degrees from The University of Missouri-Columbia. He has worked for several other institutions of higher education including Saint Louis University and St. Louis Community College – Meramec Campus. At present he is an assistant professor of sociology at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, Ill. Besides his research interest in urban sociology and social inequalities, Suchland is a freelance journalist and frequent photographer of St. Louis nightlife with works published online and in local print publications.